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## Legislation

### Regulation 12 Protection of Children Standard

(c)that the premises used for the purposes of the home are located so that children are effectively safeguarded;

(d)that the premises used for the purposes of the home are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each child from avoidable hazards to the child's health

### Regulation 46 Review of Premises

The registered person must review the appropriateness and suitability of the location of the premises used for the purposes of the children's home at least once in each calendar year taking into account the requirement in regulation 12(2)(c) (the protection of children standard).

*Additional guidance relating to homes locations states that every home will have a framework for assessing a location and these assessments will need to address two key issues – Safeguarding Concerns and Accessibility of Local Services.*

### The positive relationships standard

The positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on

(a)mutual respect and trust;

- (b) an understanding about acceptable behaviour; and
- (c) positive responses to other children and adults

## Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide advice to our neighbours who live in the local community to our children's homes. The document is also a reminder to the staff and residents of children's homes about their responsibilities to the local community as well as their responsibilities to the children they care for. The document is intended to assist both our staff teams and neighbours in understanding the importance of good community relations between our homes and neighbours. This is meant to reassure our neighbours of the importance we place on community relations and also that our communities are a safe place of belonging for our staff teams and children. The policy is created to support good community relations and is not a replacement for positive relationships, and open and honest communication between homes management, staff teams and the neighbours and friends living within the community.

## Introduction

It is the duty of Local Authorities to 'look after' certain children who are assessed as being 'in need' for a variety of reasons. Where appropriate that duty of care is delegated to specialist bodies such as ourselves. Whilst children are 'looked after' their care should be of the highest standard and they will be returned to their families whenever it is practicable and safe to do so. In following this duty we will ensure that children 'looked after' are given the opportunity to reach their full potential in respect of education, health and social attainment. Every aspect of this service is governed by the Children Act 1989 and 2004, Quality Standards and Children's Homes Regulations that guide the way staff look after children. In respect of those children who are cared for in our children's homes the objective will be to ensure that the homes are seen as part of the community rather than separate from it. Residents and staff should enjoy the same opportunities, choices and access to facilities as any other citizens but should also try to make a positive contribution to the local community.

## Community Living

Based on the above legislation we would like to summarise that all homes are scrutinised extensively for suitability of location both in terms of safety, access to resources and services and suitability of community setting. We strongly and passionately believe that all our children have a right to live in communities that can meet their needs, without exclusion, for reasons other than safeguarding or access to services. However, rest assured that we are as committed to ensuring that whilst children are in our care, as well as protecting their welfare, we will do all in our power to encourage and teach them how to be responsible members of the community.

This reflects an important point; that all members of local communities, including the staff and residents of children's homes, have rights themselves, but these rights are equally matched by responsibilities to others. In particular, the adults responsible for the care of the children must act as good parents and present positive role models. Our aim is to promote the safety and welfare of the children in our care and to achieve this we appreciate the support from members of the local community.

In managing the home **our teams** are committed to the following standards.

We will:

**Establish positive links with the local community.**

Staff will be expected to help the children accept and respect the rights of others and in particular the immediate neighbours and local community.

Staff should:

- Know the local community;
- Obtain information on local facilities;
- Present good images in the local community;
- Have good and appropriate communication systems, such as greetings cards, point of contact and follow-up process.

**Be aware of the impact of the building within the community.**

The look of the building needs to reflect a positive cared for image.

Staff will:

- Be mindful of how the building and grounds look, keep rubbish under control;
- Maintain good boundaries and fences;
- Keep noise to a minimum (e.g. by installation of double glazing, controlling stereos, T.V. and computer games and advising visitors to the home);
- Keep gardens maintained;
- Draw curtains as appropriate;
- Put lights on or off as appropriate;
- Ensure visible supervision of children's activities;

**Manage how staff and visitors behave**

It is vital that staff and others accept the importance of their role in relation to the children's home and the community within which it is situated.

Staff will:

- Present as good role models for the children and young people;
- Be ambassadors for the home and company, this includes both during working times and outside working times;
- Be accountable for the children's behaviour outside the home in the grounds, in the locality and in community facilities;
- Be mindful of the numbers of young people out together;

- Ensure that use of the garden does not exceed noise levels expected of any family living in a residential area
- Ensure that parking is considerate and does not impact the neighbours
- Use and support local facilities;
- Respond to complaints appropriately;
- Act as competent parents by being consistent and offering appropriate structures and boundaries;
- Help young people accept and respect themselves and others.

### **Ensure adherence to Good Neighbour Parking practices**

Management should ensure that

- Staff and visitors use the allocated 4 parking spaces on the driveway in front of the home
- Where parking at the front of the house is not available ensure that staff and or visitors park away from the home and away from the cul-de-sac in order that parking does not impact the immediate local vicinity of the road
- Schedule visitors to come at low parking times ie away from staff changeover
- Utilise TEAMS for meetings or attend other locations for meetings where face to face is required
- All visitors should be advised in advance of parking expectations and wherever possible staff should accommodate visitors parking on the drive
- Always endeavour to recruit with locality and carbon footprint in mind, with consideration given to the number of people in the team who will need to drive to work

### **Effectively manage noise levels in and around the home**

Management and staff teams should ensure that

- Our children live in their home and are allowed to enjoy their home as any other child would – this includes being able to freely make noise that is appropriate to the time of day and location
- Activities in the garden should give consideration to the local community and ensure they do not exceed that which is acceptable
- It is not expected that noise should radiate from the garden after 20.00 hours in the evening unless in an exceptional circumstance such as a summer birthday party for example

- Any events in the garden that may constitute a party and could radiate noise past 20.00 should be notified to the neighbours as would any neighbour making plans for a party in their garden in the summer
- All staff are to positively support our children in ensuring that any incidents relating to behaviour do not wherever possible occur in the garden or outside the grounds in the immediate local community
- Staff teams and visitors are to be mindful of the times in which they are arriving and not congregate in outside areas talking or making noise
- Staff and visitors should not arrive at or leave work in vehicles playing loud music
- Staff who require smoking breaks should not take them in groups but one at a time, in agreement with their shift supervisor

### **Address on-going practices.**

Maintaining good relations with the community is a never-ending process. Staff and managers should:

- Keep the Good Neighbour policy and practise under close review and discuss any areas of progress or improvement as required in team meetings and supervision;
- Keep in touch with local neighbours;
- Check on their views and well being;
- Keep them informed of developments that may affect them;
- Be a good neighbour;
- Consider becoming involved in neighbourhood watch schemes etc.;
- Be aware of local community issues and contribute positively wherever possible;
- Involve staff, children and young people in local community events and fundraising activities
- Share with the neighbourhood representative our Complaints and Representations policy in the event that concerns arise and cannot be dealt with informally