

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements: Child Protection

Providers must have and implement a policy, and procedures, to safeguard children.

1.5 Looked After Children

This policy was adopted by the St. George's Board of Directors held on

Date: 7 JUNE 2021

Date of Next Review: JUNE 2022

Signed on behalf of St. George's: [Signature]

Name of Signatory: ADRIAN CROUCH

Role of Signatory: CHAIRMAN

Policy Statement

St. George's is committed to providing quality provision based on equality of opportunity for all children and their families. All staff in our provision are committed to doing all they can to enable 'looked after' children in our care to achieve and reach their full potential.

Children 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 looked after children 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).

St. George's recognise that children who are being looked after have often experienced traumatic situations; physical, emotional or sexual abuse or neglect. However, we also recognise that not all looked after children have experienced abuse 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 an impact on their emotional well-being. Most local authorities do not place children under five with foster carers who are employed outside the home. However, there are instances when this does occur or where the child has been placed with another family member who continues their employment after placement.

We place emphasis on promoting children's right to be strong, resilient and listened to. Our policy and practice guidelines for looked after children is to promote secure attachments in children's lives, as the foundation for resilience through our keyworker system. These aspects of well-being underpin the child's responsiveness to learning and enable the development of positive dispositions for learning.

Procedures

- The designated person for looked after children is the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Every child is allocated a key person before they start, and this is no different for a looked after child. The designated lead ensures the key person has the information, support and training necessary to meet the looked after child's needs.
- The designated safeguarding lead and the key person liaise with agencies, professionals and practitioners involved with the child and his or her family and ensure that appropriate information is gained and shared.
- St. George's recognises the role of the local authority children's social care department as the child's 'corporate parent' and the key agency in determining what takes place with the child. Nothing changes, especially with regard to the birth parent's or foster carer's role in relation to the setting, without prior discussion and agreement with the child's social worker.
- At the start of a placement, if needed, there is a professional's meeting to determine the objectives of the placement and draw up a care plan that incorporates the child's learning needs. This plan is reviewed after two weeks, six weeks and three months. Thereafter at three to six monthly intervals.
- The care plan needs to consider issues for the child such as:
 - their emotional needs and how they are to be met;
 - how any emotional issues and problems that affect behaviour are to be managed;
 - their sense of self, culture, language(s) and identity – and how this is to be supported;
 - their need for sociability and friendship;
 - their interests and abilities and possible learning journey pathway; and
 - how any special needs will be supported?
- In addition, the care plan will also consider:
 - how information will be shared with the foster carer and local authority (as the 'corporate parent') as well as what information is shared with whom and how it will be recorded and stored;
 - what contact the child has with his/her birth parent(s) and what arrangements will be in place for supervised contact. If this is to be at St. George's, when, where and what form the contact will take will be discussed and agreed;
 - what written reporting is required;
 - wherever possible, and where the plan is for the child to return home, the birth parent(s) should be involved in planning; and

- with the social worker's agreement, and as part of the plan, the birth parent(s) should be involved in St. George's activities that include parents, such as fun-days etc. alongside the foster carer.
- The settling-in process for the child is agreed. It should be the same as for any other child, with the foster carer taking the place of the parent, unless otherwise agreed. This process may take longer in some cases, so time needs to be allowed for it to take place without causing further distress or anxiety to the child.
- 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.
- Further observations about communication, interests and abilities will be noted to form a picture of the whole child in relation to the Early Years Foundation Stage prime and specific areas of learning and development.
- Concerns about the child will be noted in the child's file and discussed with the foster carer.
- If the concerns are about the foster carer's treatment of the child, or if abuse is suspected, these are recorded in the child's file and reported to the child's social care worker according to St George's safeguarding children procedure.
- Regular contact should be maintained with the social worker through planned meetings that will include the foster carer.
- The transition to school will be handled sensitively. The designated safeguarding lead 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._____

Further guidance

- Guidance on the Education of Children and Young People in Public Care (DfEE 2001)
- Who Does What: How Social Workers and Carers can Support the Education of Looked After Children (DfES 2005)
- Supporting Looked After Learners - A Practical Guide for School Governors (DfES 2006)