

# Somerset Children's Homes

## Handbook for Families

Dear Parents and Carers,

## Welcome to our Children's Homes in Somerset

Somerset County Council has three children's homes for children and young people who have disabilities and additional needs. Two homes have six beds and are registered for children aged 8-18 years and the third home has two beds and is registered for children aged 0-18 years. All the homes are registered with The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) and comply with the Children's Homes regulations 2015.

Each home is subject to regular unannounced inspections which are carried out by an Ofsted inspector. The inspections are based on the following areas:

- Overall experience and progress of children and young people
- How well children and young people are helped and protected
- The effectiveness of leaders and managers

All our Ofsted reports are available to families from the home managers. We also have an Independent Visitor who visits each home monthly to make sure we are meeting standards.

Management and the staff teams in all our homes are committed to your child having an enjoyable time during their visits to our homes.

The contact details for each of our homes are below:

<b>Beechtrees</b>	<b>The Elms</b>	<b>The Lodge</b>
<b>Home Manager:</b> Steve Kennedy Tel: 01823 664511 Wellington	<b>Home Manager:</b> Tammie Rose Tel: 01458 251207 Curry Rivel, Langport	<b>Home Manager:</b> Karen Hill Tel: 01823 354604 Taunton

What your child can expect from us?

- To be provided with a safe, nurturing and stimulating environment with a homely feel.
- For all the staff team to have a current Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and 'Safer Recruitment' checks.
- For the staff team to have up to date training and knowledge in order to fully meet their needs.
- To have an allocated key worker within the home to be a main point of contact.
- A member of the home's staff to attend reviews and meetings regarding your child whenever possible.
- For information to only be shared on a need to know basis and wherever possible with your prior consent and knowledge.
- Up to date information about your child held on our home records.
- Staff who adhere to Somerset County Council policies and procedures and 4 Core Values (4Cs) – Collaboration, Care and Respect, Customer Focused and Can Do Attitude.
- A service that respects equality and diversity and meets individual needs.

## Working with you

We will to work closely with you and your child, to support and meet your child's individuals needs and maintain their safety and welfare.

Home management will arrange to visit your child to assess if we are able to meet your child's needs within our homes, consideration will also be taken into account of other children accessing ours home already. Initially visits will take place in school to talk to education staff about your child's needs; additionally, they will then visit you in your home if appropriate.

They will then arrange for you to visit the home to discuss your child's care needs and to meet with you before your child's first visit to the home.

A planning meeting will be held between you, home management and your child's social worker to arrange introductions to the home and ensure that everyone is fully

informed. During this meeting you will be asked to sign a contract for your child's short breaks along with relevant consent forms.

You and your child would then be invited for a visit to the children's home e.g. for tea, if applicable siblings would be welcomed and then additional family visits if required for your child. Once your child appears happy and if you are comfortable, they can attend a visit on their own. Overnight stays would only be arranged once everyone is happy that your child's needs can be met, and your child is familiar and comfortable with the home environment, and correct paperwork has been completed.

We will keep you up to date with information about the home through regular communication both in person and through letters.

We would ask that you provide any favourite comforters, toiletries, continence pads, clothing and nightwear and other personal effects for each of your child's visits. We would also ask that you ensure that your child is provided with other items according to the seasonal weather such as: sun cream, sun hats, wellington boots, waterproof coats etc.

You will be asked to complete and sign a list of your child belongings for every visit. We would also be grateful if personal belongings could be clearly labelled to minimise them being misplaced.

We will need up to date contact details in case we need to get hold of you in the event of an unforeseen eventuality / emergency. It is important that we know who is collecting and dropping your child off at the home, particularly if this is a person that is not known to the home staff. We will require confirmation of who will be collecting your child if this is not you as their parent / carer.

### Short break visiting times

During term time most child arrive and leave on transport to and from school. During school holidays we accept your child from 15:00 on the day of arrival and they must be collected by 11:00 on the day of departure. This enables us to have the correct staffing levels for their visit and to admit and discharge their required medication as

well as prepare their bedrooms and activities for their visit. Any variations to these times, need to be discussed and agreed with your child's social worker and the home management.

### Medication for your child

For each visit your child has, you will be required to supply all the medication they need during their stay. You will be asked to complete, sign, date and send in a Parental Consent Form for The Administration of Medication for your child for each stay. This includes prescribed and self-purchased non prescribed medication. All medication must be sent in the original packaging, clearly labelled with the pharmacy dispensary label if prescribed, with your child's full name, the medication name, strengths, dosage instructions (time and route), and expiry date. All this information must match with the information you provide on the Parental Consent Form for the Administration of Medication.

If information is unclear on arrival, you will receive a phone call from the shift leader on duty to clarify. If information / clarification cannot be provided in line with our medication policy, medication cannot be given, and you will be asked to collect your child.

We would request that the home is notified if your child has any allergies.

### What if my child is ill?

In order to ensure that all children are safe and not subjected to unnecessary illnesses during their stay, we request that your child does not attend if they are unwell, both for their benefit and to avoid spreading illnesses to other children and staff. If your child becomes ill during their stay, we will contact you as soon as possible and request that you collect them. If you have any doubts or queries, please telephone the home in advance and speak with a member of staff. If they have experienced diarrhoea or vomiting, we are unable to accept them into the home until they have had 48 hours with no symptoms.

In certain cases, with home management agreement, children can be discharged from hospital straight to the home, depending on medication being in place and

reason for their admission. This would be dependant on why your child was in hospital and what is in their best interest following discharge from hospital.

First aid will be provided, subject to limitations of staff training, should you child require it during their stay. If we need to seek further advice or support from a medical practitioner or hospital, we will contact you prior to this if possible (or as soon as possible after so that treatment is not delayed).

In the event of a medical emergency requiring an Ambulance, staff will call the emergency services before contacting parents, this is to ensure there is no delay in them receiving urgent medical treatment, you will be called as soon as possible.

If your child is then taken to hospital in an emergency situation during their stay, staff will escort them to hospital and meet you there, or whoever is agreed contact in your absence.

### Individual child's needs

Somerset County Council are committed to providing equal opportunities for all children, young people and staff. Home staff will work closely with you, your child and their social worker to try to achieve this.

All of our homes aim to provide a service that encourages children to develop positive attitudes and to ensure that children feel valued, are happy and are given opportunities to thrive, develop and feel loved and cared for. Each home creates an environment of mutual respect and helps children to understand that discriminatory behaviour and remarks are unacceptable.

We value contribution from all families and will work in partnership with parents and carers to ensure that individual medical, cultural and dietary needs of children are met.

Homes also aim to help children to learn about a range of cultural approaches to respect and values differences.

Each home will promote and support healthy eating for children. We will follow any dietary plans / requirements that your child has at home and are happy for you to supply a particular food or drink, if this is highlighted in your child's plan.

### Information we require

We request that you help us to update, or contribute to, assessments, reviews and other documentation as required. We ask that you let us know if there is anything which you disagree with, or are unsure of, so that we can discuss this with you and come to a suitable agreement in order to fully meet your child's needs.

### Incident reporting and restrictive physical interventions

The safety of your child is paramount. We record all low-level occurrences, accidents and near misses, including minor injuries such as superficial scrapes or a minor bruise that may have arisen through playing or a minor accident.

Any child who requires any form of restrictive physical intervention to keep them and others safe will have a detailed behaviour management plan. These will be discussed and agreed with you and, where possible, your child. Any staff who carry out any agreed form of restrictive physical intervention will be fully trained to undertake this.

In all cases you will be informed of any incident involving your child as soon as possible and reasonable.

### Education

Home staff work in conjunction with you and where possible your child, your child's education facility to promote and ensure that educational needs are met in line with their EHCP. We promote active partnership working with schools by:

- Maintaining regular contact
- Being involved in school activities as appropriate
- Contributing to EHCPs which are reviewed annually
- Supporting your child in completing homework tasks where appropriate

Transport to and from school for your child is not provided by the home, unless arranged and agreed by the social worker as part of your child's short break care package.

## Transition

We will work with you to support your child in moving on from the home to other services, taking into account the child's wishes. This could include moving to adult services, moving to other children's services for children or leaving all services.

## Closure of the homes

All of the homes are open 52 weeks a year but will close Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day for short breaks provisions. Additionally, the homes may close in order to facilitate staff training days.

On rare occasions there may be a need to close the homes or cancel your child's short break at other times i.e. due to severe weather warnings, outbreak of infectious disease or any unforeseen circumstance. We will do our utmost to ensure that the home remains open and short breaks are not cancelled, however if it is deemed unsafe to do so then we hope you will understand that safeguarding the children and staff is essential. We will try, if possible, to rearrange your child's care if this occurs, however this would be dependent on availability, compatibility and impact on your child.

## Respecting each other

It is vital that staff, parents and carers work together in a professional manner and equally respect one another.

Behaviour which would be considered unacceptable in our homes includes (but is not limited to) the following:

- Aggressive or abusive behaviour such as threatening gestures or actual violence or assault

- Verbal abuse or threats (for example, yelling, screaming, threats of physical violence, abusive or offensive language)
- Being under the influence of drugs or impaired by alcohol
- Unsafe work practices or behaviour which may harm the staff member or young people.
- Bullying, harassment or intimidation
- Undermining performance, reputation or professionalism of others by deliberately withholding information and supplying incorrect information
- Offensive gestures and behaviour

In the event of any of the above occurring you may be asked to leave the premises or refused entry, if deemed necessary the police will be called.

### Complaints procedure

If for any reason, you wish to raise a concern, complaint or compliment about the service your child is receiving in the home, we ask that you discuss this matter with the relevant home manager in the first instance. However, if this is not possible or you would prefer not, you can may also contact the Service Manager or Customer Relations team, and/or Ofsted using the information below:

#### **Teresa Delaney – Service Manager RID**

B1 West, Children with Disabilities Team

County Hall

Taunton, TA1 4DY

Telephone: 07890 580933

Email: [tdelaney@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:tdelaney@somerset.gov.uk)

#### **Somerset County Council**

#### **Comments, Compliments and Complaints**

County Hall

Taunton, TA1 4DY

Telephone: 0300 123 2224

Email: [somersetdirect@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:somersetdirect@somerset.gov.uk)

Or via website: [www.somerset.gov.uk/ourinformation/complaints-comments-compliments/](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/ourinformation/complaints-comments-compliments/)

## **Ofsted**

Piccadilly Gate

Store Street

Manchester, M1 2WD

Telephone: 0300 123 1231

Email: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)