



## NFCA Code of Conduct

The Northamptonshire Foster Carers Association (NFCA) is a voluntary organisation which is run by foster carers for foster carers. The NFCA offers support to foster carers, their families and the children they care for. This support may be by providing social events to enable carers to meet with other carers and for children to socialise but also to raise issues with management as appropriate. In addition to mainstream carers, support is offered to connected persons, resilience carers, emergency carers and other specialist carers. All carers contracted by NCT automatically become members of the NFCA. However, the NFCA reserves the right to exclude members if they breach our code of conduct.

### **Kindness and Courtesy**

We expect everyone to be kind and courteous. We expect carers to be respectful of other's opinions, even if they don't share them. We will not tolerate hate speech or bullying.

### **Respecting Privacy**

We provide safe spaces for carers to ask questions, ask for advice and share experiences, both positive and negative, without fear of comeback. This can be in a support group, at meetings, events and online via the secure Facebook Group. It is important to carers that they feel able to do this. There shall be no sharing of a carers' personal information to third parties without their permission.

### **Carers' Data**

The NFCA holds a database which details the carer's name, approval status, their email address and their postcode. The information is supplied by NCT to the secretary of the NFCA **only** and is a GDPR compliant live list. Once members are no longer a current carer, the data is deleted. If appropriate, members can request that an email be sent out on their behalf, e.g., advertising a youth group which may benefit our CIC but this must not be for personal gain. Carers are not permitted to make and keep lists of carers data from any of our channels.

### **Promotion of Businesses/Causes**

Carers may not use the NFCA to further their own personal businesses or causes. Any content posted on social media must be relevant to fostering and the member must not personally gain from it. Similarly, members may not promote their own businesses or causes at any meetings, groups or events organised by NFCA.

## **Raising of Issues**

The NFCA is the sole agency responsible for representing 'the voice of the carer', that is recognised by NCT. Carers are encouraged to raise any fostering related issues with the NFCA.

- Routine issues are usually identified via NFCA social media and monthly meetings.
- Carers may also email the Chair, Vice Chair, or Secretary with fostering related issues.
- Identified issues are added to the agenda of the next Committee and Members Meeting for discussion. Any member may table an issue for discussion and raise during the AOB part of the agenda.
- Data and information on specific topics identified by either the NFCA or NCT, may be gathered by means of a survey. Full reports and data are to be shared with all members and NCT.

As issues are discussed at meetings, consensus will be reached on objectives and approach and Committee representatives will raise with the Fostering Service Manager, in the first instance, and escalate through the Trust as required. Please note: Members may disagree with any consensus decision and take the issue directly. However, if their objectives and approach do not align with the majority, the NFCA are unable to support.

## **Advocating for Carers**

The role of the NFCA is, in part, to advocate on behalf of individual carers. Carers are encouraged to speak to their Supervising Social Worker (SSW) in the first instance and escalate as necessary.

Carers may ask the NFCA to advocate for them. The NFCA will have open and transparent discussions on the carer's behalf, including them in updates and emails. The NFCA is run by volunteers who are also carers and where we do not have the expertise to help, we would recommend that carers approach a professional service, e.g., Foster Support UK who will be able to offer them specialist help. Carers may also ask another member to advocate on their behalf. It is the expectation that the advocate will include the carer in all discussions and communications and due process will be followed. The NFCA cannot support this advocacy, however.

## **Financial**

The NFCA receives limited funding for its operation. This is managed by the Treasurer. Carers are reimbursed for any expenses occurred on behalf of their work with NFCA e.g., purchase of prizes; deposit for a venue. Receipts and paperwork must be submitted. Financial mismanagement will not be tolerated.

## **Complaints**

Every carer has the right to feel safe within the NFCA. If a carer feels that any of our guidelines have been breached, please raise it, with evidence, to one of the elected committee members. Decisions to exclude members are made by a majority decision of the elected committee members with the Chair holding the casting vote. We do not discuss exclusions in open meetings to guard privacy.

## **Exclusion**

If carers have been excluded and would like to appeal. Please write formally to the Chair, Vice Chair or Secretary of the organisation who will review the evidence and respond.