

Safeguarding children

1.3 Children in Care (looked after children)

Procedure statement for St Joseph's Pre-school

St Joseph's Pre-school 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 Children in Care to achieve and reach their full potential.

Definition: A child who has been in care of their local authority for a continuous period of more than 24 hours, in circumstances set out in sections 20 and 21 of the Children Act 1989, or is placed in the care of a local authority by the virtue of an order made under part IV of the Act, is known as a looked after child. Looked after children are also often referred to as children in care, a term which many children and young people prefer¹.

We recognise that children 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 in to 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 our setting, we place emphasis on promoting *children's right to be strong, resilient and listened to*². 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.

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 LAC.
- We do not offer placements for babies and children under two years who are in care; instead we will offer other services, if possible, to enable a child to play and engage with other children where their carer stays with the child.
- We offer places to two-year-old children. For those children who are in care, we ask that 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 two year olds. They may receive funding because their parent/carer is/are entitled to certain benefits or because one or more of the following apply:

¹ Taken from the Children Act 1989 and courtesy of www.nspcc.org.uk

² See Policy 1.1 Children's rights and entitlements

- they are looked after by a local council;
- they have a current statement of special education needs (SEN) or an education, health and care (EHC) plan;
- they get Disability Living Allowance; or
- they have left care under a special guardianship order, child arrangements order or adoption order (known as “previously children in care”).

To check eligibility visit www.glosfamiliesdirectory.org.uk

- We offer places for funded 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.
- Adopted 3 and 4 year olds are entitled to Early Years Pupil Premium to help them reach their potential. A copy of the child’s adoption certificate should be submitted by the adoptive parents to the Local Authority in order for the setting to receive the additional hourly rate on top of the free early education that the child receives³.
- 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.

Procedures

- The designated person for the child is the designated child protection co-ordinator. This is Natalie Finn-Powers and/or Marie Knight.
- Every child is allocated a key person before they start and this is no different for a child in care. 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 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 parent’s or foster carer’s role in relation to the setting without prior discussion and agreement with the child’s social worker.
- 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 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 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. If this is to be the setting, then the what form the

³ See DfE guidance: [Pupil Premium: Overview](#)

contact will take will be need to be discussed and agreed prior to the contact taking place;

- 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; and
 - 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 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 well-being 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 noted to firm a picture of the whole child in relation to the Early Years Foundation Stage 6 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 recorded in the child's file and reported to the child's social care 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 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 with the agreement of the child in care's birth parents.

Further Guidance

- Gloucestershire Local Provider Agreement "Early Years Funded Entitlements for 2, 3 & 4 year-olds"
- DfE Guidance: Pupil Premium : Overview (latest version)
- Children's Social Care National Framework (2023)⁴
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (latest version)

Associated policies and procedures

- 1.1 Children's rights and entitlements
- 1.2 Safeguarding children and child protection
- 1.5 Information sharing

Version Number	Author	Purpose of Change	Date
1.0	K Coupe	Reviewed and page numbered	Sept 2014
2.0	L Hampshire	Reviewed	Sept 2016
3.0	K Coupe & H Elliot	Reviewed and version controlled	01 May 2019

⁴ statutory guidance that sets out the purpose of children's social care as existing to support children and families, to protect children by intervening decisively when they are at risk of harm and to provide care for those who need it, so they grow up and thrive with safety, stability, and love

Version Number	Author	Purpose of Change	Date
			Committee Meeting
4.0	K Coupe & N Powers	Reviewed and updated re • April 2022 hourly rate for EYPP • inclusion of “Further Guidance” section • inclusion of “Associated policies and procedures” section as per EY Glos Safeguarding Audit (section 175/157)	03 May 2022 Committee Member (M Montgomery)
5.0	K Coupe	Reviewed and updated with Lead Practitioner’s married surname. Plus inclusion of hyperlink to DfE guidance on Pupil Premium	5 Dec 2023 Committee Member (S Webb)
6.0	K Coupe	Updated in line with “Working Together to Safeguard Children” 2023	15 Dec 2023 Committee Member (S Webb)
7.0	K Coupe	Amended to confirm that Marie Knight is a designated child protection co-ordinator	16 May 2024 Committee Member (G Ind)