

Wirral Fostering Service

Safe Caring Policy Guidance

IT TAKES A BIG **HEART** TO FOSTER



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1. The names we use: or this child calls us

Carers should avoid children calling them 'mummy' or 'daddy' instead encourage children to call them by their first name, or use 'Aunty' or 'Uncle', or another term they feel comfortable with.

2. How we show affection generally: or to this child

All children benefit from warmth and affection however, carers understand that children may view physical affection as a prelude to abuse, and have enough information about the child in placement particularly where abuse is known or suspected.

Carers always ask permission before kissing or cuddling a child, and ensure that the child knows it is ok to say no.

Carers should not avoid all physical contact with children as this can be equally damaging to children.

3. The bathroom generally: or with this child

All children who are old enough and able to bath and wash themselves should have privacy in the bathroom.

If a child needs adult help and supervision, it may be preferable for a female carer to do this and the door should be kept unlocked and slightly open.

If an older child needs intimate care, their wishes and feelings about how this is done are ascertained and respected. How will this be done for this child?

Male carers and teenagers should not be left alone to bath and dress children.

4. The way we dress

Carers do not walk around naked or in their underwear or nightwear without a dressing gown, it may give the wrong messages to some children and can be open to misinterpretation.

A child should be dressed in clothing suitable to his/her age and development and taking in to account religious or cultural needs.

5. Playing generally: or for this particular child

Doors should be left open and carers should be able to easily hear or see what is going on.

Children who have sexually abused should have close supervision whilst playing and careful consideration given to where they play.

Do not allow play fighting, avoid tickling.

When using bikes, skateboards etc, appropriate safety equipment should be used. It is acknowledged that this might be problematic for older children and individual circumstances will need to be discussed with the child's Social Worker.

6. Internet access, using the computer, and use of mobile phones generally: for this particular child

Computers should be used in communal rooms in the house, e.g. living room, dining room, kitchen where an adult is on hand to check what sites a child is viewing.

Children must be advised personal information should not be given out or personal photos uploaded.

Reasonable timescales are set for being "online" and agree this with the Social Worker.

It is important children have access to the internet with certain rules applied. What are these rules in this household or for this child?

If a child has a mobile phone, carers must ensure that the Social Worker is aware. If concerned that an unauthorised contact is taking place with family members, carers must inform the Social Worker.

Children using the social network sites through the computer, or mobile phone need to be monitored, what agreements do the carers have with the child and the child's Social Worker about access and monitoring?

7. Foster Carer/s bedroom: for this child

Children should not enter the adult's bedroom.

8. Children's bedroom, privacy and personal possessions: for this child

Children should only share a bedroom where a risk assessment has been undertaken of each child sharing, and each child's wishes about sharing are ascertained. **The risk assessments and views of the child with the name of the person who asked the child's views are attached to this safe caring Policy and signed off by a Manager.**

Children over the age of eight should not share a room with a child of the opposite gender. For children of the same gender there should be no more than six years age difference.

Bedrooms should only be entered by invitation.

Bedrooms should not normally be used as play areas for other children.

Children's privacy and possessions must be respected and kept safe from everyone within the household or visitors. What steps are taken to ensure this happens?

9. Bedtime generally: or for this child

Carers helping children to bed need to consider the child's reactions when tucking them up in bed, and this is done with the door open. Reading stories to younger children is important and can help the child settle, it is best done with the carer sitting on a chair next to the child's bed rather than sitting on the bed.

10. Who we will use for babysitting: for this child

Carers should use adults only, and only people known and agreed by the Supervising Social Worker or the child's Social Worker. Babysitters should be DBS checked.

If the carers are going to be out overnight or for longer periods this must be made known to the Supervising Social Worker and agreed by the child's Social Worker and arrangements made.

11. Travelling by Car

Carers need to think carefully about who travels alone in a car with a foster child. If there is any concern, the child should sit in the back.

The car is roadworthy, insured and has age appropriate car seats/seat belts.

Important Note: Please note changes to the rules in February 2017 around Booster Seats. [GOV.UK Child car seats: the law](#)

12. When a child is out on their own, or staying over at friends, or missing: for this child

E.g. at friends - do you have phone number, if staying over, have you spoken/visited friend's parents to check out. See temporary carers and overnight stays Policy and missing from care Policy.

What do you do to help older children understand the risks and have skills to keep themselves safe if going out without adult supervision?

Who would this child tell if they felt like running away?

Children need to know they will get a welcome back if they return from going missing, how will the carers do that?

13 Taking photographs and videos: for this child

Carers ask the child's permission before taking photos and tell them who they are for. Carers should be sensitive to children's reaction to having photos taken, and report to the Social Worker any concerns. Carers should never take photographs of children undressed or only in nightwear/ underwear.

Photographs of foster children must not be posted on the internet including those taken by the Foster Carer's family at family events, Foster Carers need to say how they will advise family and friends about this.

14. Communication, including sex and sexuality

All children need to have sex education and it must be responsive to their age and understanding, and for children looked after, geared to their previous experiences

An essential message for children is the right to say 'no' and to protect themselves from abuse.

How will carers do this?

Training is available for this, has the carer completed this training?

15. Health, Medication and Medical advice: for this child (including what regular medication is prescribed and what for)

How do Foster Carers ensure family members are healthy, physically, and emotionally? What do they do to help children understand the importance of health, hygiene and healthy lifestyles? What are they doing for this child to be encouraged to understand and live a healthy lifestyle?

Foster Carers should only give children prescribed medicine, or as advised by a medically trained advisor.

All medication must be kept locked away. A record of medication and treatment given must be kept and signed by the child and person giving it. Supervising Social Workers (SSW) will provide forms for this, which when completed will be given back to the SSW who will send a copy to the child's Social Worker for the child's file, and a copy kept in the Fostering Service.

A record of appointments and when advice has been sought is also kept by Foster Carers and is as above.

16. Rules and Boundaries: for this child

What training has the carer done re: managing behaviour (this is compulsory, if not done, must be booked a.s.a.p.)? Has this included restraint of children? Restraint should only be used in exceptional circumstances 'where it is the only appropriate means to prevent likely injury to the child or other people, or likely to cause serious damage to property in a manner consistent with the actions of a good parent'.

Children are given free access to the household facilities as would be consistent with reasonable arrangements in a family home, Standard 11.4. What are the rules in this household are they consistent for this child?

What sanctions are used? How are they negotiated, does the child know when it ends? If it involves removing the child how is this done, e.g. naughty step.

How is praise given, or recognition of achievements? How is the child helped to feel good and confident?

Include what will be done to minimise each risk in the risk assessment, include how the child will understand these risks and how they can keep themselves safe.

Bullying is a deliberate attempt to hurt or harm another person by threatening verbally, physically, or by actions such as isolating or excluding another person, how do carers manage this behaviour, in the family and with this child. (If bullying occurs this must be reported see anti bullying Policy).

17. Recording/Reporting: for this child

Diary sheets are the child's record of their stay with the carers, and are for them to read whenever they ask. It is good practice for the children to be involved in the writing of them, and make their own entries if they want to. Diary sheets must include achievements and important events, (Photographs can be included) or childhood developments, along with concerns and worries. They must be factual, relevant, and if an opinion is given must be clearly recorded as opinion.

Diary sheets must include, the name of the author, and that it is a Foster Carer filling it in. and include the name of the child, the date with the year. Diary sheets are read, signed off and given to the Supervising Social Worker, and child's Social Worker