**Guidance for completing a Household Safer Caring Plan.**

**Introduction:**

It must be acknowledged that foster carers cannot ‘parent’ a child they are caring for on behalf of the local authority in the same way as would parent a child of their own. It is very important that the family’s Safer Caring plan is explained and relevant to all the children in the household including the child/young person/s you are caring for and any children who may visit the household.

It is vital that each child/young person in the household understands what is written in the document. Explaining the document gives the child/young person you are caring for information about the placement. This is likely to give them a greater sense of security. Explaining the document to your own children provides them with an opportunity to “have a say” in the household.

It is also important that the document is explained to:

* Visitors in the house
* Friends and family members who provide respite or support to the foster carers.

All the people listed above must understand and be committed to the Safer Caring Family Document.

In addition, a copy will be shown to the child’s social worker on placement.

This document will inform and be used in conjunction with the risk assessment completed for each specific child placed.

Your supervising social worker will be able to discuss the information that you have on each child and devise routines and rules that should help you to care for each child safely.  This document will be discussed and changed if appropriate, at your annual review.

**Important principles to remember about safer caring:**

Foster carers constantly have to balance risks in the everyday decisions they take for themselves, their own children and fostered children. The difference with a fostered child is that foster carers are caring for them on behalf of the state, and so are accountable for the day-to-day decisions they take. They will be asked by their fostering service to do some things differently than they might with their own children, to keep everyone safe.

Children and young people in care are often particularly vulnerable due to their previous life experiences, so foster carers need to understand and manage the particular risks they may face while helping children to have as normal a childhood as they can.

Not only can we not eliminate risk from everyday life but trying to do so can have negative side effects and can prevent children from learning and developing their own awareness of risk and how to stay safe. So, the key to good, safer caring is about foster carers being aware of the risks involved for particular children in different situations and making well thought through decisions, in partnership with the child’s social worker and the fostering service.

Safer caring is all about being “risk-sensible”, not risk-averse. It is about foster carers working in partnership with children and young people, their parents wherever possible, and the key facets for social workers to develop the right safer caring plan for that child; and day-to-day, understanding and balancing the risks involved in a particular activity or decision, rather than applying a set of rules in all circumstances.

* Children should only be left with people who are authorised to care for them.  i.e., those named within a support network and decisions have been made about necessary checks. Children should never be left alone in the house and should not be left unsupervised.

* Always report and record incidents, accidents, and emergencies, using diary, medical and contact logs.

* Where children/young people share their bedrooms agreement to the appropriateness of this must be sought from the child’s social worker and supervising social worker and addressed by Fostering Duty as part of the Initial Matching referral agreement.

* Everyone in the household to be treated with equality and fairness.  Racist or prejudicial remarks are unacceptable in the household and will be challenged.

Please use the boxes below each subject to tell us how you manage these activities/areas within your home.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Foster Care 1 Name |  | Foster Carer 1 ID |  |
| Foster Carer 2 Name |  | Foster Carer 2 ID |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Current members of the household**  (To include all:- Approved Foster carers, Carers own children, Children in Care, Other children/adults in Household, Adult children returning from Uni or temporarily living in the home) | Names – |
| **DBS completed for all adult members of household** |  |
| **For incomplete DBS** |  |
| **Foster carers support network** | Names - |
| **DBS completed on foster carer support network**  (A DBS is required for all adults in the carers support network whose care of the children falls into the category of *regulated activity.* This is defined as Care or supervision of children that is carried out by the same person frequently (once a week or more often), or on 4 or more days in a 30-day period or overnight.) |  |
| **For incomplete DBS** |  |

**Household safe care plan :**

**Routines:**

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| Transportation, who sits where in the car? |
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| Mealtimes, what are the rules and expectations? |
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| Bedtime routines? |
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**Physical Contact:**

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| How do you comfort your own children?  Is this appropriate for children you are caring for? |
| N/A |
| How do you show affection in your family?  Is this appropriate for children you are caring for? |
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**Dress Codes around the House:**

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| There must be clear rules on how people dress around the house |
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**Use of the Computer, TV and mobile ‘phones:**

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**Taking Photos/Videos:**

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**Play:**

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**Privacy:**

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| Who can go into which bedroom? (Knock before entering) |
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| Bathroom and toilet (locking/closing doors) |
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| What additional space is available for private times, for your own child as well as a foster child? |
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**Sexual Behaviour:**

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| What boundaries exist in the house? |
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| How and when would it be appropriate to discuss sex and sexuality? |
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| How will you keep your own children safe? |
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| Who do they talk to about secrets? |
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**Managing Behaviour:**

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| How do you exercise control and techniques used to manage difficult behaviour? |
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| Ways of praising acceptable behaviour and increasing self-esteem |
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| Which behaviours are hard for you to ignore? |
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| **N.B. the following punishments must never be used:**   * Smacking – there is a departmental no smacking policy * Withholding food/drink * Threatening to cancel contact/ family time * Threatening to end the placement |

**Health and Safety:**

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| There must be a current Health & Safety checklist in place. Date this was last completed. |
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| Ensure that everyone in the household knows the fire drill and escape plan.  What is this? |
| Fire plan in place, everyone is to leave via the safest exit and call the fire brigade. |
|  |

**Recording of information, events in child’s life, medical information and family time:**

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| --- |
| Details must be kept in your foster carer’s diary  Contact records are to be completed  Medical records must be completed  Certificates of achievement, photographs and information are to be retained for life story work  All confidential information to be kept in a locked cabinet |
| **Foster Carer:**    **Signed:**  **Date:**    **Signed:**  **Date:** |
| **Review date:** |
| **Supervising Social Worker:**    **Signed:**  **Date:** |
| **Review date:** |