**West Sussex – Practice Guidance**

IROs are qualified social workers with at least five years’ experience, and who have acquired the right skills to carry out this role.

**Safety Checks in a children’s home**

**Risks and risk assessment**

* It is the responsibility of the Registered Manager, or delegated member of staff, to frequently update and review the Location, Grounds and Health and Safety risk assessments and ensure that all recommended measures are in place to minimise risk in the workplace.
* Each staff member has a responsibility to maintain close monitoring and supervision of the home at all times, with particular reference to the presence and location of high risk items.
* High risk items include:
* Solvents/glue
* Illegal drugs and “legal highs”
* Knives and weapons
* Non age appropriate magazines/pornography
* Alcohol
* Staff must remain vigilant about the potential misuse of everyday objects or substances for the purpose of self-harming or causing harm to others.
* *Please also refer to the Practice Guidance on Self-Harm.*

**Checking communal areas**

* Staff will undertake a thorough check of all internal communal areas every evening, once children are asleep in their bedrooms.
* The Home check will include the following:
* Checking for the presence of any high risk or prohibited items
* Checking for any damaged items, furnishings or loose fittings and logging them for repair and/or removing them from the home as necessary
* Checking that all potential risk items are securely stored away and not accessible to children

**Checks of external areas**

* Staff will undertake proportionate checks as follows:
* All fences, external doors and gate fittings are not damaged or compromised in their use ensuring any issues are reported to the Registered Manager as soon as possible
* Check for and dispose of any foreign objects that should not be present in the area
* Check that any activity-specific equipment is in good repair and safely stored to prevent injury
* Check that all external buildings are locked and all equipment is safely stored
* Staff will complete a weekly Health and Safety check to ensure the safety of the environment.

**Repair and maintenance issues**

* All staff members have a responsibility to report potential dangers around the Home to the Registered Manager who will then liaise with the Facilities team or the Home’s handyperson (if available) to co-ordinate a timely response.
* All concerns should be recorded in the Maintenance Log, updated and checked off when completed.
* Where risk is identified as ‘High’, immediate action must be taken to minimise the potential danger.
* In the event that damage or destruction of property or premises is attributable to the actions of a child or children, staff will consider whether a restorative sanction is required. Any sanctions will be recorded on the child’s file and a Sanctions report.
* Where a child has caused multiple or repeated damage, staff will consider ways to address this, taking into account the impact on others.

**Recording of searches**

* Where a child’s bedroom has been checked, the child should counter sign the Room Check Log and be invited to add any comments *(see Practice Guidance on Searching Bedrooms).*
* The report will also clearly identify whether any risk or prohibited items were identified, and what actions were taken.
* In the event that high-risk or prohibited items are identified that may present a risk or intention of self-harming, a referral will be made to a qualified mental health professional for specialist assessment and support.
* In the event that potential weapons or illegal substances are identified in the process of a Home check, the matter should be referred to the Registered Manager or delegated senior member of staff for consultation with the Police.
* The Registered Manager will decide whether the information needs to be shared with parent/carers and any other professional contacts and if a Regulation 40 report needs to be completed.

**Links to related documents:**

Staff Expectations

Home Safety Policy

Health & Safety policy

Location Risk Assessment

Self-harm Policy

Location Risk Assessment

Grounds Risk Assessment

Health and Safety risk assessment

Weekly H&S Check

Home Check Log