



## Micheldever & Stratton Preschool Looked After Children Policy (Revised 4<sup>th</sup> January 2021)

*Working in conjunction with the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework (EYFS).*

Quality and Consistency.

A Secure Foundation.

Partnership Working.

Equality of Opportunity.

**Unique Child   Positive Partnerships   Enabling Environment   Learning and Developing**

### 1. Introduction

Educational achievement and subsequent life chances for looked after children (LAC) and previously LAC are of real concern. Pupils who are looked after require special treatment and additional attention in order to improve their situation.

Micheldever & Stratton Preschool endeavours to provide positive experiences and offer stability, safety, and individual care and attention for all our children. With this in mind, we aim to:

- Encourage children to reach their potential and to make good progress in relation to their professional, social and emotional development.
- Ensure that children enjoy high quality teaching and a curriculum which meets their needs and the requirements of legislation.
- Plan support for looked after children realistically and use the preschool's resources efficiently to ensure the preschool meets their needs.
- Promote a positive culture in all aspects of preschool life.
- Help children develop their cultural, moral and social understanding.

#### 1.1 *Legal framework*

*1.2. This policy has due regard to legislation and statutory guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:*

- Children Act 1989
- The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010
- Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
- Children and Young Persons Act 2008
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Children and Social Work Act 2017

- DfE (2018) 'Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children'
- DfE (2020) 'Keeping children safe in education'
- DfE (2018) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'

## 2. Definitions

### *2.1. "Looked after children (LAC)" are defined as:*

- Children or young people who are the subject of a Care Order or Interim Care Order under the Children Act 1989.
- Children who are placed in foster care, children's residential homes, with relatives or friends, in semi-independent or supported independent accommodation.
- Children subject to a Care or Interim Care Order whilst placed with a parent, where the LA has parental responsibility.
- Children who are not subject to an order, but are accommodated by the LA under an agreement with their parents.

### *2.2. "Previously-LAC" are defined as:*

- Children who are no longer looked after by an LA in England and Wales because they have either been adopted or are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order.
- Children who were adopted outside England and Wales from 'state care' (care that is provided by a public authority, religious organisation, or other organisation whose main purpose is to benefit society).

## 3. Roles and responsibilities

### *3.1. The committee are responsible for:*

- Ensuring the preschool has a coherent policy for LAC and previously-LAC.
- Reviewing the preschools' policies and procedures in conjunction with legislation and statutory guidance.
- Ensuring the designated staff for LAC and previously-LAC have received the appropriate training.
- Ensuring that appropriate staff have the information they need in relation to each looked after child's:
  - Legal status (i.e. whether they are looked after under voluntary arrangements with consent of parents or on an interim or full care order) and contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility.
  - Care arrangements and the levels of authority delegated to the carer by the LA.

- Ensuring that staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep LAC and previously-LAC safe.
- Ensuring that there are clear systems and processes in place for identifying and reporting possible safeguarding or mental health concerns against LAC and previously-LAC.
- Ensuring LAC and previously-LAC have equal access to all areas of the curriculum and that reasonable adjustments are made, if necessary.
- Reviewing the annual report produced by the designated staff member to evaluate the progress of LAC in the preschool.
- Ensuring they receive feedback from the manager regarding the effectiveness of the policy on an annual basis.

### *3.2. Managers are responsible for:*

- Appointing the designated staff member for LAC and previously-LAC.
- Allowing the designated staff member the time and facilities to succeed in carrying out their duties.
- Overseeing this policy and monitoring its implementation, feeding back to the committee annually on the following:
  - The number of LAC and previously-LAC in the preschool
  - An analysis of assessment scores as a cohort, compared to other pupil groups
  - The attendance of LAC and previously-LAC, compared to other pupil groups
  - The level of fixed term and permanent exclusions, compared to other pupil groups
- Ensuring all members of staff are aware that supporting LAC is a key priority.
- Ensuring PP+ for previously-LAC is managed effectively.
- Promoting the advantages of actively challenging negative stereotypes of LAC.

### *3.3. The DSL for LAC and previously-LAC is responsible for:*

- Building relationships with health, education and social care partners and other partners so that they understand the support available to LAC and previously-LAC.
- Promoting the educational achievement of LAC and previously-LAC at the preschool; this includes those that left care through adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement orders or were adopted from state care outside England and Wales.
- Acting as the main contact for social services and the DfE.
- Promoting a culture of high expectations and aspirations.
- Ensuring LAC are involved in setting their own targets.

- Advising other staff on strategies for LAC.
- Ensuring that LAC are prioritised for one-to-one tuition and support.
- Leading on how the child's PEP is developed and used in preschool to ensure the child's progress towards targets is monitored.
- Liaising with the SENCO to ensure all pupil needs are met.
- Being vigilant in observing any potential safeguarding concerns that could arise surrounding LAC and previously-LAC due to their increased vulnerability to harm, and reporting these to the DSL as soon as they arise.
- Working with the child's keyworker and social worker to develop and implement their PEP.
- Working with the manager to submit an annual report to the committee, which details the progress of all LAC and previously-LAC.

#### *3.4. The DSL is responsible for:*

- Keeping up-to-date records of LAC's respective social worker and committee.
- Promoting amongst staff the importance of recognising and reporting safeguarding concerns surrounding LAC and previously-LAC as soon as possible due to their increased vulnerability to harm.
- Where a child ceases to be looked after and becomes a care leaver, keeping up-to-date contact details of their LA personal advisor and liaising with the advisor as necessary regarding any issues of concern affecting the care leaver.

#### *3.5. The SENCO is responsible for:*

- Ensuring they are involved in reviewing PEP and care plans for LAC and previously-LAC.
- Liaising with the DSL, keyworker, specialists and parents when considering interventions to support the progress of previously-LAC.

#### *3.6. Staff are responsible for:*

- Being aware of LAC and previously-LAC and providing them with support and encouragement.
- Preserving confidentiality, where appropriate, and showing sensitivity and understanding.
- Being vigilant for any signs of bullying towards LAC and previously-LAC.
- Being vigilant for any signs of safeguarding concerns surrounding LAC and previously-LAC due to their increased vulnerability to harm, and reporting any concerns to the DSL as soon as possible.
- Promoting the self-esteem of LAC and previously-LAC.

#### 4. Personal Education Plan (PEP)

*4.1. All LAC must have a care plan; PEPs are an integral part of this care plan.*

*4.2. The PEP is an evolving record of what needs to happen for a pupil to enable them to make the expected progress and fulfil their potential.*

*4.3. The PEP will reflect the importance of a personalised approach to learning which meets the identified educational needs of the child.*

*4.4. The preschool with other professionals and the child's carers will use the PEP to support the child's educational needs, raise the child's aspirations and improve their life chances.*

*4.5. All relevant bodies, such as the LA, the staff and carers, will involve the child in the PEP process at all stages.*

*4.6. The PEP will address the pupil's full range of education and development needs, including as appropriate:*

- Access to preschool provision that is appropriate to the child's age.
- On-going catch-up support, which will be made available for children who have fallen behind in their development.
- Transitional support where needed, such as if a child is moving to a new school.
- Preschool attendance and behaviour support, where appropriate.
- Support to help the child meet their aspirations, which includes:
  - Support to achieve expected levels of progress for the relevant EYFS and to complete an appropriate range of approved qualifications.

*4.7 The committee and the staff will ensure that information is included within a LAC or previously-LAC's PEP surrounding how they are benefitting from any use of PP+ funding to improve their attainment.*

*4.8 Any interventions supported by PP+ will be evidence-based and in the best interests of the child.*

#### 5. Working with agencies and the committee

*5.1. The preschool will ensure that copies of all relevant reports are forwarded to the LAC social workers, in addition to carers or residential social workers.*

*5.2. The preschool will coordinate their review meetings; for example, hold their annual review of LAC with their statutory care review.*

*5.3. The preschool will work with other agencies to exchange information, such as changes in circumstances, exclusions or attendance issues, taking prompt action, where necessary, to safeguard LAC and previously-LAC.*

*5.4. Behaviour management strategies will be agreed between the staff and the committee, to ensure challenging behaviour is managed in the most effective way for that individual child.*

*5.5. The DSL for LAC and previously-LAC will communicate with the committee and child's social worker to facilitate the completion of the PEP.*

*5.6. Through the keyworker, the preschool will work with the committee, social worker and other relevant agencies to monitor any arrangements in place so that actions and activities recorded in the child's PEP are implemented without delay.*

*5.7. The DSL will communicate with the committee and agree on how children premium plus (PP+) can be used effectively to accommodate the child's educational attainment and progress.*

*5.8. PP+ for previously-LAC will be allocated directly to, and managed by, the preschool.*

*5.9. The preschool will work with the committee to manage allocation of PP+ for the benefit of our cohort of LAC, or previously-LAC, and according to their needs.*

*5.10. If deemed necessary, the preschool will allocate an amount of funding to an individual to support their needs.*

*5.11. The DSL will ensure consistent and strong communication with the committee regarding LAC who are absent without authorisation.*

*5.12. The preschool will share their expertise on what works in supporting the education of LAC and previously-LAC.*

## 6. Training

*6.1. The DSL and other school staff involved in the education of LAC and previously-LAC will receive the appropriate training, this includes information about the following:*

- Preschool admissions arrangements
- SEND
- Attendance
- Managing and challenging behaviour
- Promoting positive educational and recreational activities
- Safeguarding.

## 7. Safeguarding

*7.1. The preschool recognises that many LAC or previously-LAC have experienced trauma, abuse or complex family circumstances that have led to them being placed in care, and will ensure that all staff are aware that experiences of adversity such as these can leave children vulnerable to further harm or exploitation.*

*7.2. All staff will be trained to recognise signs and indicators of safeguarding concerns and will ensure that extra vigilance is practiced in observing and identifying these indicators amongst LAC and previously-LAC as soon as possible.*

*7.3. Where a LAC or previously-LAC has a social worker, this will inform decisions about safeguarding, e.g. responding to unauthorised absence or missing education where there are known safeguarding risks.*

*7.4. Managers will implement appropriate pastoral support services in place throughout the preschool to ensure that the welfare of LAC and previously-LAC can be adequately protected to the extent that reflects their increased vulnerability.*

*7.5. Staff will be encouraged to report to the DSL any concerns they have over LAC or previously-LAC in line with the processes outlined in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.*

*7.6. Staff will be regularly encouraged to look for signs of bullying and report to the DSL if they believe a LAC or previously-LAC is being bullied, as this can have a particularly negative impact on children who have early experiences of rejection or abandonment.*

## 8. Pupil mental health

*8.1. LAC and previously-LAC are more likely to experience the challenge of social, emotional and mental health issues which can impact their behaviour and education.*

*DSL will have awareness, training and skills regarding a child's needs and how to support them in relation to behaviour management and mental health.*

*8.2. The DSL will work with the committee to ensure the preschool is able to identify signs of potential mental health issues, understand the impact issues can have on LAC and previously-LAC, and knows how to access further assessment and support, where necessary.*

*8.3. Pre-School understands that the increased frequency of mental health problems amongst LAC and previously-LAC may present a barrier to adequately identifying when mental health problems are indicative of a safeguarding concern. For this reason, the DSL will ensure that they, and all the staff who maintain regular contact with LAC or previously-LAC are vigilant surrounding any changes in the mental health, behaviour, social inclination or mood of these pupils.*

*8.4. A strengths and difficulties questionnaire, or other relevant method of assessment, will be used to help social workers and other relevant professionals to form a view about LAC and previously-LAC's current emotional wellbeing. Staff will contribute their views in order to assist social workers in their assessment.*

## 9. Exclusions

*9.1. Past experiences of LAC and previously-LAC will be considered when designing and implementing the school's Behaviour Policy.*

9.2. Where the preschool has concerns about a child's behaviour, the committee will be informed at the earliest opportunity.

9.3. As far as possible, the preschool will engage proactively with the social worker or carer of a LAC to provide appropriate support for underlying issues that may be causing poor behaviour and improving this behaviour.

9.4. Exclusion will only be used as a last resort, after the preschool and committee have considered what additional support can be provided to prevent exclusion, and any additional arrangements to support the child's education in the event of exclusion.

9.5. The preschool will inform parents that they can seek the advice of the committee on strategies to support their child to avoid exclusion.

9.6. Permanent exclusion will only occur where there has been serious and/or persistent breaches of the preschools' Behaviour Policies or where allowing the pupil to remain in preschool would seriously harm the education or welfare of others.

## 10. Pupils with SEND

10.1. Support for LAC with SEND, who do not need an EHC plan, will be covered as part of the child's PEP and care plan reviews.

10.2. The SENCO, keyworker, DSL and specialists will involve parents when considering interventions to support their child's progress.

10.3. If appropriate, the committee will be invited to comment on proposed SEND provision for previously-LAC.

10.4. The DSL and SENCOs in the preschool will ensure that LAC and previously-LAC with SEND are supported in line with the SEND Policy, with extra consideration given to the fact that some of the usual procedures for supporting pupils with SEND may lack applicability for LAC, e.g. where LAC are in residential care and, thus, will have their EHC plans taken care of by the LA rather than the general stipulation of the place where they are ordinarily resident.

## 11. Information sharing

11.1. Appropriate and specific arrangements for sharing reliable data are in place to ensure that the education needs of LAC and previously-LAC are understood and met.

11.2. The arrangements set out include:

- Who has access to information on LAC and previously LAC and how data will remain secure.
- How pupils and parents are informed of, and allowed to challenge, information that is kept about them.
- How carers contribute to and receive information.



- Mechanisms for sharing information between the preschool and relevant LA departments.
- How relevant information about individual children is passed between authorities, departments and the preschool when pupils move.

## 12. Monitoring and review

*12.1. This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the committee, following feedback from DSL and the preschool manager*

## Other Related Policies & Procedures

*The following policies provide additional information regarding the safeguarding and welfare of the children in our care:*

- *Acceptable Use Policy*
- *Administration of Medicines*
- *Admissions*
- *Anti-Bullying*
- *Children's Records Policy*
- *Children's Rights & Entitlement Policy*
- *Complaints*
- *Confidentiality & Client Access Policy*
- *Covid 19 Policy*
- *Critical Incident Policy*
- *Diversity & Equality Policy*
- *Emergency Closure Policy*
- *Employment & Staffing Policy*
- *E-Safety Policy*
- *EYPP (Early Years Pupil Premium)*
- *Fees, Charges, Non-Payment Policy*
- *Fire Safety & Emergency Evacuation Policy*
- *First Aid Policy*
- *Food & Drink Policy*
- *GDPR Policy*
- *Information Sharing Policy*

- *Jewellery Policy*
- *Key Person Policy*
- *Key Person & Settling Policy*
- *LADO Policy*
- *Lockdown Policy*
- *Managing Children/Staff Allergies Policy*
- *Mobile, Camera & Social Media Policy*
- *Nappy Changing Policy*
- *No Smoking Policy*
- *Outdoor Play Policy*
- *Outings & Visits Policy*
- *Parent Involvement Policy*
- *Parents, Alcohol & Drugs Policy*
- *Photography & Video Policy*
- *Physical Contact & Handling Policy*
- *Prevent & British Values Policy*
- *Positive Behaviour Policy*
- *Provider Records Policy*
- *Recording & Reporting of Accidents & Incidents Policy*
- *Risk Assessment Policy*
- *Safeguarding Policy*
- *Security Policy*
- *Special Education Needs & Inclusion Policy*
- *Staff Behaviour Policy*
- *Staffing & Volunteers Policy*
- *Student Placement Policy*
- *Suitable Persons Policy*
- *Toileting Policy*
- *Transfer of Records Policy*
- *Uncollected or Lost Children Policy*

- *Usage, Storage & Retention Policy*
- *Vaccination Policy*
- *Whistleblowing Policy*
- *Working in Partnership Policy*

*This policy will be monitored and evaluated at committee meetings. It will be reviewed annually and unless new legislation or an incident occurs which requires an immediate review of this policy*

**January 2020**

**Review Date: January 2022**

**\*This Notice was adopted by the committee on 26/01/21**

**Signed: Claire Bentham** \_\_\_\_\_

\*This document was agreed via email by our Trustees as we were unable to hold our policy meeting due to the Covid-19 virus (Jan 2021)

**Reviewed Date: 17/01/22**

**Signature: *Mrs N L Mann-Rae***

**Amendments: Removed FS policies**

**Reviewed Date: 16/01/23**

**Signature: *Mrs N L Mann-Rae***

**Amendments:**

**Reviewed Date:**

**Signature:**

**Amendments:**

**Reviewed Date:**

**Signature:**

**Amendments:**