



Looked After Children Policy

Looked After Children Policy

Policy Statment

Bradpole Preschool is committed to providing high-quality early years provision that promotes equality of opportunity for all children and their families. We recognise the unique needs of looked after children and understand the importance of providing a safe, nurturing, and inclusive environment where they feel valued, secure, and supported.

All staff are committed to working sensitively and effectively with looked after children, carers, social workers, and other professionals to promote each child's emotional well-being, learning, and development. Through positive relationships, consistent care, and inclusive practice, we aim to help every looked after child achieve positive outcomes and reach their full potential in line with the principles and requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

Understanding Looked After Children

Children become 'looked after' if they have either been taken into care by a local authority or have been accommodated by a local authority through a voluntary care arrangement. Most looked after children live in foster homes, although some may live in children's homes, with relatives, or may return home to live with their birth parents.

We recognise that some looked after children may have experienced trauma, abuse, neglect, loss, separation, or disruption in their early lives. These experiences can affect children's emotional well-being, relationships, behaviour, and development. 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 circumstances are, 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 work outside the home; however, there are instances when this does occur or where the child has been placed with another family member who works.

Supporting Children Through Inclusive Practice

In accordance with the EYFS, we promote every child's right to be resilient, capable, confident, and listened to through positive relationships and enabling environments. Our practice is underpinned by the principles of attachment, nurture, and resilience. We recognise that secure attachments provide the foundation for children's emotional security, learning, behaviour, and development.

We work closely with carers, social workers, and other professionals to ensure children feel safe, valued, and supported in their learning and development. Particular attention is given to the prime areas of learning:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Communication and Language
- Physical Development



Looked After Children Policy

We understand that children need time to settle, build trusting relationships with carers and key persons, and feel emotionally secure before they are able to fully access learning opportunities and adapt to new experiences and environments.

Key Principles

- The term 'looked after child' refers to a child's current legal status and is never used to label or single out a child from their peers. We do not abbreviate this term to 'LAC'.
- Bradpole Preschool welcomes funded two-year-old children who are in care. Where possible, and where it is in the child's best interests, we would expect the child to have had sufficient time to begin forming a secure attachment with their foster carer before starting at the setting.
- We offer funded places for three- and four-year-old children who are in care to ensure they access their entitlement to early years education. We recognise the importance of stability and continuity for looked after children and will work with carers and professionals to support successful placements within the setting.
- We will offer stay-and-play provision to children aged two to five years who are still settling with foster carers or who are temporarily being looked after, where appropriate and beneficial to the child.
- Where a child already attending Bradpole Preschool becomes looked after and is placed locally with foster carers, we will make every effort to continue offering the child a place to maintain stability, continuity, and familiar relationships.
- All information relating to looked after children will be recorded, stored, and shared in accordance with data protection, confidentiality, and safeguarding requirements.

Procedures and Responsibilities

Leadership and Key Responsibilities

The designated person for looked after children is the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) Nikki Moss or Sally Parmiter, the deputy DSL.

- Every child is allocated to a key person team, red team or green team, as well as a named lead keyperson before they start and this is no different for a looked after child
- The designated person will ensure that key persons receive the information, guidance, support, and training necessary to meet the individual needs of looked after children effectively.
- The designated person and key persons will work in partnership with social workers, carers, and other relevant professionals to ensure that information is appropriately shared to support the child's welfare, learning, and development.
- The setting recognises the role of a local authority Children's Social Care department as the child's 'corporate parent' and acknowledges its responsibility in decision-making regarding the child's care and welfare.
- No changes relating to parental responsibility, contact arrangements, collection arrangements, or the roles of birth parents and foster carers will be made without prior agreement from the child's social worker.



Looked After Children Policy

Care Planning and Information Sharing

- At the beginning of a placement, professionals involved with the child should meet to agree the aims of the placement and develop a care plan that reflects the child's emotional, developmental, and learning needs. Reviews will usually take place after two weeks, six weeks, three months, and then at regular intervals thereafter.
- The care plan will consider:
 - the child's emotional well-being and how emotional needs will be met;
 - strategies for supporting behaviour and emotional regulation;
 - the child's identity, self-esteem, culture, language, and sense of belonging;
 - opportunities for friendship and social interaction;
 - the child's interests, strengths, abilities, and learning journey;
 - any special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and how they will be supported.
- The care plan will also include:
 - arrangements for sharing, recording, storing, and transferring information securely and confidentially;
 - agreed contact arrangements with birth family members, including any supervised contact taking place at the setting;
 - expectations regarding reports, meetings, and communication between professionals;
 - involvement of birth parents in planning wherever appropriate and agreed;
 - opportunities for birth parents, where agreed by the social worker, to participate in setting events and activities alongside foster carers.

Settling-In and Emotional Well-Being

- The settling-in process will be planned carefully and sensitively. Unless otherwise agreed, foster carers will take the role usually held by parents during the settling-in period. Particular emphasis will be placed on supporting secure attachments and following the child's emotional needs and pace. The process may take longer for some children and will be managed sensitively to avoid additional anxiety or distress.
- During the first few weeks following admission, staff will focus observations on the child's emotional well-being, sense of security, sociability, and ability to regulate feelings and behaviour. Observations relating to communication, interests, learning, and development will contribute to assessments within the EYFS prime and specific areas of learning.

Safeguarding and Welfare

- Any concerns regarding the child's welfare or development will be recorded and discussed appropriately with foster carers and relevant professionals.
- If concerns arise regarding possible abuse, neglect, or inappropriate care, staff will follow the setting's safeguarding and child protection procedures immediately, recording concerns accurately and informing the relevant social worker and safeguarding agencies as required.



Looked After Children Policy

Communication and Transitions

- Regular communication will be maintained with the child's social worker and foster carers to ensure continuity of care and support.
- Transitions, including transition to school, will be carefully planned and managed sensitively. Relevant information will be shared with receiving schools and professionals with appropriate permissions and in accordance with safeguarding, confidentiality, and data protection requirements.

Legislation and Guidance

This policy is based on the following legislation and statutory guidance:

- *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage* (Department for Education, September 2025)
- *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (HM Government, 2026)
- *Promoting the Education of Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children* (DoE 2018)
- *What to do if you're Worried a Child is Being Abused* (HM Government, 2015)
- The Children Act 1989
- The Children Act 2004
- The Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR

This policy was adopted by the Bradpole Preschool Committee

During the Summer Term 2026

Date to be reviewed Summer Term 2027