

Meynell Kindergarten
P38
Children in care

Policy statement

Meynell Kindergarten 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 'Children in care (CIC): 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 CIC 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 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 our setting, 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 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 or learning. For young children to get the most out of educational opportunities they need to be settled enough with their carers to be able to cope with further separation, a new environment and new expectations made upon them.

Principles:

- 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 refer to such a child using acronyms such as CIC.
- We will always offer stay and play provision for a child 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.

Procedure:

- The designated person for looked after children is the designated safeguarding lead.
- Every child is allocated a key person before they start and this 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 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. Nothing changes, especially with regard to the birth parents or foster carer role in relation to the setting without prior discussion and agreement with the child's social worker. Taking into account delegated responsibility.
- At the start of a placement there is a professional meeting that will determine the objectives of the placement and draw up a care plan that incorporates the child's learning needs. Times will be set when they will be reviewed (PEP).
- Virtual school and PEP reviews 3 per year, adapted as needed and who will be invited/relevant parties.
- Agreed medium for information sharing with carers and behavioural tracking surrounding contact, court dates etc. previously looked after children including those adopted.
- Transparent use of funding pupil premium (PP).
- Educational Health Care Plan

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 self, culture, language/s and identity - how this is supported.
- The child's needs for sociability and friendship.
- The child's interests and abilities and possible learning journey pathway.
- 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 person) 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 family 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 workers 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 alongside the foster carer.
- The settling in process for the child is agreed. 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 sufficient 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 wellbeing 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 tracked to form a picture of the whole child in relation to the EYFS in all areas of learning.
- 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 record in the child's file and reported to the child's social care worker according to the settings safeguarding children procedure.
- Regular contact should be maintained with the social worker through the planned meetings that will include the foster carer.
- Transition to school will be handled sensitively and the designated person and or the child's key person will liaise with school, passing on relevant information and documentation with the agreement of the looked after child's birth parent.

Meynell Kindergarten has adopted this policy:

SignedChair Person

SignedManager

Date Review Date