



# BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT POLICY

COTTONGRASS HOMES

## **ASSESSING AND PLANNING FOR SUCCESS**

Upon admission to a Cottongrass Home, all children will be assessed to establish if any behaviours require additional or specialist support or management.

A pre-admission risk assessment is required for each young person prior to accommodation, for both planned and emergency placements. This is to be completed by the placing social worker and based on known recent behaviours. This should be made available to all staff, official visitors and any other person(s) working with/alongside the children that we support and taken into account when drafting risk assessments relating to that child, the children who live alongside him/her and staff who support him/her.

Following admission, each home will be responsible for on-going behavioural risk assessment. Any and all concerns in this regard will be noted in the weekly house diary (within the daily observations) and where relevant the child's personalised support plan. The risk assessment for that child will be reconsidered and amended if and when noted and recorded behaviour requires.

New staff members are trained on form completion and behaviour is a standing agenda item in staff meetings where risk assessments may also be considered and amended.

### **1. POLICY/COTTONGRASS HOMES' BELIEFS**

Consistency is the key, where staff/carers manage behaviour inconsistently, little if any progress will be made; it may result in more disruption.

Where staff/carers work together, improvements will be made.

The setting of routine & boundaries or expectations must not be ad hoc or unplanned. Planning is critical; particularly where children's behavioural needs are complex or where behaviours give rise to serious concern, such as violence, drug or substance misuse, self-harming, bullying.

Each child's personal development plan should summarise how their behaviours should be managed, including the strategies that will be adopted in managing the behaviours.

**Good behaviour should be encouraged, promoted and rewarded.**

Children should be encouraged and supported to acquire the skills and level of responsibility and freedom which is within their capabilities and understanding; in turn, this will improve their self-image and confidence.

If children are capable of it, they must be involved in monitoring and reviewing their plans - and in agreeing new objectives and strategies.

## **2. ENCOURAGING AND REWARDING CHILDREN**

See Flowchart on Encouraging and Rewarding Success. **Relationships**

Our relationships with the young people are the single most influential factor in managing behaviour. This being accepted the following should be believed and adhered to:

1. If children invest in staff relationships and feel cared for, valued and respected, this will help towards appropriate behaviour.
2. The message that staff need to send to young people is self-regulation; the ability for young people to be able to amend and control their own behaviour.
3. Young people need to understand that it is 'ok' to feel angry, upset or scared, but that there are ways of dealing with these emotions in a safe and appropriate way.
4. Staff within our homes should always endeavour to develop a positive working relationship with each young person.
5. Staff should have a readiness to listen to young people and empathise with them, respect their feelings and take their wishes into consideration. They should have the capacity to accept young people for what they are, and to challenge their behaviour only when necessary.

### **Promoting Positive Behaviour**

At Cottongrass Homes we believe that promoting positive behaviour is more productive than the use of punitive measures for challenging behaviours. The use of praise; positive feedback to young people, incentive and reward schemes, and having an environment that has regular positive re-enforcement are all integral to promoting positive behaviour.

### 3. REMINDERS AND REPRIMANDS

See Flowchart on reminders and reprimands

#### 3.1 Reminders

Whilst it is crucial to notice and reward acceptable behaviour, it is also important to manage unacceptable or disruptive behaviour; in the same, positive and consistent, manner. Matters of concern must be raised and discussed with the child, with a view to giving the child a fresh start. If misbehaviour is persistent or serious, other strategies may have to be adopted; but minor or non-persistent behaviours should only result in staff/carers reminding or cautioning children.

Reminders and cautions should be clear and to the point, with clarity about:

- the behaviours which are unacceptable;
- the impact or influence that the behaviour is having on the child or others;
- clarity about what is expected;
- help, advice and encouragement to put things right;
- and an agreement for a fresh start with no recriminations or further reminders.

Staff/carers should employ a range of non-verbal and verbal techniques to show their disapproval. Any step in the right direction must be approved of and rewarded whilst mistakes or problems should be openly discussed and strategies for change identified and encouraged.

**The overall strategy should be to help the child do well.**

#### 3.2 Reprimands

Where behaviour is persistently or seriously unacceptable, it may be appropriate to reprimand children.

However reprimands may only be used in the following circumstances:

- If children are capable of behaving acceptably and, preferably, understand what is expected;
- Where children have persistently or seriously failed to do as required/expected;
- Where nothing else can be done to change the behaviour; for example, by encouraging and rewarding acceptable behaviour rather than noticing and reprimanding unacceptable behaviour. If it appears that a reprimand is justified, it should preferably be delivered in private, on the spot or as soon after the misbehaviour as possible.

Reprimands don't have to be loud but the person delivering them should appear 'in charge' or 'in control' and it should be said with feeling, with the staff member stating clearly what is wrong, how s/he and others are affected by the misbehaviour and - critically - what should be done to put things right.

The person delivering the reprimand should provide the child with an opportunity to explain but should not necessarily expect an apology. However, there should be clarity for the child that **improvement is expected** - and as necessary the adult should discuss what support and encouragement will be given to put things right.

An effective reprimand is over and done within a few minutes - and then the child should be given **a fresh start**.

## 4. CONSEQUENCES

### 4.1 Guidance on use of consequences

The use of consequences as a result of a child's behaviour can be very effective but, before imposing them, THINK.

In general if children do not behave acceptably, **strategies should be** adopted that are **encouraging and rewarding**.

Where consequences are used they must be reasonable & the minimum necessary to achieve the objective. Also, there should be a belief that the consequence will have the desired outcome - increasing the possibility that acceptable behaviour will follow.

The following principles always apply:

- Consequences must be the exception, not the rule;
- Consequences must not be imposed as acts of revenge or retaliation;
- Think, and discuss with your manager, before imposing any consequence; don't apply it in the heat of the moment;
- Consequences may only be imposed upon children for persistent or serious misbehaviour; where reminders and reprimands have already failed or are likely to fail;
- Before applying any sanction, make sure the child is aware that his/her behaviour is unacceptable and, if possible, warn him/her that consequences will be applied if the unacceptable behaviour continues;
- It is the certainty not the severity of consequences that is important;
- Consequences should only last as long as they need to, allow the child the opportunity to **make a fresh start as quickly as possible**.

### 4.2 Non-Approved Consequences

The following must never be used:

- (a) any form of corporal punishment;
- (b) the child being confined to their room
- (c) the child being prevented from leaving the home
- (d) a punishment involving the consumption or deprivation of food or drink;
- (e) a restriction, other than one imposed by a court, on—
  - (i) A child's contact with parents, relatives or friends;
  - (ii) Visits to the child by the child's parents, relatives or friends;
  - (iii) A child's communications
  - (iv) A child's access to their mobile phone or any telephone helpline providing counselling or guidance for children;
- (f) Requiring a child to wear distinctive or inappropriate clothes;
- (g) The use or withholding of medication or medical or dental treatment;
- (h) The intentional deprivation of sleep;
- (i) Imposing a financial penalty, other than a requirement for the payment of a reasonable sum (which may be by instalments) by way of reparation;
- (j) An intimate physical examination of the child;
- (k) Withholding any aids or equipment needed by a disabled child;
- (l) A measure involving—
  - (i) A child in imposing a measure against another child; or
  - (ii) Punishing a group of children for the behaviour of an individual child.

Any consequence implemented must be fully documented and its use reviewed. A **fresh start** must be begun as soon as practicably possible.

## **5. POLICE INVOLVEMENT**

A decision to contact the Police should normally be taken by the manager of the home unless a serious incident has occurred, in which case staff may contact the police immediately then inform a manager.

### **5.1 Serious Incidents**

Cottongrass Homes does not allow the use of restraint (unless in truly exceptional circumstances) on the children it supports. Staff are advised that in general if a child is creating a danger to themselves,

others and/or property they are to remove themselves and the other children from the room where the bad behaviour is being exhibited and find a place of safety (this may require leaving the property and remaining outside) and then call 999.

Restraint of a child can only be used where it is apparent to the member of staff that without its use there is an imminent threat to the child or others around him/her and that the action set out in the above paragraph is unsuitable in the circumstances. If and when restraint has been used it must be documented in full in the child's record. The following must be included in the recording of the incident:

- Date and time of the restraint
- Which staff member(s) was involved
- How long the restraint was used for
- Why the restraint came to an end
- Full description of the circumstances that led to the restraint (including details of the child's actions, those around him/her at the time, the danger presented that gave rise to the restraint and how the restraint was initiated and undertaken)

Ordinarily the manager of the home/senior person on duty should contact the police. If another member of staff has called 999 the manager must be notified without delay. The social worker must also be notified.

## **5.2 Not Serious Incidents**

An incident where no immediate police response is required, for example where assaults or damage has occurred and there is no risk of reoccurrence/significant harm to people, or incidents of theft. The incidents should be reported to the home's manager who then has the responsibility of identifying the appropriate course of action.

**It is important to avoid any unnecessary reporting of incidents to the police.** Should the manager decide and/or the victim wishes that formal police involvement is necessary, then the Police will be contacted by the manager and where applicable the relevant risk assessments and other documentation updated.

In certain circumstances preservation of evidence may be an issue and residential staff will need to ensure that reasonable steps are taken to retain articles relevant to any criminal allegation or police investigation.

## **5.3 Liaison**

It must be emphasised that a good working relationship with the Police is the most effective way to respond to young people with difficulties.

A regular liaison meeting between a member of the Police and the house manager would provide for discussion of non serious incidents within the home to identify the appropriate method of resolution.

It is the intention of this document to emphasise the importance of flexibility in determining the most suitable option for dealing with children and young persons. Additional advice and support could be sought from the child's social worker.





Flow Chart: Reminders and Reprimands

