

LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN POLICY

HETTY is committed to providing quality based on equality of opportunity for all children and their families. All staff in our provision are committed to doing all they can to enable 'Looked after' children in their care to achieve and reach their full potential.

Children become 'looked after' if they have either been taken into care by local authority or, or have been accommodated by local authority (a voluntary care arrangement). Most looked after children will be living in foster homes, but smaller number may be in children's home, living with a relative or even placed back home with their natural parents.

HETTY recognise that children who are being looked after often experience traumatic situations; physical emotional or sexual abuse or neglect. However, we also recognise that not all looked after children have experience 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 an impact on their emotional well-being.

HETTY 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 two important concepts, attachment and resilience. The basis of this is to promote secure attachments in children's lives, as the foundation for resilience. These aspects of well-being underpin the child's responsiveness to learning and enable the development of positive dispositions for leaning. For young children to get the most out of education 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 'Looked after child' denotes a child's current legal status; this term is never used to categorise a child as standing out from other children.
- We do not normally offer placements for babies and children under two years who are in care; we offer instead other services to enable a child to play and engage with other children while their carer stays with them.
- In exceptional circumstances, we offer places to two -year-old children 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 carer, and the placement in the setting will last a minimum of three months.

- We offer places for funded two, 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 that they will have formed a secure attachment to the carer. We expect that the placement in the setting will last a minimum of six weeks
- We will offer ‘stay and play’ sessions 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 foster carer we will continue to offer the placement for the child.

Procedures

- The designated person for looked after children is the safeguarding lead
- 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 and his or her family and ensure that appropriate information is gained and shared.
- The setting recognises the role of local authority children’s social care department as the child’s corporate and the key agency in determining what takes place with the child .Nothing changes, especially with regard to the birth parents or foster carers 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 to determine the objectives of the placements and draw up a care plan 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 needs to consider issues for child such as;
 - Their emotional needs and how they are to be met;
 - How any emotional issues and problems that affect behaviour are to be managed?

- Their sense of self, culture, language and identity-and how this is to be supported;
- Their need for sociability and friendship;
- -Their interests and abilities and possible learning journey and how any special needs will be supported.
- In addition the care plan will also consider:
 - How information will be shared with foster carer and local authority as 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 parents when appropriate, what will be in place for supervised contact. If this is to be at the setting, when, where and what form the contact will take will be discussed and agreed;
 - What written reporting is required?

The settling in process for the child is agreed and should be the same as for any other child. In the first two weeks after settling in the child's well-being is the focus and key worker will observe and start to build a picture of the whole child in relation to the Early Years Foundation Stage prime and specific areas of learning and development. Any concerns about the child's progress or well-being will be discussed with foster carer, however if concerns are raised about the foster carer this would be shared with social care and the safeguarding procedure would be used. Regular contact should be maintained with social worker through planned meetings.

FURTHER GUIDANCE

The child Act 1989

The child care act 2006

Support the Education of looked After Children 2005

Every child matters 2003

**This policy was adopted at a meeting of HETTY preschool
Staff & Trustees**