

Behaviour Management Policy

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1. Encouraging and Rewarding Children

Whilst children bring their own values and behaviours to placements, residential staff play a key role in influencing children.

The culture of the home, generated by the staff, is crucial. Staff are expected to understand, manage and deal with young people's behaviour including encouraging children to take responsibility for their behaviour and help them to learn how to resolve conflict. A restrictive, unsupportive, discouraging and punishing culture will result in instability, hostility and possibly severe disruption.

The home should have clear, fair boundaries, where children feel safe, encouraged and appropriately rewarded, so that they will thrive and do well. Staff who adopt this approach will also experience less instability and disruption.

Rewards and consequences form a small part of the tools available to staff to support and encourage positive behaviour.

The Positive Relationship Standard (Reg 11.1) states that:

"Children are helped to develop, and benefit from relationships based on:

- a. Mutual trust and respect;
- b. An understanding about acceptable behaviour; and
- c. Positive responses to other children and adults."

Reg 11.2 sets out the expectations on staff to support the social, emotional and behavioural needs of the children and young people whom we care for. For this policy the significant issues include:

That staff:

- Help children to develop socially aware behaviour;

- Encourage each child to take responsibility for their behaviour, in accordance with their age and understanding;
- Help each child to develop and practice skills to resolve conflicts positively and without harm to anyone;
- Communicate to each child expectations about children's behaviour and ensure that each child understands those expectations in accordance with the child's age and understanding;
- Understand how children's previous experiences and present emotions can be communicated through behaviour and ensure that staff have the competence and skills to interpret these and develop positive relationships;
- Are provided with supervision (see supervision policy) and support to enable them to understand and manage their own feelings and responses to the behaviour and emotions of the children, and help the children do the same;
- Deescalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children (see policy on Dealing with violence and aggression);
- That each child is encouraged to build and maintain positive relations with others.

Over time, as children achieve what is expected, such rewards should be reduced or children should be expected to achieve more for the same or a similar reward.

2. Minimum House Rules

The Children's Guide and statement of purpose should set out the homes 'house rules'. This should be explained to children, with the reasons for the rules and they should also know that there are rules for everyone. They should not feel that they are being treated with less regard than other members of the household. Ideally these expectations should be known to children before they are placed.

An example of house rules:

1. No smoking;
2. Keep own bedroom clean and tidy;
3. Do not go into any other bedroom;
4. Be dressed all the time;
5. If you have gone out, return home at the time your carer has said;
6. Always be where you say you will;
7. If you want to change your plans when you are out ask permission from your carer first;

8. Do not hurt anyone else;
9. Do not hurt any pets or animals;
10. Homework must be done;
11. If you have been excluded from school, school work will be done at home;
12. When you use the bathroom or toilet always close the door;
13. If you have any problems try and talk to your carer/residential staff;
14. Try to consider other people's feelings.

3. Consequences

3.1 Guidance on use of Consequences

Consequences can be very effective but, before imposing them, think about it.

Most looked after children have come to view themselves, and are viewed, as failures. They have had their fill of consequences, usually imposed inconsistently, unfairly or as acts of revenge.

Before imposing consequences, carers/residential staff should do all they can to support and encourage children to do well. If children do not behave acceptably, strategies should be adopted that are encouraging and rewarding.

Rather than noticing and sanctioning misbehaviour it is always better to notice and reward good behaviour - or any step in the right direction. For example, it may be more effective to allow a child to have use of a video or TV at bedtime for getting up on time; rather than taking the TV away for getting up late. Same deal, different meaning!

The former is discouraging and causes resentment; the latter is encouraging, can improve self esteem and relationships between children and carers.

If children continue to behave in unacceptable ways, they should be reminded about what is expected and given further encouragement to get it right. If misbehaviour persists or is serious, effective use of reprimands can act as a disincentive or firm reminder. If this does not work, or may not, consequences may be effective.

Where consequences are used they must be reasonable and the minimum necessary to achieve the objective. Also, there should be a belief that the sanction will have the desired outcome - increasing the possibility that acceptable behaviour will follow. All consequences should be recorded on Clear care.

If consequences are imposed, carers should apply the following principles:

- a. Consequences must be the exception, not the rule. A Last Resort;
- b. Consequences must not be imposed as acts of revenge or retaliation;
- c. Think before imposing the consequences; don't apply it in the heat of the moment;
- d. Consequences may only be imposed upon children for persistent or serious misbehaviour where reminders and reprimands have already failed or are likely to fail;
- e. Consequences should only be used if there is a reasonable chance they will have the desired effect of making the point and in reducing or preventing further unacceptable behaviour;
- f. Before applying any sanction, make sure the child is aware that his/her behaviour is unacceptable and, if possible, warn him/her that consequences will be applied if the unacceptable behaviour continues;
- g. It is the certainty not the severity of consequences that is important;
- h. Consequences should only last as long as they need to and allow the child the opportunity to make a fresh start as quickly as possible.

3.2 Non Approved Consequences

The following consequences are Non Approved, which means they may never be imposed upon children:

- a. Any form of corporal punishment; i.e. any intentional application of force as punishment, including slapping, punching, rough handling and throwing missiles;
- b. Any sanction relating to the consumption or deprivation of food or drink;
- c. Any restriction on a child's contact with his or her parents, relatives or friends; visits to the child by his or her parents, relatives or friends; a child's communications with any of the persons listed below*; or his or her access to any telephone helpline providing counselling or advice for children. (NB This does not prevent contact or communication being restricted in exceptional circumstances, where it is necessary to do so to protect the child or others - see Contact with Parents Procedure);
- d. Any requirement that a child wear distinctive or inappropriate clothes;
- e. The use or withholding of medication or medical or dental treatment;
- f. The intentional deprivation of sleep;
- g. The modification of a child's behaviour through bribery or the use of threats;
- h. Any sanction used intentionally or unintentionally which may humiliate a child or could cause them to be ridiculed;
- i. The imposition of any fine or financial penalty, other than a requirement for the payment of a reasonable sum by way of reparation. (NB The Court may impose fines upon children which staff should encourage and support them to repay.);

- j. Any intimate physical examination of a child;
- k. The withholding of aids/equipment needed by a disabled child;
- l. Any measure which involves a child in the imposition of any measure against any other child; or the sanction of a group of children for the behaviour of an individual child;
- m. Swearing at or the use of foul, demeaning or humiliating language or measures.

*The persons with whom the child may have contact, in relation to c. above, are:

- a. Any officer of the [Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service](#) appointed for the child;
- b. Any social worker for the time being assigned to the child by his or her placing authority;
- c. Any person appointed in respect of any requirement of the procedure specified in the Representations Procedure (Children) Regulations 1991;
- d. An [Independent Visitor](#);
- e. Any person authorised by the Regulatory Authority e.g. Ofsted;
- f. Any person authorised by the local authority in whose area the children's home is situated;
- g. Any person authorised by the Secretary of State to conduct an inspection of the children's home and the children there.

3.3 Approved Consequences

The following consequences may be imposed upon children:

- a. Confiscation or withdrawal of a telephone or mobile phone in order to protect a child or another person from harm, injury or to protect property from being damaged;
- b. Restriction on sending or receiving letters or other correspondence (including the use of electronic or internet correspondence) in order to protect a child or another person from harm, injury or to protect property from being damaged;
- c. Reparation, involving the child doing something to put right the wrong they have done; e.g.: repairing damage or returning stolen property;
- d. Restitution, involving the child paying for all or part of damage caused or the replacement of misappropriated monies or goods. No more than two thirds of a child's pocket money may be taken in these circumstances if the payment is small and withdrawn in a single weekly amount. Larger amounts may be paid in restitution but must be of a fixed amount with a clear start and end period. If the damage is serious or the size of payment particularly large then the child's Social Worker should be informed of the matter;
- e. Curtailment of leisure activities, involving a child being prevented from participating in such activities;

- f. Additional chores, involving a child undertaking additional chores over and above those they would normally be expected to do;
- g. Early bedtimes, by up to half an hour or as agreed with the child's Social Worker;
- h. Removal of equipment, for example the use of a TV or video/DVD player;
- i. Loss of privileges, for example the withdrawal of the privilege of staying up late;
- j. Suspension of pocket money for short periods.

3.4 Monitoring and Recording Use of Consequences

The Home Manager must monitor and review the use of consequences and that the sanction used has been appropriate.

The effectiveness of consequences should be reviewed to ensure consequences are an effective tool. If the consequences are not working alternative methods should be applied.

Consequences to be recorded in the Consequences Record and child's record.