



Looked after children Policy

Updated September 2024

At Briar Dene Childcare, we are committed to providing a safe, supportive, and nurturing environment for all children, including those who are looked after (children in foster care or under the care of the local authority). This policy aims to ensure that looked after children receive the best possible care, education, and support to thrive, both in the nursery setting and beyond. We understand the additional challenges faced by looked after children, and we provide tailored support to meet their individual needs.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Ensure that all looked after children are treated with the same dignity and respect as any other child in our care.
- Promote the emotional, social, and educational well-being of looked after children.
- Create an environment where looked after children can thrive and achieve their full potential.
- Outline the nursery's approach to working with parents, social workers, and other relevant professionals in supporting looked after children.
- Comply with statutory and regulatory requirements regarding the care of looked after children.

A looked after child is a child who is in the care of the local authority, either through voluntary agreement or because of a court order. This includes:

- Children who are living with foster carers.
- Children who are living in children's homes or residential care.
- Children who are under a special guardianship order or other care arrangements made by the local authority.

Responsibilities:

- **Nursery Management:** It is the responsibility of nursery management to ensure that looked after children receive appropriate care, education, and support in accordance with their individual needs. Management will ensure that all staff are trained and aware of their responsibilities in supporting these children.
- **Key Workers:** Each looked after child will be assigned a key worker, who will be responsible for providing continuity of care, building a trusting relationship with the child, and working closely with the child's family, social worker, and other professionals to meet the child's needs.
- **Staff Members:** All staff members have a duty to treat looked after children with respect and understanding, ensuring that they receive the same quality of care and educational opportunities

as their peers. Staff are responsible for identifying and reporting any additional needs or concerns to the designated safeguarding lead or key worker.

Individual Care Plans:

Looked after children may have specific needs that require additional support. These needs will be addressed through the creation of an individual care plan, which will be developed in collaboration with the child's social worker, carers, and other professionals involved in the child's care.

- **Care Plan Content:** The care plan will outline the child's specific needs, including emotional, social, educational, and behavioural needs, and will detail how these will be met within the nursery environment.
- **Review and Updates:** The care plan will be regularly reviewed and updated as necessary, in line with the child's progress and any changes to their circumstances. The nursery will collaborate with the child's social worker and other professionals to ensure the plan remains relevant and effective.

Communication and Collaboration:

Effective communication between the nursery, social workers, and carers is essential in providing the best possible support for looked after children.

- **Sharing Information:** The nursery will work in partnership with the child's social worker and carers to ensure that relevant information is shared and that the child's needs are fully understood. Information shared will be kept confidential and used only for the purpose of supporting the child.
- **Regular Meetings:** The key worker will arrange regular meetings with the child's social worker, carers, and other professionals as needed. These meetings will provide an opportunity to discuss the child's progress, address any concerns, and make any necessary adjustments to the care plan.

Supporting Emotional and Social Development:

Looked after children may experience additional emotional or social challenges as a result of their experiences. The nursery will support these children by:

- Providing a safe, stable, and supportive environment.
- Encouraging and facilitating positive relationships with peers and staff.
- Recognising and celebrating achievements, no matter how small, to build self-esteem and confidence.
- Providing opportunities for the child to express their feelings, concerns, and experiences in a safe and non-judgmental setting.

Where appropriate, the nursery may also access additional support services such as counselling, therapeutic support, or specialised interventions to support the child's emotional well-being.

Educational Support:

The nursery is committed to supporting the educational needs of looked after children. This includes:

- Providing a curriculum that is inclusive and accessible to all children, ensuring that the child can participate fully in learning activities.
- Monitoring the child's progress in relation to their peers and providing additional support if needed.
- Working with the child's social worker and school (if applicable) to ensure that educational needs are being met both at the nursery and in other settings.
- Supporting the child's transition into school, including the sharing of relevant information with the receiving school to ensure continuity of care and education.

Confidentiality and Privacy:

All information regarding a looked after child will be treated with the highest level of confidentiality. The child's personal circumstances, including their care status, will not be disclosed to other children, staff, or parents unless required for the child's welfare or safety.

- **Sharing Information:** Information about a looked after child will only be shared with those directly involved in the child's care, such as the child's social worker, carers, and relevant staff members. Any information shared will be done so with the child's best interests in mind.
- **Respecting Privacy:** Looked after children will be given the same level of privacy and dignity as all other children at the nursery. Staff will ensure that the child's personal circumstances are not discussed or treated as a topic for gossip or speculation.

The nursery will regularly monitor the effectiveness of this policy, and the support provided to looked after children. This will include:

- Regularly reviewing the child's individual care plan and progress.
- Seeking feedback from the child's social worker, carers, and other professionals involved in the child's care.
- Conducting internal reviews to assess how well the nursery is meeting the needs of looked after children and identifying areas for improvement.

Any changes to the policy or practices will be communicated to staff, and training will be provided where necessary.

Training and Awareness:

Staff will receive regular training to help them understand the needs of looked after children and how to support them effectively. This training will cover:

- The background and experiences of looked after children.
- The importance of building positive, trusting relationships.
- How to support emotional and behavioural needs.
- How to work collaboratively with other professionals involved in the child's care.

- How to handle sensitive information and maintain confidentiality.

At Briar Dene Childcare, we are dedicated to ensuring that looked after children receive the highest level of care, education, and support. This policy reflects our commitment to meeting the individual needs of each child and ensuring they feel valued, respected, and safe within our nursery environment. By working closely with the child's carers, social workers, and other professionals, we aim to provide a holistic approach to supporting looked after children, ensuring they can achieve their full potential.

Review of Policy:

This policy will be reviewed annually (September 2025), or as needed, to ensure that it remains relevant and effective in meeting the evolving needs of the children, families, and staff within the nursery.

Name:	Position:	Signed:	Date:
David Birkbeck	Owner		
Kayleigh Tydd	Director		
Greg Bamber	Nominated Individual		
Zoe Tydd	Manager & DSL		
Abbie Lloyd	Deputy Manager		
Jade Radcliffe	Second Deputy Manager		
Pamela Lear	Practitioner		
Diane Jones	Practitioner		
Emily Gautrey	Practitioner		