

# LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

## *Statement of intent*

Bishy Barnabees is 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 full potential.

## *Aim*

We aim to:

- Promote secure attachments in children's lives as the basis for resilience;
- promoting children's right to be strong, resilient and listened to by encouraging children to develop a sense of autonomy and independence;
- helping children to establish and sustain satisfying relationships within their new 'family groups', with peers, and with other adults;

## *Methods*

- The term 'looked after child' denotes a child's current legal status; this term is never used to categorise a child as standing out from others. We do not refer to such a child using acronyms such as LAC.
- We do not offer placements for babies and children under two years of age who are in care; we offer instead other services to enable a child to play and engage with other children where their carer stays with the child.
- We offer places to two year old children in exceptional circumstances who are in care. In such cases, the child should have been with the foster carer for at least two months and show signs of having formed a secure attachment to the carer and where the placement in Bishy Barnabees will last a minimum of three months.
- We offer places for funded three and four year olds who are in care to ensure they received their entitlement to early education. We expect that a child will have been with a foster carer for a minimum of one month and has formed a secure attachment to the carer. We expect that the placement in Bishy Barnabees will last a minimum of six weeks.
- We will always offer 'stay and play' provision for a child who is two to five years old who is still settling with their foster carer, or who is only temporarily being looked after.
- Where a child who normally attends Bishy Barnabees is taken into care and is cared for by a local foster carer we will continue to offer the placement for the child.

## *Procedures*

- Our designated people for looked after children are our designated Child Protection Officers, those being *LOUISE KERRY AND JULIE BEASLEY*.
- Every child is allocated a Key Person before they start and this is no different for a looked after child. Louise or Julie ensures the Key Person has the information, support and training necessary to meet the looked after child's needs.
- Louise or Julie and the Key Person liaise with agencies, professionals and practitioners involved with the child and his or her family and ensures appropriate information is gained and shared.
- Bishy Barnabees recognizes the role of the local authority 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 Bishy Barnabees without prior discussion and agreement with the child's social worker.
- At the start of a placement there is a professionals meeting that will 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. Therefore at three to six monthly intervals.

## *The Care Plan*

The care plan needs to consider such issues for the child as:

- The child's emotional needs and how they are to be met;
- How any emotional issues and problems that affect behaviour are to be managed;
- The child's sense of self, culture, language/s and identity – how this is to be supported;
- The child's need for sociability and friendship;
- The child's 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 Bishy Barnabees, 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's 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 Bishy Barnabee's activities that include parents, such as outings, fun-days etc. alongside the foster carer.

### *Settling In*

- The settling-in process for the child is agreed, this is the same as for any other child, with the foster carer taking the place of the parent, unless otherwise agreed. It is even more important that the 'proximity' stage is followed until it is visible that the child has formed a relationship with his or her Key Person sufficient to act as a 'secure base' to allow the gradual separation from the foster carer. This process may take longer in some cases, so time is 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 are noted to form a picture of the whole child in relation to the Early Years Foundation Stage 6 areas of learning.
- 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 Bishy Barnabees Child Protection procedure
- Regular contact is maintained with the social worker through planned meetings that also includes the foster carer.
- Transition to school is handled sensitively and the designated person and or the child's Key Person liaises with the school, passing on relevant information and documentation with the agreement of the looked after child's birth parents.

### *Further Guidance*

- Guidance on the Education of Children and Young People in Public Care (DfEE 2000)
- Who Does What : How Social Workers and Carers can Support the Education of Looked After Children (DfES 2005)

This policy was adopted in June 2011, Updated July 2015  
Reviewed March 2017

To be read in conjunction with Data Storage & Retention Policy, Charging Policy, English as an Additional Language Policy, Settling in Policy, Transition Policy and Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy