



## STARLINGS PRESCHOOL

### Safeguarding Children - 1.6 Looked after children

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#### Policy statement

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

Definition of ‘Looked after Children’ (LAC): *Children and young people become ‘looked after’ if they have either been taken into care by the local authority or have been accommodated by the local authority (a voluntary care arrangement). Most LAC will be living in foster homes, but a smaller number may be in a children’s home, living with a relative or even placed back home with their natural parent(s).*

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 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.

In Starlings Preschool, we place emphasis on promoting *children’s rights to be strong, resilient, and listened to*. Our policy and practice guidelines for looked after children are based on these 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.

### **Principles**

The term 'looked after child' denotes a child's current legal status; this 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.

### **Procedures**

We offer places for two, three and four-year-olds who are in care to ensure they receive their entitlement to early education. We expect that a child will have been with a foster carer for a minimum of one month and has formed a secure attachment to the carer. We expect that the placement in the setting will last a minimum of six weeks.

We will always offer 'stay and play' provision for a child who is two to five years old who is still settling with their foster carer, or who is only temporarily being looked after.

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.

The designated person for looked after children is the DSL (designated safeguarding lead.)

Every child is allocated a key person before they start, and this is no different for a looked after child. The designated person ensures the key person has the information, support and training necessary to meet the looked after child's needs.

The designated person and the key person liaise with agencies, professionals and practitioners involved with the child and his or her family and ensures appropriate information is gained and shared.

### **The role of the Local Authority and PEP's**

The setting 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 regards 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.

Local authorities have a duty to promote the educational achievement of looked-after children under section 52 of the Children Act 2004. They must ensure all looked-after children from age three have an effective, robust and up-to-date Personal Education Plan (PEP). This is the education part of a looked-after child's care plan.

A Personal Education Plan (PEP) is a statutory active document for a looked-after child. It forms the education part of the child's Care Plan.



The PEP sets out the child's:

- identified needs
- school history
- targets for educational progress, attainment and achievement, and the support in place to secure these targets
- views about their own education and aspirations for the future (discussed in partnership with social workers, parents and carers)

Each looked-after child should feel that the PEP is relevant to their needs and other aspects of their lives. It is important to listen to and involve the child in a positive, supportive way during the PEP process. The designated teacher should ensure that the PEP is an effective tool to help the school support the child's educational progress.

At the start of a placement there is a professionals meeting that will determine the objectives of the placement and draw up a care plan that incorporates and the child's learning needs (PEP). This plan is reviewed regularly.

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, 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 will also consider how information will be shared with the foster carer and local authority (as the 'corporate parent') as well as what information is shared with whom and how it will be recorded and stored, what contact the child has with his/her birth parent(s) and what arrangements will be in place for supervised contact.



### **Transition to school**

Transition to school will be carefully considered and managed with full exchange of information.

### **Virtual School Hampshire (VSH)**

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/virtual-school>

### **Legal Framework**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-act-1989-care-planning-placement-and-case-review>

The Children Act 1989, as amended by the Children and Families Act 2014 and the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

### **Further guidance**

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/683556/Promoting\\_the\\_education\\_of\\_looked-after\\_children\\_and\\_previously\\_looked-after\\_children.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/683556/Promoting_the_education_of_looked-after_children_and_previously_looked-after_children.pdf)

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/virtual-school/personal-education-plan>

**This policy was adopted by Starlings Preschool**

**On 6<sup>th</sup> September 2021**

**Date to be reviewed**

**Signed on behalf of the management committee**

**Name of signatory Tricia Hunt**

**Role of signatory Chairperson**