

DERBY CITY COUNCIL

SAFER CARING PLAN GUIDE FOR FOSTER CARERS

Guidance for Practice

The objectives of 'safe caring' practices are:-

- ❖ To ensure the needs of the children in placement are met
- ❖ To outline the principles and rules for living together
- ❖ To ensure children, foster carers, parents, social workers and the local authority know what the expectations are in this family and agree in principle
- ❖ To keep everyone in the foster carer's household safe from harm and abuse
- ❖ To keep members of the foster family safe from complaints and false allegations of abuse

All foster carers need to produce a plan for their household, and each individual child to help to achieve these aims. In producing this, you will need to think about how your family works, what household 'rules' you have, and what guidelines you will need to adjust or change whilst you are acting as foster carers.

The guidelines you follow should be the result of discussion with all members of your household and discussed with your fostering social worker, children's social worker, and where appropriate parents. They may need to be adjusted to meet the needs of a particular situation, and for any individual child you may be asked to foster. You should let your foster child know that you have thought about how to keep everyone safe and secure and this plan is how you will do it.

Safer caring plan- (add names)

Your plan is an individual one for your home and circumstances, but the following information gives guidelines as to what may need to be included in your personal plan. You should let your foster child know that you have a plan and encourage discussion around the guidelines that apply to them whilst they live with you. This is so you can meet the foster child's needs, and develop a caring relationship. The safer caring plan identifies how you will safely manage risk, whilst allowing the child to try new experiences, make mistakes in a safe environment, develop skills and encourage resilience. How do you welcome a child into your home?

You should start with a general statement, such as this statement below...

'In my/our house, I/we have some guidelines as to what we do. We call this our 'safer caring' plan and we believe it is important to have this plan so that children and young people feel safe and comfortable whilst they live with me/us in this house.

1. **Care and expected Behaviour.** Important to let children know 'in our house we do not smack children'. What are the consequences of 'breaking the rules'. Methods of discipline; rewards for appropriate behaviour. How will affection be shown ('in this house we'.....) Rough and tumble, tickling, teasing. Consider the impact of these behaviours on the child, and whether the child has the ability to understand it is play, and accept when play is over.
2. **Playing.** Where play is allowed, in and out of house, and times to be in the house. Rules about tidying of toys. Expectations re playing with friends. Giving information about friend's addresses, phone numbers, times to be home. Rules re checking in with foster carer for older children.
3. **Outside Activities,** Safety around cycling or other activities. Swimming. Attending clubs, What? Who with? Where? Is a risk assessment needed?
4. **Bedroom** How do you respect privacy for all family members. Rules about knocking. Presence of friends in bedrooms. Bedtime routines, who does what? What to do if the child is sick, gets up in the night. Babies/cots in bedroom. What are the arrangements when on holiday, is a risk assessment needed? Sleepovers?

5. **Bathroom**. How will privacy be maintained. Routines for use of bathroom, and expectations re personal hygiene. Is an intimate care plan needed/risk assessment? How will the child develop self care skills/who will assist if needed and how?
6. **Health, Accidents and Emergencies** We will register you with a GP/dentist/optician. How do we administer medication? How we deal with accidents and emergencies. Hygiene? Managing health conditions and any risks? Sexual health, information and responsibility.
7. **Kitchen**. Who is allowed in and when. (Also think about safety around cooking, access to chemicals, medicines etc.) Children should be encouraged to be involved in some meal preparation/baking activities under supervision to develop a sense of achievement, responsibility and independence.
8. **Dress**. Appropriate dress for different situations. Rules about covering up and nudity. Use of dressing gowns, appropriate nightwear.
9. **Out and about**. Car safety, seat belts etc. Giving information about friends' addresses, phone numbers, times to be home. Rules re 'checking in' with foster carer. Who is responsible for transporting children, what are the rules about where to sit? Expected behaviour in cars and when out.
10. **Alternative Child Care**. Who will care for the children if you go out? (no under 16s) Are carers aware of your household policy? Do they know where to get help?
11. **Overnight stays**. Check there is a delegated authority consideration in relation to this child. Always check where the child wants to stay, speak to an adult in the house to confirm the plan, and check with child's social worker wherever possible. Remember you still need to inform the social worker even where you have delegated authority to make the decision.
12. **Smoking**. If and where allowed. (think about where drink and cigarettes will be kept)
13. **Confidentiality**. How will you respect their right to privacy and confidentiality about personal information? What information will need to be shared with other people, and who will you share it with?

14. **Photographs** - think about what photos you take. Is the child happy with having his/her photo taken? Who will view them? Could the photo be misconstrued by others. Good photos are excellent in preserving history for a child, but can be misused. What do we do with photographs on mobile phones and computers?
15. **Mobile phones, Computers and Social Networking**. Communication Technology can be an excellent way of keeping an eye on your foster child, but what is your policy to be regarding their use? Can you enforce this? What finance will you allow to fund a mobile phone? Is the parent aware and in agreement with your policy? Is the social worker aware and in agreement to its use? Is there a time when they must be switched off in the day/evening? When can the computer be used. Are there adequate parental controls in place? Supervision arrangements. (think about where you put the computer in the house) What social networking sites are the children allowed to access, and when? How do you know who the child is contacting? What are the privacy settings and filters? Balance online/offline? How will you monitor usage?
16. **Money and financial arrangements**. Pocket money? Who and when to give? Agreements about savings? Contributions to Junior ISA? Can the child spend their own money as they want, or are some things restricted?
17. **Pets**. Who can handle the pets. Expectations about children's behaviour around pets.
18. **Fire Evacuation** Does everyone know how to get out of the house in the event of fire? When and how do you make sure they know?

Remember to sign and date the plan and update if needed, if things change and especially if another child joins the family.