

Children in Care Policy



Policy Statement

At Landulph Under Fives we believe that all Children in Care should have access to excellent pre-school provision and achieve at a similar level to all children. We are committed to providing quality provision based on equality of opportunity for all children and their families. All staff are committed to doing all they can to enable 'looked after' children in their care to achieve and reach their potential.

'Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high-quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.' Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage DFE March 2014 - Updated July 2023

Our aims to support pre-school Children in Care

- Provide a safe and secure environment, which values education and believes in the abilities and potential of all children.
- Narrowing the gap - Bring the educational attainments of our Children in Care in line to those of their peers.
- Making sure that they have access to education appropriate to their age and ability. This includes full access to the Early years Foundation Stage
- Identifying our settings' role to promote and support the learning and development of our Children in Care.
- All settings are required to have a designated person for Children in Care who will act as their advocate and coordinate support for them, liaising with carers/parents and social workers on a wide variety of educational and care issues.

The Pre-school Leader is the designated person for Children in Care at Landulph Under Fives.

The Early Years Foundation Stage sets the standards that all early year's providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children's 'school readiness' and gives children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life. 'Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage DFE March 2014 - Updated July 2023'

All staff and management are committed to ensuring improved educational life chances for Children in Care by ensuring that the relevant personnel have reasonable support and time to complete tasks and

responsibilities. Also, to establish and maintain appropriate reporting and monitoring procedures both within the setting and with other agencies.

DESIGNATED PERSON FOR CHILDREN IN CARE

Maintains a register of all children in care from both in and out of Cornwall. This will include:

- The contact person in the relevant Children in Care Education Support Service (CiCESS)
- The name of the social worker, area office and telephone number
- The type of placement, foster, residential, adoptive, foster
- Documents for the child e.g., care plans, reports.
- Daily contact and telephone numbers of those who need to be contacted in an emergency or for any other concerns. E.g., name of young person, name of parent or carer or key worker in children's home.
- Share Child Protection / disability information if appropriate (if not appropriate to share, indicate the confidential nature of the information.
- Relevant health information
- Baseline information and any other relevant assessments or information.
- The child (where appropriate) is entitled to decide who attends their Children in Care Statutory Reviews (6 monthly); if the setting does not attend, they need to submit a written report that promotes the continuity and stability of their personal education plan.
- Participate in appropriate Children in care training and joint agency training
- If there are safeguarding concerns for a Child in Care or any other child, contact and advice should be sought from the Multi agency referral unit (MARU) 0300 1231 116

Whole setting approach: Four guiding principles should shape practice in early years settings:

- every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured;
- children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships;
- children learn and develop well in enabling environments, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers; and
- children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities. 'Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage DFE March 2014 - Updated July 2023'

At Landulph Under Fives:

- The setting celebrates the achievements of Children in Care.
- Staff have high expectations of the child, encouraging achievement and ambition
- The child will have a key person in the setting who is able to take time to listen to them and have access to support and counselling if required.
- For young Children in Care, there should be clarity in relation to who is and is not allowed to collect the child from the setting

- All staff within the setting are made aware of the needs of Children in Care and actively promote their best interests
- Adults in the setting are sensitive to the young person's wishes over what is known and by whom regarding their care status
- Effective assessment, recording and reporting practices are established and systems are in place to keep staff up to date and informed about Children in Care
- The designated person ensures that positive messages about behaviour and achievement are shared within the setting and between setting, carers and outside agencies and that high educational expectations are maintained
- Staff work in partnership with carers and agencies and parents
- Support carers to value educational achievement and improve attendance
- Staff can help the individual begin to feel that they are fitting in and offer them a safe haven and a sympathetic ear in a crisis
- Staff are aware that being or becoming 'in Care' has a major impact on children's lives and that when considering children's learning and or behaviour, due consideration will be given
- Staff are aware of a variety of issues that may undermine the young person's ability to engage in the learning process including feelings of loss, rejection, isolation, confusion and low self-esteem

Special Educational needs/Gifted and talented:

- Any special educational needs/Gifted and talented abilities are quickly identified and appropriate provision is made
- Landulph Under Fives ensure that systems are in place to identify and prioritise when Children in Care are underachieving and have early interventions to improve this
- Contact needs to be made with the Children in Care Education Support Service (CiCESS) as soon as concerns are raised.
- If the child or young person has a statement of special educational need, then ensure the six-monthly review coincides with one of the six monthly care planning reviews; dates can be obtained from the social worker and should include the Senior locality SENCo from the Early years Inclusion team.

Admissions and transitions:

- Landulph Under Fives ensure that on admission or transfer all relevant information is obtained at the outset
- We make every effort to provide continuity of pre-school educational experience

Exclusion:

- Identify any Child in Care who is at risk of exclusion and contact the Early Years School improvement team (Carol Kimberley), the Inclusion team (Beth Williams), Children in Care Education Support Service (CiCESS), Social Worker and or relevant professionals to put proactive strategies in place to avoid the Child in Care missing days from pre-school

Multi-agency liaison: Links with Early years services

- The Designated person will need to liaise closely with carers, parents (if appropriate) and the child's social worker on a variety of issues. It is important that positive messages about behaviour and achievement are shared
- There should be a well planned and co-ordinated approach to meeting the child's educational and social needs, for example, whether potentially disruptive changes in the setting can be prevented
- There needs to be clear understanding about the role and responsibility of setting staff in relation to the young person and the roles and responsibilities of the other professionals involved
- staff will need to share positive perceptions and high expectations of the child with other professionals but especially with the child themselves
- The setting should be aware of and sensitive to the appropriate role of the carers and or parents
- The Designated person should ensure that requests from the LA for statistical information held by the setting are completed and returned on time to comply with statutory obligations

Personal education plans (PEPs):

- Ensure that there is a quality Early years Personal Education Plan in place for each child to include appropriate targets. This must be compatible with the child's Care Plan held by the Social Worker, and form part of any other setting plan. E.g., Statement, Transition Plan, Pastoral Support Programme, adoption plan.

Council contacts for this:

sali.kew-jones@cornwall.gov.uk 07891 840613

Sammi.Morgan@cornwall.gov.uk

- Contribute to the process whereby all Children in Care have a high-quality EY Personal Educational Plan (PEP) in place within 10 days of starting the setting. This will include SMART educational targets and will be linked to the child's Care Plan and any other plan resulting from the assessment of the child (IEP, PSP, Statement of Educational Need)
- Following the writing of an EY PEP, any educational recommendations in that PEP will be adhered to by staff in order that any Child in Care has the opportunity to fulfil and achieve the targets set
- Hold an EY PEP meeting for every statutory care review, involving the social worker, foster carers, young person and parent if appropriate (*See brief PEP Guidance on website*)
- PEP 'Responsibility sheet' will record who holds PR / signing of consent forms / emergency contacts

Related documentation:

See CiCESS website on Cornwall intranet for related documentation and information

www.cornwall.gov.uk/cicess

'Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage

DFE March 2014 - Updated July 2023'

Promoting the Educational Achievement of Looked After Children Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities

DCSF February 2018

Improving the Educational Attainment of Children in Care (Looked After Children)

DCSF November 2009

Improving the Attainment of Looked After Children in primary schools

DCSF November 2009

Special Educational Needs

SEN Code of Practice and SEN toolkit

'Conducting Early years Inspections'

Ofsted October 2014

The Pre-school Leader and Chair person will be responsible for ensuring all staff are briefed on the regulations and practice outlined in this policy.

Policy adopted by: Landulph Under Fives

On: Sept 2023

Date to be reviewed: Sept 2024

Signed: J Howells

Position: Chair

Being 'in care'

Section 20 - when a child is accommodated under a Section 20 voluntary arrangement. Cornwall, in this instance does not have parental responsibility, this remains with the parents but the child is 'accommodated' by Cornwall.

Interim care order - This is an Order that is made at the first hearing after Care Proceedings have been issued. This Order can last for up to 8 weeks and can be renewed every 4 weeks after that. The Order can only be granted if the Court feels there is good reason to believe that a child may be at serious risk of harm.

When Social Services apply for an Interim Care Order, they have to have prepared an Interim Care Plan which sets out where the child should live until the final hearing. This will include contact arrangements between the parent and the child. The Interim Care Order, like a Care Order grants Cornwall Parental Responsibility which means they are able to make decisions about the child's living arrangements and do not need the parent's permission to do so.

There are several final orders the court can make:

Care order

This is an order that places the child in the care of Cornwall and gives it parental responsibility.

This does not mean the parents lose parental responsibility but it does mean Cornwall can override

their wishes if it believes this would be best for your child. However, it must have consulted parents first.

For this order to be made, the child must be under 17 years old.

A care order means that Cornwall must provide a place for the child to live (for example with relatives or foster carers) and is responsible for the child's 'maintenance' (making sure they have money to live on). Occasionally the child remains at home with parents under a care order, but Cornwall still makes all decisions and can remove the child at any time if they are concerned about the care the child is receiving.

If Cornwall is granted a care order, its plans for the child will be set out in the care plan filed at court. This plan must be reviewed regularly and parents should be consulted about this

A full care order remains in force until the child is 18 years old, unless the court:

- makes a residence or special guardianship order;
- decides that the order should end (known as 'discharging' the order);
- makes a supervision order instead; or
- makes an adoption order.

Supervision order

this means parents have parental responsibility and remain responsible for their child's care, but Cornwall has the power to 'supervise' how they care for your child. A supervision order lasts up to one year but the council can ask the court for an extension for up to two more years.

Residence order

this order would mean that the child would live with someone else, such as a member of the family, without Cornwall being involved. It would give that person parental responsibility for the period of the order.

Special guardianship order

this court order places a child with someone who is not their parent in a longer-term arrangement. It is more permanent than a residence order because a parent cannot apply to 'revoke' (end) the order without the court's permission. The court can give this permission only where the circumstances have changed significantly since the order was made. However, a special guardianship order (SGO) does not break the legal relationship between a parent and child.

If an SGO is made for the child, the special guardian will gain parental responsibility for the child. Parents will still have parental responsibility as well, but the special guardian has the right to override their wishes if they cannot agree.

Placement order

in rare cases Cornwall may consider that the child should be placed for adoption. Where adoption is planned, Cornwall will probably apply for a 'placement order' at the final hearing. This order allows Cornwall to place the child with prospective adopters even if parents don't consent to this.

There are further legal proceedings before the court can make an 'adoption order'. If the child is adopted, they will stop being a member of the birth family, and will become legally related to the adoptive parents. Once a placement order has been made, there are only very limited circumstances in which parents can later apply to end it or to oppose adoption.