

Magdalen Gates Preschool

Looked After Children Policy



Magdalen Gates
Preschool

At Magdalen Gates Preschool all staff are committed to enabling 'looked after' children in their care to achieve and reach their full potential.

'Looked after' children have either been taken into care by the Local Authority or accommodated by the Local Authority under a voluntary care arrangement – most with foster carers.

Looked after children have often experienced traumatic situations: physical, sexual or emotional abuse or neglect. Some, however, have not, and children may be looked after for a number of reasons.

Whatever the reason, separation from home and family will have an impact on their emotional well-being.

We aim to help looked after children to get the most out of their time at Preschool, providing them with secure attachments and help to settle in.

We never refer to a child as 'looked after'.

We offer places, if available, to looked after children from 2 ½ years of age – we expect that the child will have been with a foster carer for at least 2 months and have formed secure attachments to the carer. Funded places will be offered to looked after children aged 3-4 years, if available. We would hope to be able to offer emergency places to looked after children, however this is only possible if places are available. We expect 3-4 year old looked after children to have been with a foster carer for at least 1 month and to have formed a secure attachment to the carer. Carers are welcome to 'stay and play' to help these children to settle in.

If a child who normally attends our Preschool is taken into care with a local foster carer we continue to offer the place to the child.

Procedures for Looked After Children

1. The designated person is the designated Safeguarding Officer – see our Safeguarding policy
2. Every child has a key person – the designated person ensures the key person has the information, support and training necessary to meet the needs of the looked after child.

3. The designated person and key person liaise with other professionals and ensure appropriate information is gained and shared.
4. At the start of the child's time at Preschool, professionals meet to draw up a care plan which will be regularly reviewed.
5. The care plan will consider:
 - The child's emotional needs & how they are to be met
 - How to manage issues that affect behaviour
 - How the child's sense of self, culture, language & identity are to be supported
 - The child's need for sociability & friendship
 - The child's interests and abilities
 - How any special needs will be supported
 - How information will be shared with the foster carer & local authority, what information will be shared & how it will be recorded & stored
 - Contact arrangements with birth parents if this involves the setting
6. The settling-in process for the looked after child should be as for any child. We understand that this may take longer than for other children.
7. Observations concentrate, at first, on the child's well-being, including sociability and emotional needs. Then observations concentrate on communication, interests and abilities in order to plan next steps in learning and development.
8. Concerns are discussed with the foster carer.
9. Concerns about the foster carer are reported to the child's social worker, following our safeguarding policy and procedures.
10. Transitions to school or other settings are handled sensitively with the designated person or key person liaising with the school in terms of passing on relevant information.
11. A Personal Education Plan (PEP) is completed as necessary. Relevant staff have attended training in PEPs.

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