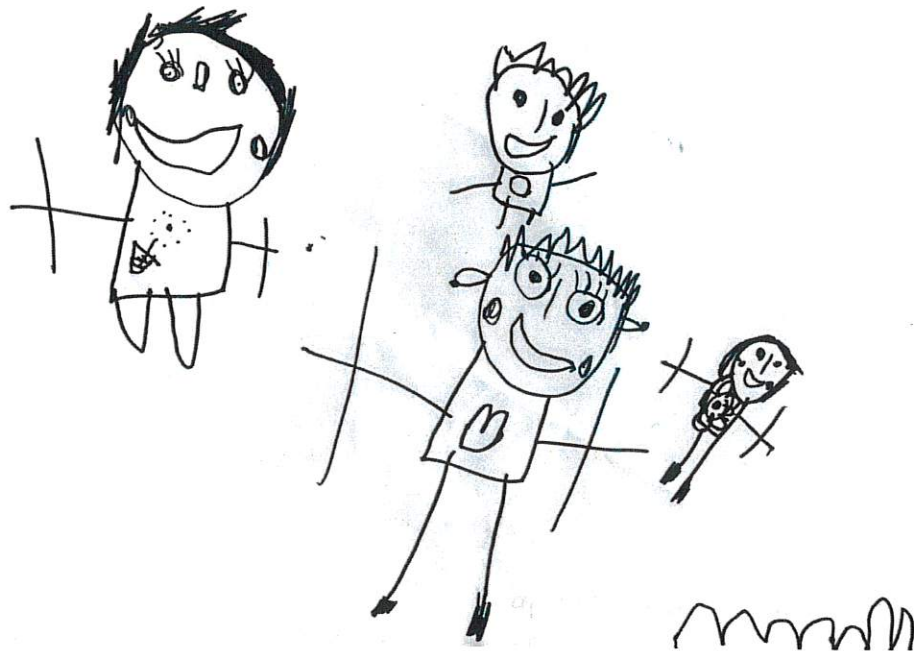


Looked After Child Policy



Alumwell Nursery School

Our vision is to develop happy, confident and secure learners in a safe and stimulating environment where all children thrive through working in partnership with parents and our local community.

This policy adheres to Equality Duty Legislation published in May 2014.

Care is a vital part of our child protection system. Most young people in care say that their experiences are good and that it was the right choice for them (Beihal et al, 2014). But more needs to be done to ensure that all children in care are healthy and safe, have the same opportunities as their peers and can move successfully into adulthood.

Children's early experiences have a significant impact on their development and future life chances. As a result of their experiences both before and during care, looked after children are at greater risk than their peers. www.nspcc.org.uk

Office of National Statistics has reported that children in care are four times more likely than their peers to have a mental health difficulty and they are less likely to do well at nursery.

What is a looked after child?

A child who is being looked after by their local authority is known as a child in care. They might be living:

- with foster parents
- at home with their parents under the supervision of social services
- in residential children's homes
- other residential settings like schools or secure units.

They might have been placed in care voluntarily by parents struggling to cope. Or, children's services may have intervened because a child was at significant risk of harm.

At Alumwell Nursery School we make it our priority that Looked After Children are safe, secure and make progress to meet their developmental targets. We support their emotional well-being enabling them to be involved with the education on offer.

We work closely with Virtual nursery, Children's Services, Health and any other education service they require e.g Special Needs, Speech and Language.

For Looked After Children, nursery will be a place offering stability, safety, continuity and emotional warmth through positive relationships.

To do this we must:

- Ensure access to a balanced and broadly based education to all looked after children
- Prioritise recording and improving the academic achievement of all looked after children
- Prioritise a reduction in the number of exclusions and truancies for all looked after children
- Ensure there is a designated teacher to advocate for the rights of children looked after

- Develop systems of communications and protocols
- Promote the attendance of looked after children

Therefore we will:

- Work alongside social workers to ensure that each looked after child has a current Personal Education Plan in place and is reviewed termly.
- Provide a climate of acceptance and challenge negative stereotypes.
- Ensure all children who are looked after have the same opportunities to participate fully in the National Curriculum, careers guidance, extracurricular activities, work experience, and enjoy the nursery experience fully in line with corporate parenting principles.
- Ensure discretion when addressing a child's care status and ensure there is sensitivity to the background of children who are looked after, especially surrounding work on family.
- Ensure the designated teacher is provided with regular training, and that they cascade this training to nursery staff as appropriate.
- Seek to review all nursery policies regularly in the light of the LEA's Social Inclusion guidance, Special Educational Needs Legislation, and joint Department for Education and Skills / Department of Health guidance on The Education of Children in Public Care.
- Ensure that a clear protocol for sharing of information will be followed both within nursery and with outside agencies.
- Endeavour to support all looked after children educated in this nursery to achieve to their fullest possible academic potential.

To make sure all children looked after are well provided for and their needs are met, a designated teacher will be named on the website who has clear responsibilities. A named governor also has specific duties. The Head Teacher has overall responsibility. Each child will also have a named Key Worker who will work with the child and its carers on a daily basis. The Key worker will liaise with the Designated Teacher and will contribute to the Personal Education Plan. The pep is written and reviewed on epep online which is a portal provided by Walsall Council. The designated teacher is responsible for filling in all the sections under designated teacher criteria.

The named Governor should be satisfied that:

- the nursery has a coherent policy for children looked after

- the nursery's policies and procedures are reviewed in the light of social inclusion guidance and joint DH/DfE guidelines
- the designated teacher has received appropriate training
- looked after children have equal access to all areas of the curriculum
- the Governing body receives an annual report

The Head Teacher will:

- appoint the designated teacher
- ensure that the designated teacher has received appropriate training
- oversee the development of the policy on looked after children
- be responsible for all systems to support looked after children.
- report to the governing body on an annual basis on the following:
- the number of looked after pupils in the nursery
- an analysis of test scores as a discrete group, compared to other pupils
- the attendance of pupils, compared to other pupils
- the level of fixed term and permanent exclusions, compared to other pupils
- the number of complaints

The Designated Teacher

The designated teacher will serve as the contact for children's services and the education department including Virtual Nursery and will maintain responsibility for several key areas to support looked after children within the nursery. This includes serving as an advocate for all children looked after in the nursery.

The designated teacher will help establish and maintain the ethos regarding looked after children of the nursery by:

- maintaining and respecting confidentiality of all looked after children and ensuring information is shared on a strictly 'need to know' basis
- ensuring that all staff, through appropriate training, are aware of the difficulties and educational disadvantages faced by looked after children and understand the need for positive systems to support them, whilst maintaining appropriately high expectations for their educational achievements

- acting as an advocate for looked after children in order to allow them equal access to educational opportunities and support with important decisions affecting future life chances

The designated teacher will set up systems to monitor and record the progress of all looked after children. S/he will:

- have an overview and co-ordinating role for gathering and holding all information regarding children who are looked after including carrying out Strengths and Difficulties questionnaire within 6 weeks of starting nursery
- maintain records regarding all looked after children, including legal status and information regarding who should be contacted regarding matters concerning the child
- establish a system for contacting and forwarding educational records to new settings to facilitate a smooth and speedy transfer
- monitor the educational progress of all looked after children and intervene, in co-operation with other agencies if required, if there is evidence of underachievement, absence from nursery or internal truancy, or other similar concern

The designated teacher will facilitate effective communication by:

- building positive home-nursery relationships between parents / carers with regular opportunities for dialogue
- being proactive and participating in setting goals for the child's PEP
- playing an active role in care planning by ensuring that the attendance of the most appropriate member of staff and/or written reports are provided to all statutory reviews of looked after children
- helping co-ordinate education and PEP meetings
- serving as the named contact for colleagues in social services and education
- ensuring effective communication between all relevant parties
- inviting the responsible social worker to all meetings, and liaising with this social worker regarding the development of Personal Education Plans (PEP).

The designated teacher will monitor each child's achievement and ensure that

they have the support they require within nursery:

- by meeting with the child looked after to discuss who needs to know they are looked after and to ensure that the young person is informed of their role
- by ensuring each child has a named key worker member of staff who can provide advice and/or practical help on academic or pastoral issues
- by ensuring each child has a Personal Education Plan
- by requesting support from the SENCO and/or outside agencies, including the Education of children Looked After Service, if a looked after child requires additional academic or behavioural support
- by working closely with the SENCO to ensure all looked after children with special educational needs are being assessed and are getting appropriate resources to support their learning
- by having a strategy for key stage or new nursery transitions
- by encouraging all children to continue on to further or higher education
- by ensuring all looked after children are made to feel a part of the nursery environment

Personal Education Plans

Each child will have a Personal Education Plan (PEP), which the designated teacher will take the lead in developing. The nursery's role in this plan is crucial and at least one member of staff who knows the child well will attend the meeting to establish and subsequently review this. Other staff will contribute in writing as appropriate.

The PEP will consider:

- the child's strengths and weaknesses
- interests, both in and out of nursery
- developmental and educational and pastoral needs
- future plans, and how these can be supported
- issues arising for the child
- It will also identify targets that will be reviewed during the next PEP meeting.

Admission/Induction Arrangements

Children looked after are a priority for admission and, as such, we will follow the LA's published admission criteria.

On admission, the child will meet with the designated teacher and their named member of staff. They will discuss any relevant issues, academic or pastoral, and ensure the child is made to feel comfortable in our nursery. Records will be requested from the child's previous nursery and as soon as practicable after they are received a meeting will be held with the carer / parent, social worker, and other relevant professionals, and child as appropriate. This will provide information to inform the child's new Personal Education Plan, and ensure that communication systems are established early.

In the first PEP meeting, we will seek clarification from the social worker as to who requires nursery reports and who may give permission for nursery trips or other such activities. At this meeting any means of communication to aid the fluid exchange of information between statutory meetings will be discussed and agreed (such as a home/nursery book to detail any sudden significant changes in a child's circumstances.)

Nursery Trips and Special Activities

Given the delays that looked after children experience in getting parental consent for nursery trips and activities, we will aim to ensure that looked after children enjoy the same extra-curricular opportunities as other children by reserving placements for them on trips or on activities.

Complaints

If a young person, parent or social worker wishes to complain about the provision or policy, they should in the first instance raise it with the designated teacher, who will try to resolve the situation.

If the issue cannot be resolved within 10 days, the young person, carer or social worker can submit a formal complaint in writing to the Head teacher. The Head teacher will investigate the complaint and respond in line with our nursery's complaints policy.

Any issue that remain unresolved at this stage should be addressed through a meeting in order to assess the impact of any such complaint upon the young person's education. This meeting may include the named Governor and any other outside agency that both parties deem necessary to attend. This meeting will follow our complaints policy.