



Looked After Children Policy – Little Explorers Nursery

At Little Explorers, we are committed to providing an inclusive, nurturing, and high-quality environment for all children and families, including those who are looked after by a local authority. We recognise that looked after children (LAC) may face additional challenges and vulnerabilities, and we are dedicated to supporting their wellbeing, development, and educational outcomes.

Definition and Legal Framework

A *looked after child* is a child who is in the care of the local authority, either through a care order or through voluntary accommodation (Section 20, Children Act 1989). This includes:

- Children placed with foster carers.
- Children in residential homes.
- Children living with family members under local authority arrangements.
- Children placed back in the family home under supervision.

This term refers strictly to legal status. At Little Explorers, we never use the term “looked after child” to label or single out a child. We do not use acronyms such as “LAC” in general practice with children or families.

Our policy is underpinned by the following legislation:

- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Childcare Act 2006
- Adoption and Children Act 2002
- Children and Young Persons Act 2008
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (Updated 2026)
- EYFS Statutory Framework
- Equality Act 2010

Our Commitment

Each child is treated as a unique individual. We recognise that looked after children may have experienced trauma, disruption, or separation and may require additional emotional, developmental, or safeguarding support. We will:

- Work closely with carers, social workers, and other professionals prior to the child starting to assess readiness and secure transitions.
- Offer a tailored settling-in process with flexibility based on the child's needs and attachment history.
- Ensure each looked after child has a consistent key person and support from our designated person for looked after children, Claire Aquilina and Megan Murphy who will liaise with professionals and oversee their progress.
- Be sensitive to the child's sense of identity, family situation, and any safeguarding or emotional vulnerabilities.
- Avoid assumptions about behaviour and respond with care and trauma-informed practice.

Previously Looked After Children (PLAC)

We recognise that previously looked after children, including those who have been adopted or are subject to special guardianship or child arrangements orders, may continue to experience the impact of early trauma. We will ensure appropriate support is in place to meet their individual needs.

Safeguarding and Training

All nursery staff are trained in safeguarding and understand the procedures for reporting concerns. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will work closely with the designated person for looked after children to ensure any concerns are addressed promptly. Additional training will be arranged if needed to support specific needs.

Safeguarding and Information Sharing

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) has overall responsibility for safeguarding all children, including those who are looked after. Information will be shared in line with safeguarding requirements and data protection legislation. Consent will be sought where appropriate; however, this will not prevent information sharing where there are safeguarding concerns.

Confidentiality

Information relating to a child's care status will be treated as strictly confidential and shared only with professionals who need to know to support the child effectively.

Attendance

Attendance of looked after children will be closely monitored, and any concerns will be followed up promptly in line with safeguarding procedures.

Partnership Working and Information Sharing

We will:

- Contribute to Early Help Assessments (EHA), Child in Need meetings, strategy meetings, case reviews, and other multi-agency plans.
- Attend and contribute to the child's Personal Education Plan (PEP), which is a statutory requirement for all looked after children aged 3 and over.
- Work collaboratively with the Virtual School Head, social worker, and carers to promote the child's learning, development, and wellbeing.

Where appropriate, a care plan will be developed in consultation with professionals and carers, covering:

- Emotional needs and support strategies.
- Behaviour support and emotional regulation.
- Cultural identity, language(s), and sense of self.
- Friendship, social interaction, and interests.
- Support for SEND/EAL (if applicable).
- Transition planning and school readiness.

All information sharing will be compliant with data protection regulations, and parental consent will be sought where appropriate.

Transitions and Continuity of Care

Transitions will be planned sensitively. Where a child is moving to school or another setting, the key person and designated person will ensure all records and key information are transferred securely. The child's learning journal, artwork, and key documentation will be given to the carer at the point of transition.

Private Fostering Arrangements

Private fostering is when a child under 16 (or under 18 if disabled) is cared for by someone who is not their parent, close relative, or legal guardian for more than 28 days. It is the nursery's legal duty to inform the local authority of any such arrangement. If we become aware of a child who may be privately fostered, we will notify the children's social care team without delay.

Review and Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed annually or in line with any updates to legislation or guidance. The designated person for looked after children will regularly monitor the implementation of this policy and ensure that the setting remains a safe and supportive environment for all looked after children.

This policy was adopted on	Reviewed
<i>24/01/2022</i>	<i>4th May 2026</i>