Beechoak Farm Montessori Pre-school

Safeguarding children

1.2 Looked After Children

A child that has been taken into care by the local authority or accommodated by the local authority for a period of time, the child may live in a foster home, children's home or with other members of their family

Policy statement

All staff believe in equality of opportunity and are committed to ensuring 'looked after' children in their care reach their full potential. We are aware that many Looked After Children (LAC) may have been victims of child abuse. However, we also realise this is not always the case. In any circumstance though, separation from family and home causes great disruption in the child's life and will impact their emotional wellbeing. A key belief at Beechoak Farm is that all children should feel safe, secure and listened to. We place emphasis on children's rights to be strong and resilient. Our policy and practice for LAC focuses on these principles and our commitment to the key person approach.

Principles

- A child who is looked after will <u>never</u> be labelled. The term is used to denote their current legal status only.
- For young children to get the most out of educational 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.
- We offer places to two year old children in exceptional circumstances who are in care, if space is available. We request that the child has formed a secure bond to their carer and will remain at Beechoak for at least three months.
- We offer places to three and four year olds, if space is available to ensure they receive their entitlement to early education. We request that the child has formed a secure attachment to their carer and will remain at Beechoak for at least six weeks.
- If a child at Beechoak Farm is taken into local foster care we will continue to offer the place to that child.

Procedures

- The designated person for LAC is the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
- We use the 'Key person' approach. The key person, the DSL and the manager will liaise with any other professionals, the child's foster family and the child's biological family (if appropriate) to ensure needs are met.

- We acknowledge that once a child is taken into care the local authority social care department become the 'corporate parent' and that nothing will change with regard to the child and access with their biological family unless we are informed by the child's social worker otherwise.
- A meeting of professionals involved with the child is convened by the setting at the start of a placement. A Personal Education Plan (PEP) is put in place within 10 days of the child becoming looked after.
- On admission to Beechoak there will be a meeting with all involved with the child to draw up a care plan that includes the child's educational needs. This plan will be reviewed regularly and followed at all times.
- The care plan would include the following:
    - The child's emotional needs and how they are to be met.
    - If there are any emotional/ behavioural issues and how these are most effectively managed.
    - Background information about the child including their heritage, culture and sense of identity.
    - The child's ability to socialise and need for friendship.
    - The child's interests and abilities and possible learning journey pathway.
    - Any special needs and how they will be supported.
- It will also include details on:
    - Which information will be shared and with whom.
    - What contact the child may have with their birth parents and any arrangements for contact (all contact with the parents will be outside of Beechoak Farm)
    - What information needs to be record and when.
    - With advice from the social worker the child's birth parents may be involved in the process of creating and reviewing the care plan.
- The care plan is reviewed after two weeks, six weeks, three months, and thereafter at three to six monthly intervals.
- The settling in period for the child will be discussed prior to the start date and a plan will be put in place dependant on the child's needs.
- The foster carer will remain with the child for the duration of the first visit; the child's key person in partnership with the foster carer will discuss the action plan for the subsequent visits dependant on the success of the first visit. If this process needs to be extended for the benefit of the child it will be brought to the attention of the manager who will arrange this will the foster parent.
- The transition from Beechoak Farm to school will be handled sensitively. The designated person and/or the child's key person will liaise with the school, passing on relevant information and documentation with the agreement of the child's social worker as detailed in the care plan.

This policy was adopted by staff at Beechoak Farm Montessori preschool.

Held on 2nd December 2025

Date to be reviewed December 2026

Signed on behalf of Beechoak Farm Montessori by

Charlotte Muggleton	&	Hayley Majeika
Proprietor		Manager