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www.pelican-childcare.co.uk

Looked after children

Policy Statement

Pelican Children's Centre 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 our care to achieve and reach their potential.

Definition of looked after children(DAC), Children and young people become looked after if they have either been taken into care by the local authority, or have be 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).

Pelican children's centre recognises that children who are being looked after have often experienced traumatic situations physical, emotional or sexual abuse or neglect. We also recognise that not all children experienced abuse and 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.

On our setting we promote children's right to be strong, resilient and listened to. Our policy and practice guidance for looked after children are based on these two important concepts, attachment and resilience. The basis is to promote secure attachments in children's lives as the basis resilience. These aspects of well-being underpin the child's responsiveness to learning and are the basis in developing positive disposition's 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, new environment and new expectations made upon them.

Principles

- The term looked after child denoted 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.
- We offer places for babies and children 3 months – 5 years. We offer a service that children with exceptional circumstances, we offer opportunities to enable a child to play and engage with other children.
- We offer places to children who are entitled to funding including "Me2, 3&4 Government funding, which offers access to Early Years Education.
- We will always offer stay and play sessions for children 3 months to 5 years who is still settling with their foster carer, or who is only temporarily being looked after.
- Where a child normally attends our setting, is taken into care and is cared for by the local Authority we will continue to offer the place for the child.

Procedures

- The designated person for looked after children is the designated person for child protection.
- 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.
- Pelican Children's Centre recognises there 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 carers roles in relation to the settling without prior discussion and agreement with the child's social worker.
- At the start of the placement there is a professional meeting that will determine the objectives of the placement and draw up a care plan that incorporates and the child's learning needs. This plan is reviewed after two weeks, six weeks and three months. Thereafter three to six monthly intervals.
- The care plan needs to consider such issues for the child as,

- The child's emotional needs and how they are being met.

How any emotional issues and problems that affect behaviour are to be managed.

The child's culture, language are identified and how this is to be supported.

The child's need for sociability and friendship.

The child's interests and abilities and possible learning journey pathways, and any additional needs and how this will be supported.

- In addition the care plan will also consider;

How information will be shared with the foster carer and the 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 parent(s) and what arrangements will be in place for supervised contact.

What written reporting is required.

Whenever possible, and where the plan is for the child's return home, the birth parents should be involved in planning and with the social worker's agreement, and as part of the plan, the birth parent(s) should be involved in the settings activities that include, parents, alongside the foster parents.

Pelican children's Centre in process for the child is agreed, it should be the same for any other child, with foster carer taking the place of the parents 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 gradual separation from the foster carer. This process may take longer in some cases, a 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.
- Further observation about communication, interests and abilities will be noted to form a picture of the whole child in relation to the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Concerns about the child will be noted in the file on a daily diary sheet and will be 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 safeguarding file and reported to the social worker according to the centres safeguarding procedure.
- Regular contact must be maintained with the social worker through 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 the school, passing on relevant information and documentation.

Further Guidance

- Guidance on the Education of Children and Young People in Public Care (DFEE2000)
- 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 Schools Governors(DFES 2006)

This policy was adopted at a meeting of The Board of Trustees at Pelican Children's Centre

Held
on.....

Date to be
reviewed.....

Signed on behalf of the board of
trustees.....

Name of
signatory.....

Role within the
centre.....