



LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

Statement of intent

Rainbow's End Pre-School is committed to providing quality provision based on equality of opportunity for all children and their families. Looked after children are those who have *'been in the care of their local authority for more than 24 hours. Looked after children are also often referred to as children in care, a term which many children prefer'* (NSPCC definition).

Aim

Rainbow's End Pre-School is committed to doing all they can to enable 'looked after' children in their care to achieve and reach their full potential. We recognise that looked after children will have had different experiences and a range of reasons for being taken into the care of the local authority. Whatever the reason, a child's separation from their home and family signifies a disruption in their lives that has impact on their emotional well-being.

The designated person for looked after children is the Designated Safeguarding Lead Gillian Neal

Practice

- At Rainbow's End Pre-School we place emphasis on promoting children's right to be strong, resilient and listened to.
- Our policy and practice guidelines for looked after children are based on two important concepts - attachment and resilience.
- The basis of this is to promote secure attachments in children's lives as the basis for resilience.
- These aspects of well-being underpin the child's responsiveness to learning and are the basis in developing positive dispositions for learning.
- For young children to get the most out of educational opportunities they need to be settled enough with their carer to be able to cope with further separation, a new environment and new expectations made upon them.
- The term is never used to categorise a child as standing out from others. We do not refer to such a child using acronyms such as LAC.
- We offer places for funded three and four-year-olds who are in care to ensure they receive their entitlement to early education.
- We expect that the placement in the setting will last a minimum of half a term.
- Where a child who normally attends our setting is taken into care and is cared for by a local foster carer we will continue to offer the placement for the child.
- Every child is allocated a key person before they start and this is no different for a looked after child.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead ensures the key person has the information, support and training necessary to meet the looked after child's needs.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead will liaise with agencies, professionals and practitioners involved with the child and their family and ensures appropriate information is gained and shared.
- Rainbow's End Pre-School recognises the role of the local authority social care department as the child's 'corporate parent' and the key agency in determining what takes place with the child. Nothing changes, especially with regard to the birth parent's or foster carer's role in relation to the setting without prior discussion and agreement with the child's social worker.
- There will be a professionals meeting to determine the objectives of the placement and create a care plan that incorporates the child's learning needs.

- This plan is reviewed after two weeks, six weeks and three months. Thereafter at three to six monthly intervals or as required.
- The care plan needs to consider such issues for the child as:
 - the child's emotional needs and how they are to be met;
 - how any emotional issues and problems that affect behaviour are to be managed;
 - the child's sense of self, culture, language/s, identity and how they will be supported;
 - the child's need for sociability and friendship;
 - the child's interests and abilities; and
 - how any special needs will be supported.
- In addition, the care plan will also consider:
 - how who, what, when, how, when information will be shared how information will be shared;
 - what contact the child has with their birth parent(s) and what arrangements will be in place for supervised contact. If this is to be the setting, when, where and what form the contact will take will be discussed and agreed;
- what written reporting is required;
- with the social worker's agreement, and as part of the plan, the birth parent(s) involvement in the setting's activities such as outings, fun-days etc alongside the foster carer.

In the first two weeks after settling-in, the child's well-being is the focus of observation, their sociability and their ability to manage their feelings with or without support. Further observations about communication, interests and abilities will be noted to firm up a picture of the whole child in relation to the Early Years Foundation Stage areas of learning. Concerns about the child will be noted in the child's file and discussed with the foster carer. Regular contact should be maintained with the social worker through planned meetings that will include the foster carer.

Transition to school will be handled sensitively and the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the child's key person will liaise with the school, passing on relevant information and documentation with the agreement of the looked after child's birth parent/guardians.

Policy Review

As part of Rainbow's End Pre-School's monitoring of looked after children this policy will be subject to periodic review.

Policy adopted by: Rainbow's End Pre-School

Date: 01.01.2024

Policy Review Date:31.12.2024