**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.

**Behaviour Management**

**Boundaries and expectations**

* Children will be positively rewarded for behaviour that demonstrates self-respect; respect for others, equipment, resources and facilities within the home. Positive rewards can be as simple as praising a child for showing these qualities.
* Children are expected to communicate and conduct themselves in a non-threatening way that promotes positive regard, consideration of others and social cohesion, in line with their age and understanding.
* Any activity, act or omission that places the wellbeing of others at risk may attract a proportionate and measured consequence.
* Staff will explain and maintain clear and consistent boundaries in relation to acceptable behaviour at a level appropriate to the child’s age and understanding.
* Interactions between staff and children are based upon mutual respect and understanding and clear professional and personal boundaries which are effective and appropriate to the setting.
* Staff will model the desired behaviour by treating the children and each other with respect at all times.

**Managing behaviours associated with disabilities and additional needs**

* A significant proportion of the children living or accessing short breaks in WSCC children’s homes will have some level of diagnosed learning disability or additional needs. They may be placed within a specialist provision, or be better matched to one of the non-specialist homes if their additional needs are a secondary factor in their coming into care.
* This cohort of children may present with some behaviours that are associated with their disability or additional needs; such as physically targeting another child if they present with loud unpredictable noises for a child with sensory difficulties.
* As such, these presenting behaviours will not be treated in the same way as if the motivation behind the behaviour was intentional or malicious in nature. It is important to establish a clear baseline of known behaviours and triggers for children so that appropriate strategies can be put in place.
* Consequently, some children may have a number of defined behaviour management strategies in place that have been recommended followed specialist assessments. Staff will be expected to implement these strategies as part of the child’s Behaviour Support Plan / Positive Handling Plan and work with other professionals to ensure the child is making progress in specific areas.

**Staff responsibilities**

* Residential staff should at all times endeavour to:
* Listen to and empathise with children, respect their thoughts and feelings and take their wishes into consideration;
* Look for things that are going well, or any step in the right direction, and appropriately reward it;
* Use rewards in a creative and diverse way, specific to children's needs, capabilities and interests. This may mean that children are rewarded with toys, games, activities or monetary rewards. But all 'tangible' rewards should be accompanied by use of 'non tangible' encouragement and support - by carers/staff demonstrating to children that they have done well. Such 'non tangible' rewards include praising, smiling, touching and hugging children.

**Expectations within the home**

* It will be appropriate in most children’s homes to establish some minimum ‘rules’ that apply in the home so children are clear about what is expected of them. The Registered Manager is responsible for ensuring all children are aware of the expectations and boundaries of behaviour in the home, and will need to adapt their guidelines in line with the age and understanding of the children living in the home. Some suggested rules are:
* No smoking;
* Keep own bedroom clean and tidy;
* Do not go into any other bedroom;
* Be dressed all the time;
* If you have gone out, return home at the time that has been agreed;
* Always be where you say you will;
* If you want to change your plans when you are out, ask permission first;
* Do not hurt any member of staff;
* Homework must be done;
* If you have been excluded from school, school work will be done at home;
* When you use the bathroom or toilet, always close the door;
* If you have any problems try and talk to staff;
* Try to consider other people's feelings.

**Positive behaviour support**

* Where a child’s behaviour falls below expected levels, staff may instigate proportionate measures or consequences that are constructive, controlled and in line with their agreed Positive Handling Plan.
* As part of group living, it is important that each individual has an understanding of how their behaviour impacts on others. The use of a restorative approach is adopted within WSCC children’s homes. Restorative approaches are a powerful approach to behaviour management that focuses on repairing harm through inclusive processes that engage everyone involved in the incident. Implemented well, the restorative approach shifts the focus from punishment to learning.
* Children are encouraged to develop awareness of their rights as well as their responsibilities towards themselves and other children and staff in the Home.
* A ‘Positive Handling Plan’ will be developed with the child including individual triggers, preferred responses and consequences. Approaches to different situations will be clarified and discussed with the child, in line with their age and understanding.
* Staff will receive regular training in positive behaviour support and employ strategies that promote positive interactions with others.
* All children will be treated equally and consistently in the home.
* Where a child’s behaviour has significantly improved, or positive behaviour is sustained in difficult circumstances, the child should be rewarded with positive feedback and a record should be kept to acknowledge the circumstances surrounding the improvement. This will inform future planning for the child.
* Staff should identify an appropriate and proportionate reward in negotiation with the child in line with their age and understanding and this should be recorded clearly and shared as appropriate.
* Staff should identify and discuss their high aspirations and expectations with children and celebrate when progress is made and maintained.

**Links to related documents:**

Positive Handling Plan

Building Positive Relationships

Rewards & Consequences (Sanctions)

Dealing with Challenging and Violent Behaviour

Use of Restraint and Physical Interventions