



# Ladybird Forest Pre-School



## Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements: Child Protection

### 1.3 Looked After Children

#### Policy statement

We are committed to providing quality provision based on equality of opportunity for all children and their families. All staff in our provision are committed to doing all they can to enable 'looked after' children in care to achieve and reach their full potential.

Children become 'looked after' if they have been taken into care by the local authority, or have been accommodated by the local authority (a voluntary care arrangement). This includes children who are subject to a care order or temporarily classed as looked after on a planned basis for short breaks or respite care. Most looked after children will be cared for by foster carers with a small minority in children's homes, living with a relative or even placed back home with their natural parent(s). The term 'looked after child' denotes a child's current legal status. The Pre-School never uses this term to categorise a child as standing out from others or refers to a child using acronyms such as 'LAC'.

We recognise that children who are being looked after have often experienced traumatic situations; physical, emotional or sexual abuse or neglect. However, we also recognise that not all looked after children have experienced abuse and that there are a range of reasons for children to be taken in to 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 an impact on their emotional well-being. Most local authorities do not place children under five with foster carers who work outside the home; however, there are instances when this does occur or where the child has been placed with another family member who works.



## Procedures

- The designated person for looked after children is the LAC Co-ordinator.
- Every child is allocated a key person before they start and this is no different for a looked after child. The LAC Co-ordinator ensures the key person has the information, support and training necessary to meet the looked after child's needs.
- Our Pre-School treats each child as an individual. We recognise that for young children to get the most out of educational opportunities they need to be settled appropriately with their carer. Before they start pre-school, the Pre-School Manager or LAC Co-ordinator will discuss with the child's carer, and social worker, the length of time the child has been with the carer to establish how secure the child feels and whether they are ready to be able to cope with further separation, a new environment and new expectations made upon them.
- The key person will support the child initially with transition and settling in and then continue to support and build up a relationship with the child, carers and any other agencies involved. Regular contact will be maintained with the carers throughout the child's time at the Pre-School and with the social worker or other professionals (where applicable).
- Where applicable, we contribute to any assessment about the child, such as those carried out under local authorities' assessment frameworks or Early Help Assessment (EHA) and to any multi-agency meetings, case conferences or strategy meetings in relation to the child's learning and development. The LAC Co-ordinator and/or the child's key person will attend meetings as appropriate.
- The key person will carry out regular ongoing observations to build up a picture of the child's interests, and plan activities accordingly to support the child's stage of



## Ladybird Forest Pre-School



learning and development and interests. This information will be shared with carers and other professionals as appropriate as well as any concerns surrounding their developmental stages.

- The key person and LAC Co-ordinator will work together to ensure any onward transition to school, or another Pre-School is handled sensitively to ensure that this is as smooth as possible and all necessary information is shared. The child's individual file, including observations, photographs and pieces of artwork and mark making will be passed on to the carer at this stage

### **Plans**

We will develop a Care Plan with carers and professionals. This will include:

- 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 and identity - how this is to be supported;
- the child's need for sociability and friendship;
- the child's interests and abilities and possible learning journey pathway; and
- how any special needs will be supported.

In addition, the Care Plan may also consider:

- who may receive information about the child (e.g. foster carer, local authority, other organisations or professionals);
- what information is shared;
- how information will be shared;
- how information will be recorded and stored;
- what written reporting is required;
- who may collect the child from Pre-School;



## Ladybird Forest Pre-School



- what contact the child has with his/her birth parent(s) and what arrangements will be in place for supervised contact. If this is to be in the setting, when, where and what form the contact will take will be discussed and agreed;
- with the social worker's agreement, and as part of the plan, whether the birth parent(s) should be involved in the setting's activities that include parents, such as outings, fun days etc. alongside the foster carer, and;
- with the involvement of the birth parent(s) where possible, the plan (if one exists) for the child to return to their home.

Where applicable, we will complete a Personal Education Plan (PEP) for any children aged three to five in partnership with the social worker and/or care manager and carers. We will also attend all appropriate meetings and contribute to reviews.

### ***Private Fostering***

Private fostering is an arrangement made between the parent and the private foster carer, who then becomes responsible for caring for the child in such a way as to safeguard and promote their welfare.

A privately fostered child is a child under the age of 16 (18 if a disabled child) who is cared for and provided with accommodation etc. for more than 28 days and where the care is intended to continue by someone other than:

- The parents
- A person who is not a parent but has parental responsibility
- A close relative
- The Local Authority.

It is a statutory duty for us to inform the local authority where we are made aware of a child who may be subject to private fostering arrangements. We will do this by contacting



the local authority Children's Social Care Team. Records of contact made with the Local Authority will be kept on the child's Pre-school file.

## **Training**

We are aware that there are several reasons why a child may go into care and these reasons may or may not include traumatic experiences or abuse. All our practitioners are committed to doing all they can to support all children to achieve their full potential. The nursery staff team are all trained to understand our safeguarding policy and procedures. Additional training to support children's individual needs will be planned for where appropriate. Practitioners are always supported by management and we have an open-door policy if they need to discuss any sensitive issues regarding the child.

The Pre-School Manager and the LAC Co-ordinator will be responsible for ensuring that all members of staff are briefed on the regulations and practice outlined in the guidance from the Department of Further Education and Skills (DfES) and Department of Health (DoH).

The Pre-School Manager will ensure that the LAC Co-ordinator attends the relevant training relating to 'looked after children'.

## **Legal framework:**

This policy is underpinned by or supported through:

- Childcare Act 2006
- Children Act (1989 and 2004)
- Adoption and Children Act (2002)
- Children and Young Persons Act (2008)
- Children and Families Act (2014).
- Children and Social Work Act (2017).

## **Further guidance:**



# Ladybird Forest Pre-School



- Guidance on the Education of Children and Young People in Public Care (DfEE 2000)
- Who Does What: How Social Workers and Carers can Support the Education of Looked After Children (DfES 2005)
- Supporting Looked After Learners - A Practical Guide for School Governors (DfES 2006)

## Relevant Ladybird policies:

- 1.2 Safeguarding Children and Child Protection
- 1.5 Drop Off and Collection
- 10.6 Data Protection and Confidentiality

## Key contact details:

Organisation	Contact Number
Local authority - Central Bedfordshire Children's Services	0300 300 8585
Local authority - Central Bedfordshire Children's Social Care Team	0300 300 4833

<b>This policy was reviewed by</b>	Amanda Sanders - Pre-School Manager Victoria Grimes - Admin Manager Rebecca McGough - Chair
<b>Date of review</b>	13 <sup>th</sup> January 2024
<b>Date for next review</b>	13 <sup>th</sup> January 2025



# Ladybird Forest Pre-School



**Chair's signature**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. McHenry", written in a cursive style.