

**PROTOCOL FOR CALLING THE POLICE**  
**THE RIDE CHILDREN'S HOME**

**1. Introduction**

The aim of this protocol is to identify reasons for Police involvement with the home, what the home will do to minimise Police involvement in the home and what response the home can expect from the Police if they are contacted by the home.

The Ride is a 6 bedded emergency to long term children's home that accommodates 'young people' from the ages of twelve to seventeen on admission.

Our priority is the safety of the young people that we accommodate and the staff looking after them.

Research shows that young people who live within children's homes are far more likely to become offenders and are overrepresented within the prison population in the U.K.

The Ride does not believe that the young people in their care should be criminalised and is working together with Hounslow YOS to use restorative justice methods programmes to reduce this.

All of the young people in the home will be vulnerable and have suffered significant 'trauma' or traumatic events in their lives. This may result in the young people having behaviours that are extreme and may put both themselves, other young people and /or the staff who are caring for them and / or others at significant risk of harm and as such, be very difficult to manage in a safe way by the staff looking after them.

The Ride is staffed with a minimum of two staff on an AM shift and 3 staff on a PM shift with 2 people sleeping in, however staffing may increase depending on the number of young people that are in placement at any one time and the difficulties that they may be experiencing. During office hours the management team are also often in the home.

We understand that Police attending the home for minor incidents is very time consuming for the police, not productive and damages relationships between the home, young people and the Police.

At The Ride we have a history of little police involvement with the home, and we would like this to continue.

## **2. Possible Reasons for Police Involvement in the Home:**

- Safeguarding concerns relating to the young people, including any concerns re: child sexual exploitation.
- Reporting young people missing from home.
- Returning young people who have been missing.
- Calling for Police assistance if the young people are exhibiting behaviour that is very risky and likely to cause significant harm to themselves or others or significant damage to property.
- The Police attending the home re: matters concerning the young people that have been committed away from the home.
- Complaints made by the young people or others.
- Safer Neighbourhood 'visits' by the Police.
- Reporting criminal acts by others not resident at the home perpetrated i.e. theft, damage etc.
- Investigating criminal offences that may have been captured on the homes CCTV cameras.

## **3. Why The Home Will Have to Contact the Police.**

- Safeguarding concerns relating to the young people for incidents that may have happened in the home or away from the home. These may not only be reported by the staff but also by the young people themselves.

We have a duty to report concerns regarding safeguarding to the Police for possible action / investigation and to keep the young people in our care safe from harm.

- Young people who are missing from home or who have failed to return to the home by their curfew time, especially if staff have not managed to maintain telephone contact with them. This is because we have a 'duty of care' to the young people residing at the home ; if they have not returned home by a

reasonable hour we have a duty to report them as missing to the Police due to their vulnerability. This time will be agreed with their social worker.

- Young people who are putting themselves or others at significant risk of harm by their behaviours that cannot be safely managed by the staff on duty. Our 'duty of care' relates not only to the young people resident but also to the staff team working within the home. If staff feel that there is an immediate and significant risk of harm to anyone in the house (young people or adults) they may have to contact the Police for immediate assistance.
- The staff at the home may contact the Police for assistance to remove individuals from the home who have no authorisation to be there e.g. young people or adults who have entered the house without permission and refuse to leave, these may be relatives or friends of the young people or could be unknown adults threatening harm to a resident.
- All visitors to the home who are deemed to be 18+ will have their I.D checked before being allowed entry and will be supervised by the staff when at the home depending on the circumstances (the level of supervision will depend on if they are known as a friend or relative to a young person and it is known that they do not pose a risk).
- Staff at the home may also contact the Police directly if they believe they have been assaulted, had damage done to their property or had property stolen.
- All members of society have a right to report what they believe to have been a criminal act perpetrated to their person or belongings.

#### **4. What the Police Can Expect the Home to do to Minimise Police Involvement with the Home:**

- Each night there is a manager 'on call', prior to any Police involvements within the home the 'on call' manager should be contacted and advise given and followed. The 'on call' manager will consult staff on shift regarding the nature of the incident and staff on shift will follow their advice, which may or may not include involving the Police.

**However** if there is a real and immediate risk of significant harm to young people or the staff caring for them, police should be called immediately dialling 999 for assistance and the on call manager notified when it is safe to do so.

Damage caused by the young people to the home will not normally be reported to the Police; however this may also depend on the severity of the damage caused. In these instances the on call manager should be contacted who will advise accordingly.

- All the young people will have risk assessments in place, known by the staff, which will outline how staff will manage presenting challenging behaviours. These do not routinely include contacting the Police.
- Staff are trained on Positive Behaviour Support (Team Teach) which focuses on de-escalation and use of physical restraints as a last resort. These techniques are designed to keep the young people, staff and others safe at times of crisis and focuses on de-escalating situations before young people become aggressive. It is also recognised that given size differences etc. this is not always possible once the situation escalates to physical aggression. The Police will not be called to help manage behaviour unless there is real and significant unmanageable risk.
- Prior to reporting young people as 'missing from home' to the Police the staff will have searched the home and made numerous attempts to contact the young person – including calling friends and family members to attempt to locate them as per Philomena Protocol. If staff have not managed to have verbal communication with them via telephone contact young people will be reported as missing and a grab pack sent to police detailing clothing worn etc. within 30 minutes of not returning within their curfew time Police will then risk assess the level of risk and provide a CAD number to staff. Any young person deemed at serious risk who should be reported missing quicker will have details on when to report to police detailed in their care plan which will have been agreed with the young person's Social Worker.
- The staff will try and contact the young people by 'phone and find out why they are late returning. If they are on their way home they will be allowed time to return and contacted again nearer the time they have given. Unless there is a significant safeguarding concern they will not be reported to the Police if they are believed to be on their way home, however, they will be reported later if they fail to return.
- All the young people will have plans regarding actions to take if they are missing from home. These will include trying to locate the young people missing and returning them to the home if possible. However, if there is a crisis in the home or minimal staff on duty preventing staff from collecting them it may not be possible for them to return the young people immediately and the Police may have to be contacted. The Police may also have to be contacted should the young people be thought to be at an address or location that is known to present a risk (to the young person or member of staff collecting them) or the young people are presenting challenging behaviours and are not considered to be safe to transport.
- We will always try and resolve complaints from neighbours / members of the public with the individuals concerned. However, they may contact the Police if they feel it is warranted.

- The staff will always try to ensure that ‘unwanted’ visitors leave the home when they are requested to.
- Staff who wish to report matters perpetrated on their person or property would be encouraged to discuss the matter with a manager prior to them contacting the Police to see if any other solution is available to them.
- Manager will attend ward panel meetings on a three monthly basis.

## **5. The Homes Expectations of the Police.**

- The Police understand that the reason the home is contacting them is of a serious nature.
- That if the staff are requesting an immediate response then that response is as immediate as it can be from the Police.
- If young people are reported as “missing” from home the Police will circulate their description, attend the home and complete a search of their room and complete a Police Prevention interview on the young people’s return to the home.
- If there are reasons to attend the home due to Safeguarding concerns the Police will follow the Local Safeguarding Children’s Board protocols, policy and procedure.
- That the Police visit the home as part of their ‘safer neighbourhood’ visits.

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