

## LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN POLICY

### POLICY STATEMENT

At St Eval Pre-school we are 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 Children in Care to achieve and reach their full potential.

We recognise that children who are in care have often experienced traumatic situations; physical, emotional or sexual abuse or neglect. However, we also recognise that not all children in care 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.

### Procedures

At St Eval Pre-school, we place emphasis on promoting children's right to be strong, resilient and listened to. Our policy and practice guidelines for children in care 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.

- The term 'Children in Care' denotes a child's current legal status; this term is never used to categorise a child as standing out from others
- We do not offer placements for babies and children under two years who are in care
- We offer places to two year olds who are in care - in such cases, the child should have been with the foster carer for at least two months and show signs of having formed a secure attachment to the carer and where the placement in the setting will last a minimum of three months
- We offer places for funded three and four year olds who are in care to ensure they receive their entitlement to early education
- Where a child who normally attends our setting is taken into care and is cared for by a foster carer, we will continue to offer the placement for the child
- Every child is allocated a key person before they start at pre-school and this is no different for children under local authority care. The DSL ensures the key person has the information, support and training necessary to meet the individual child's needs.

Designated Person for 'Children in Care' is: [Rachael Richards](#)

Designated Safeguarding Lead is (DSL): [Hannah Burchell](#)

The designated person and the key person liaise with agencies, professionals and practitioners involved with the child and his or her family; and ensure appropriate information is gained and shared. 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. At the start of a placement there is a

professionals meeting that will determine the objective of the placement and draw up 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.

The care plan considers such issues for the child as:

- The child's emotional needs & 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
- The child's need for sociability and friendship
- The child's interests & abilities
- How any special needs will be supported
- 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. 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
- Wherever possible and where the plan is for the child's return home, the birth parent(s) should be involved in planning
- With the social worker's agreement, and as part of the plan, the birth parent(s) should be involved in the setting's activities that include parents, such as outings, fun-days etc. alongside the carer

## Settling in Process

This should be agreed with the setting & carers. It should be the same as for any other child, with the foster carer taking the place of the parent, unless otherwise agreed. It is even more important that the 'proximity' stage is followed until it is visible that the child has formed a relationship with his or her key person sufficiently to act as a 'secure base' to allow the gradual separation from the foster carer. This process may take longer in some cases, so time needs to be allowed for it to take place without causing further distress or anxiety to the child. 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.

## Concerns

Concerns about the child will be noted in the child's file and discussed with the foster carer. If the concerns are about the foster carer's treatment of the child, or if abuse is suspected, these are recorded in the child's file and reported to the child's social worker according to the setting's safeguarding children procedure. Regular contact should be maintained with the social worker through planned meetings that will include the foster carer.

## Transition to School or Another Setting

Transition to school or another setting will be handled sensitively, and the designated person and/or the child's key person will liaise with the school / setting, passing on relevant information and documentation, according to the legalities.

