

**SAFER CARING POLICY SOCIAL WORKER GUIDANCE**

***All approved Foster Carers must have a Safer Caring Plan which is prepared by the Supervising Social Worker, together with the Foster Carers as soon as the Carer is approved.***

***The reviewing and updating of the Safer Caring Plan is part of the support provided to the Foster Carer by the Supervising Social Worker and must include the Child’s Social Worker. Safer Caring plans must be prepared in the case of any placement, as soon as the child is placed, where there are any safeguarding concerns or at least annually where none of the above apply.***

***There should be one Safer Caring Plan for each child in every fostering household and must be signed by the Foster Carer.***

***NMS 20.9 – Appropriate training on safer caring is provided for all members of the foster household, including young people of sufficient age and understanding, and ensures that foster carers understand how safer caring principles should be applied in a way which meets the needs of individual children.***

***Process for completing the Safer Caring Plan on LCS:***

1. The Safer Caring Plan must be created as a new form on LCS.
2. The form is completed by the Social Worker with the Foster Carer.
3. Once completed the form should be saved on your computer as a PDF.
4. To enable signatures, close the PDF and then go back to where it is saved and right click/open with/choose another app/Word, to open as a Word document.
5. The Foster Carer reads through what has been agreed and signs off with the laptop pen.
6. The Social Worker saves and uploads the signed word document onto the Carer file in documents.
7. The Social Worker returns to the LCS form and completes the final section to confirm that the form is signed, the date signed and finalise the form.

**Guidance on LCS form for Social Workers:**

***Sandwell Foster carer handbook has a detailed section on ‘Developing a Safer Caring Plan’ for Foster Carers that SSW’s should be referring their carers to.***

**Health, Allergies and Accidents**

* Ensure all accidents are recorded correctly and appropriate professionals consulted
* That children and young people are registered with a GP, Dentist and Optician
* Serious accidents need to be medically assessed by a GP or at Hospital
* Be aware of any allergies and act accordingly
* In partnership with the child’s social worker that all immunisations are up to date.
* All medicines need to be kept in a secure location

Please include additional information in relation to your household:

**Bathing and Personal Care**

* Supervise bathing at all times if the child is very young or has additional needs
* Ensure that the child has the appropriate washing items and skin / hair products
* Appropriate drying facilities need to be made available such as clean towels and dressing gown.
* Make sure there is an appropriate seat on the toilet and step if required
* Ensure bathroom privacy is given to those children whom it is age appropriate to.

Please include additional information in relation to your household:

**Communication and Language**

* The children and young people will be referred to by their name at all times
* That Foster Carers be encouraged to use creative methods of communication if the child or young person does not speak English.
* Carers will ask what name the chid (if age appropriate) wants to be referred to as.
* That children and young people should be encouraged to call the Foster Carers by their names or a mutually agreed name. This should not be ‘mom and dad’.
* That the Foster Carers will inform and remind children and young people that swearing, abusive language or negative comments should not be used.

Please include additional information in relation to your household:

**Bedroom Safety and Vigilance**

* The children and young people should have their own room unless they are siblings and a bedroom sharing risk assessment has been completed.
* Each unrelated child should have their own bedroom above age 5.
* All household members should knock before entering the bedroom of another person.
* That the Foster Carer should be highly vigilant when there is more than one child and young person upstairs or if there is a risk of self harm.
* That older children should be encouraged to keep their room tidy and that they should have a lockable box for their personal and sentimental belongings.
* All bedrooms should have nets, blinds and curtains to ensure children have privacy when changing.

Please include additional information in relation to your household:

**Dressing and Clothing**

* Children and young people will be encouraged to dressed appropriately
* Children and young people may need support to dress themselves
* Children and young people will have appropriate underwear, day clothes and night clothes.
* The child would need a school uniform that fits well and is in good repair.
* All family members to be dressed appropriately whilst walking around the house.
* That the child and young person will have a washing basket and if age appropriate, be supported to wash and iron their clothes.

Please include additional information in relation to your household:

**Play and social activities**

* Play should be supervised for younger children
* Toys and books are age appropriate, clean and if necessary meet British Standards.
* Provide activities and environments that are well organised, age appropriate and safe
* Computer gaming may need to be monitored, as some young people may have a tendency to spend many hours on these devices.
* If children attend social or sporting activities, this should be with an appropriate and trained provider

Please include additional information in relation to your household:

**Issues of disability**

* Carer will ensure a child or young person has the correct equipment and that it is in full working order (i.e. hearing aids, glasses, walking aids and adaptation)
* The carer will ensure that all additional health appointments are attended.
* Carer seeks professional advice as and when needed.
* That the carer has appropriate training in relation to the child’s additional needs and that this is kept up to date.

Please include additional information in relation to your household:

**Affection and physical interaction**

* The child and young person may want to offer physical affection such as hugs and kisses. The carers should be mindful of this and ensure that this is handled with sensitivity and with an understanding of the child’s or young person’s history.
* Carers should be mindful that some looked after children may interpret close contact differently and play fighting and tickling should be discouraged.
* All affection needs to be instigated by the child and not the carer.

Please include additional information in relation to your household:

**Discipline and behaviour management**

* The use of physical chastisement is not permitted
* Sending children and young people to their rooms should not be used as a technique
* Withholding contact and school trips is not an appropriate sanction.
* Restraints are not permitted
* Carers should consult with their Supervising Social Worker or the child’s Social Worker regarding different behaviour management approaches
* Discipline needs to be consistent and the same from both Carers.

Please include additional information in relation to your household:

**Contact**

* Contact with birth family will be organised by the child’s allocated social worker
* Carers need to be vigilante with mobile phones and social networking as this can be used by parents and family as a means of contact
* All contact must be supervised by an appropriate worker unless directed otherwise by children’s services
* If the carer is aware of any contact safeguarding issues, they must inform the appropriate professional immediately

Please include additional information in relation to your household:

**Transport and equipment**

* Children and young people will travel in fully insured roadworthy vehicles and have appropriate seating in the vehicle.
* All pushchairs, cots, car seats, high chairs etc. must conform to BS standards and are in full working order
* If the young person uses a bicycle, skate board or roller skates that they should have appropriate protective equipment.

Please include additional information in relation to your household:

**Digital devices, social networking and mobile phones**

* Carers must ensure that when children and young people access the internet, how this is monitored to ensure they are not accessing inappropriate material. The carers should have robust internet security.
* Carers must ensure that mobile phones are not used to access inappropriate material, unauthorised birth family contact and young people should be discouraged from having mobiles in their bedrooms at bedtime.
* Carers must ensure that cameras on phones or webcams are not being used inappropriately.
* Carers must ensure that young people, school and other organisations should not post public photos of children in care, unless prior authorisation is given.
* Carers must be mindful that technology may be sold for other purposes or that some children in care, may have electronic devices without an explanation of how they acquired them.

Please include additional information in relation to your household:

**Talking about sex and relationships**

* To be age appropriate with their discussions
* Carers should not use inappropriate language or slang when discussing this young people.
* Carers should use their discretion on who may be the best person to talk to children and young people, dependent upon the child’s age, gender and understanding about these matters
* Carers to recognise that young people may need to have privacy

Please include additional information in relation to your household:

**Holidays and second homes (caravans)**

* The child needs permission to go on holiday and carers should not book holidays unless written agreement has been given by the child’s Social Worker or parent.
* Foster Carers should be mindful when holiday and must apply their own risk assessment and safer caring, in relation to the age and presentation of the child or young person.
* Permission needs to be sought prior to undertaking any risky activities which would include activities such as water skiing; rock climbing; jet skiing; abseiling; etc. (this is not an exhaustive list)

Please include additional information in relation to your household:

**Privacy, confidentiality and personal belongings**

* Carers must not share information with other Carers about children and young people in their care, unless it is appropriate to do so.
* Carers should keep all information on children and young people they care for in a secure manner and this should be confidentiality destroyed when a young person moves on.
* All household members should have the option and space to have some private time.
* Carers must ensure that children and young people’s personal belongings (especially sentimental ones) should be kept safe and be moved on appropriately when children move on
* Valuable items, such as jewellery, money, bank cards etc should be kept in a secure place where only the carer has access.

Please include additional information in relation to your household:

**Alcohol and Substance Misuse and Dangerous Items**

* Carers need to be vigilante where they store alcohol and hazardous substances that may be a risk to children and young people
* Cigarettes, lighters and matches should be stored securely
* Carers should a good understanding of substance misuse and be able to recognise the signs of this.
* Carers should contact theirs and the young person’s Social Worker if they find any illegal substances, weapons or other dangerous items within the placement

Please include additional information in relation to your household: