

Little Bears Pre-school

Children in Care Policy

Statement and Aim

At our Preschool we believe that all Children in Care should have equal access to excellent educational provision and achieve at a similar level to all Devon children. We as a preschool aim to work closely with our Local Authority, Devon County Council, for Children in Care and take a proactive approach to support their success, recognising that we have a vital role to play in promoting children and young people's social and emotional development.

To do this we commit to:

- Raising their aspirations;
- Giving them a sense of the control they have over their own lives;
- Fostering positive attitudes and behaviours;
- Providing continuity and 'normality' for those who may have been subject to emotional distress, abuse and disruption.

Definition

Who are our Children in Care?

Most Children in Care will be living in foster homes but a smaller number may be in a children's home, living with a relative or even be placed back at home with their parent(s) sharing parental responsibility with the Local Authority.

Under the Children Act 1989, a child is in the care of the Local Authority if he or she is provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by the Authority. This includes the following:

- (a) Children who are accommodated by the local authority under a voluntary agreement with their parents;
- (b) Children who are the subject of a care order or interim care order;
- (c) Children who are the subject of emergency orders for the protection of the child.

Objectives

We aim to ensure that those key qualities found by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) (2009 i & iii) and Ofsted (2008 iii) to be features of best practice in supporting children in care, are embedded in our practice.

In Supporting Children in Care we will:

- Create an ethos in which all staff understand their role and accept their responsibility as a Corporate Parent;
- Provide a safe and secure environment, which values education and believes in the abilities and potential of all children;
- Bring the attainments of our Children in Care in line with those of their peers;
- Make sure that they have access to education appropriate to their age and ability. This includes access to a broad and balanced curriculum;
- Balance high levels of support with challenge and high expectations;
- Plan for future transitions effectively;
- Have a Designated Practitioner (DP) for Children in Care who will act as their advocate and coordinate support for them, liaising with carers, parents (as appropriate) and social workers on a wide variety of educational and care issues;
- To support the Every Child Matters five outcomes.

All staff are committed to ensuring improved educational life chances for Children in Care by ensuring that the relevant personnel have reasonable support and time to complete tasks and responsibilities. Also, to

establishing and maintaining appropriate reporting and monitoring procedures both within the preschool and with other agencies.

In addition we will:

- Closely monitor the academic, social and personal progress of all children in Care;
- Work alongside social workers and other professionals to ensure that each child in care has a current good quality Personal Education Plan (PEP) in place which includes challenging, curriculum-based targets and is an effective tool which supports the children's educational progress;
- Challenge negative stereotypes amongst students and staff;
- Ensure discretion when addressing a child's care status and the background and family history of children who are in care, especially surrounding teaching and learning relating to the family;
- Ensure a clear protocol is followed in the sharing of information, both within preschool and with outside agencies.

In pursuit of this Policy we will:

- Nominate a Designated Practitioner for Children in Care who will act as their advocate and coordinate support for them;
- Nominate a member of the Committee to ensure that the needs of Children in Care in the preschool are taken into account at a preschool management level and to support the Designated Practitioner;
- Support the Designated Practitioner in carrying out their role by making time available and ensuring that they attend training on Children in Care.

New Roles & Responsibilities

Designated Practitioner for Children in Care: Mrs Jane Elston

The role of the Designated Practitioner is to:

- Promote the educational achievement of every Child in Care on the preschool's register;
- Monitor the standards and achievement of Children in Care
- Promote a culture where the personalised learning needs of every Child in Care matters and their social, emotional and academic needs are prioritised;
- Facilitate the training of preschool staff in developing their understanding of the factors which can affect how Children in Care learn and develop;
- Contribute to the development and review of whole setting policies to ensure that they do not unintentionally put Children in Care at a disadvantage;
- Promote a culture in which Children in Care believe they can succeed;
- Be a source of advice for the other staff about differentiated teaching strategies appropriate for individual children who are in Care;
- Promote good home-setting links through contact with Carers and effective communication;
- Set up systems to monitor and record the progress of all Children in Care;
- Work with curriculum-base leaders to monitor the educational progress of Children in Care and intervene, drawing upon external agency support if required, if there is evidence of underachievement or other similar concerns;
- Maintain records regarding all Children in Care, including legal status and information regarding who should be contacted regarding matters concerning the child;
- Establish a system for contacting and forwarding educational records to new preschools or schools to facilitate an effective, smooth and speedy transfer;
- Have an overview and coordinating role for gathering and holding all information regarding Children in Care;
- Maintain and respect confidentiality of all Children in Care and ensure that information is shared on a strictly need to know basis;
- Play an active role in care planning by ensuring that the attendance of the most appropriate member of staff and/or written reports are provided to statutory reviews of Children in Care as required;
- Serve as a named contact for colleagues in Social Care and ensure effective communication between all relevant parties;
- Ensure that each child who is in care has a carefully selected Key Worker.

The role of the Preschool Manager:

- Ensure that, the Designated Practitioner has the opportunity to acquire and keep up to date the necessary skills, knowledge and training to understand and respond to the specific learning needs of Children in Care;
- Ensure that the Designated Practitioner role contributes to the deeper understanding of everyone in the setting who is likely to be involved in supporting Children in Care to achieve;
- Oversee the development of the policy on Children in Care;
- Allocate Children in Care a Key Worker;
- Evaluate the standards and achievement of Children in Care and report these termly to the Committee and discuss them, at Senior Leadership/Staff meetings.

Committee

The name of the Designated Committee Member for Children in Care is:

What every Designated Member of the Committee for CIC needs to know:

- Number of CIC on our register;
- Number of CIC with up to date PEPs
- Overall attainment of CIC in the setting / performance compared to peers;
- Number of CIC with SEN and statements;
- Authorised and unauthorised absence levels of CIC;
- Number of CIC who have been excluded in previous 12 months; · How the Local Authority supports educational achievement of CIC.

The Committee will:

- Ensure the Designated Practitioner has opportunity to attend training and that preschool staff and members of the committee are aware of the DCSF Statutory Guidance;
- Have knowledge of the Duty on Local Authorities to Promote the Educational Achievement of Children in Care, under Section 52 of the Children's Act 2004;
- Appoint a member of the Committee with specific responsibility for Children in Care;
- Take a proactive approach in cooperating with, and supporting, the relevant Local Authority with regard to the education of Children in Care attending the preschool;
- Ensure that Designated Practitioners and staff are aware of and enabled to carry out their responsibilities effectively with the full support of the Committee;
- Ensure that there are arrangements in place to keep themselves informed about provision for, and attainment of, Children in Care.

The role of all those involved in supporting Children in Care:

- Ensure that all Children in Care are treated inclusively;
- Have high expectations of Children in Care's involvement in learning and educational progress;
- Be aware of the emotional, psychological and social effects of loss and separation from birth families;
- Understand the reasons which may affect the behaviour of Children in Care and why they may need more support than other children/be positively discriminated for;
- Understand how important it is to see Children in Care as individuals and not to publicly treat them differently from their peers;
- Appreciate the central importance of showing sensitivity about who else knows about a Child's in Care status;
- Understand what a PEP is and its importance in helping to create a shared understanding between practitioners, carers, Social Workers and, depending on age and understanding, the child him/herself of what everyone needs to do to help them achieve their potential.

Special Educational Needs (see our Inclusion Policy):

- Any special educational needs will be quickly identified and appropriate provision will be made;
- We will have systems in place so that we can identify and prioritise when Children in Care are underachieving and have early interventions to improve this;
- If the child has a statement of special educational need, we will ensure the annual review coincides with one of the six monthly care planning reviews; dates can be obtained from the social worker.

Admissions and transitions:

We will:

- Prioritise Children in Care within our own admissions procedures and admit children as quickly as possible recognising the importance of establishing or indeed re-establishing stability for Children in Care;
- Ensure that all Children in Care meet the Designated Practitioner who will identify any relevant issues, academic or pastoral and seek agreement of the child as to who in the setting should be notified of the child's status;
- Ensure a warm welcome to our setting by providing appropriate induction for all Children in Care so that there is a smooth and successful transition which includes carers and parents where appropriate.
 - Make sure that on admission or transfer all relevant information records are obtained at the outset.
- Forward appropriate documents, in a timely fashion, to any receiving preschool or school at the point of transition where the receiving setting is made known.

Attendance: (see our Attendance Policy)

We will:

- Inform the Carer / Education Welfare service / Social Worker / Parents (if appropriate) if there are any concerns about attendance;
- We will acknowledge attendance in any education meetings, celebrating success and setting realistic targets if it is a concern.
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Multi-agency liaison:

- The DP will liaise closely with carers, parents (if appropriate) and the child's social worker on a variety of issues, and it is important that positive messages about behaviour and achievement are shared;
- There will be a well-planned and co-ordinated approach to meeting the child's educational and social needs;
- There will be a clear understanding about the role and responsibility of staff in relation to the child and the roles and responsibilities of the other professionals involved;
- Our staff will share positive perceptions and high expectations of the child with other professionals but especially with the child;
- We will be aware of and sensitive to the appropriate role of the parents;
- Our DP will ensure that requests from the LA for information held by the preschool are completed and returned on time to comply with statutory obligations;
- We will encourage each of our Children in Care to access out of hours learning activities realising the positive impact this could have on their self-esteem and learning.

Personal Education Plans (PEPs):

We will:

- Hold a PEP meeting in time for every statutory care review that involves the social worker, foster carers, child and parent if appropriate.

- Have a PEP for each child which includes appropriate targets. This will be compatible with the timing of the child's Care Plan. Other preschool plans eg. Statement, Transition Plan, will feed into and form a part of the PEP;
- Contribute to the process whereby all Children in Care have a high quality Personal Educational Plan (PEP) in place within 20 days of starting the preschool.
- Make certain that following the writing of a PEP, any educational recommendations in that PEP will be adhered to by our staff in order that all our Children in Care have the opportunity to fulfil and achieve the targets set;

Educational Visits and Outings

We aim to ensure that Children in Care enjoy as many opportunities as possible. The responsibility for giving permission for educational visits, outing and enrichment opportunities is that of the Social Worker, sometimes delegated to Foster Carers. The person who may give permission will be clarified at the first PEP meeting.

Complaints

If a young person, parent or Social Worker wishes to complain about the provision or policy, they should, in the first instance, raise it with the Designated Practitioner, who will try to resolve the situation alongside the carer and Social Worker.

Legal Framework

- *DfES, Guidance on the Education of Young People in Public Care (DH/DfES, 2000)* ○ *Children Act 1989, Children Act 2004*
- *DfES, Every Child Matters: Change for Children, (2004)*
- *DfES, Every Child Matters: Change for Children in Social Care, (2004)*
- *DfES, Statutory Guidance on the Duty of Local Authorities to Promote the Educational Achievements of Looked After Children under Section 52 of the Children Act 2004, (2005)*
- *Ofsted, Raising Achievement of Children in Public Care, (2005)*
- *Social Exclusion Report, A Better Education for Children in Care: Full Report, (2003)* ○ *DfES, Care Matters: Time For Change, (2007)*
- *DCSF, The Children's Plan: building brighter futures, (2007)*
- *DCSF, the Role and Responsibilities of the Designated Teacher for Looked After Children: Statutory Guidance for School Governing Bodies, (2009)* ○ *Ofsted, Children's Messages to the Minister, (2009)*

Related Policies

- Behaviour Management Statement
- Safeguarding Policy ○ Attendance Policy
- Admissions Policy

For further information on Children in Care Education Support Service go to:

www.devon.gov.uk/index/childrenfamilies/childrenincare/childrenincareeducation.htm

Approved.....: **(CIO Chair's signature)**

Adopted on

