

10. Looked after children

Policy

Definition of 'Looked after Children' (LAC): *Children and young people become 'looked after' if they have either been taken into care by the local authority, or have been accommodated by the local authority (a voluntary care arrangement). Most LAC will be living in foster homes, but a smaller number may be in a children's home, living with a relative or even placed back home with their natural parent(s).*

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 others. We do not refer to such a child using acronyms such as LAC.

We recognise that not all looked after children have experienced traumatic situations 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.

At Little Moonbeams, we place emphasis on promoting *children's right to be strong, resilient and listened to*. 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.

Procedure

- The designated person for looked after children is the designated child protection co-ordinator –Setting Owner Vicky Martin Setting Manager : Melanie Moss
- 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 outside agencies, professionals and practitioners involved with the child and his or her family and ensures appropriate information is gained and shared.
- 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 at regular 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.

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- 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:

- 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.