



# Promoting Positive Behaviour and use of Physical Intervention

## Guidance and Procedure

August 2019





# 1. Introduction

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Many children and young people who are 'looked after' have experienced traumatic situations. Such experiences will impact upon their ability to communicate and express their needs appropriately. At times they may present with challenging behaviours which reflect their sense of frustration; anger; confusion; anxiety; loss and hurt. Behaviour that may be viewed as 'naughty' is often an expression of past hurt and abuse.

In order for foster carers to provide homes in which children are happy, healthy and safe they will need to set boundaries and have measures in place to maintain these.

It is important that foster carers build up a positive relationship with the child as a way of managing behaviour and the first way of doing this should be the use of praise and reward for good or acceptable behaviour which helps to build a relationship with the child.

Foster carers should act as good parents and manage behaviour in the way they would if the child was their own.

This policy sets out the guidance for foster carers on acceptable ways of managing a child's behaviour and the procedure they should follow if they have to use physical intervention.

The policy will be given to carers on approval and should be shared and made clear to placing social workers, children and their families.

# 2. Legal Framework

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The Fostering Services Regulations 2011.

Regulation 13 requires a fostering provider to have a written policy on acceptable measures of "control, restraint and discipline" of children placed with foster parents. The provider must ensure that

- no form of corporal punishment is used on any child placed with a foster parent,
- no child placed with a foster parent is subject to any measure of control, restraint or discipline which is excessive or unreasonable, and
- restraint is used on a child only where it is necessary to prevent injury to the child or other persons, or serious damage to property.

Fostering Guidance 2011 and the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services (2011)

Sets out the expectation that foster carers will be expected to create an environment that "promotes, models and supports positive behaviour in which children can take responsibility for their behaviour, develop positive relationships and practice how to resolve in C3rypBT/Stive l(.)p handserious daryfote3rirypEpanus .917

## 3. Household Safer Caring Policy

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As part of the assessment process for foster carers they will complete a household safer caring policy. They should use this to reflect on what are the rules and boundaries in their home and how will they will explain this to children placed with them.

Foster carers should be given all the information available to the fostering service about the child and the reasons they are becoming looked after or moving placement. This should include any difficulties that the child has experienced any challenges they may present. This will help carers think about what boundaries they may need to put in place and how they will manage these.

Each child placed will have an individual safer caring policy/risk assessment and it should look at individual challenges or risks that the child may present and how these should be managed. It is important that measures are proportionate and seek to reduce the challenges and risks occurring.

## 4. Setting Boundaries

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In setting boundaries for a child, foster carers should discuss with their supervising social worker and the child's social and take the following into account:

- The child's previous experience of family life
- The child's age, emotional age and development level
- The behavioural expectations of the fosters carers and their family (what is the bottom line)
- What is fixed and what is negotiable - this is particularly important with older children. Carers will need good negotiating skills

## 5. Support to Foster Carers

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### 5.1 Training

Understanding and managing behaviour is part of the Skills to Foster Course in addition further training is available post approval.

The Understanding Behaviour course should be completed in the first 12 months post approval and seeks to develop an understanding of the context of children's behaviour and help carers to respond effectively to a range of behaviours.

WF uses an attachment model when working with foster carers. Supervising social workers will support carers to understand the challenges of parenting developmentally traumatized children and the importance of creating a secure base for them. Foster carers are supported to use the secure base to develop a relationship with children where they experience acceptance even when their behaviour is challenging.

WF commissions training to support foster carers learning and development in managing behaviour and supervising social workers should discuss the need for this in the fostering households Learning and Development plan. (WF's Learning and Development for Foster Carers)

WF will also commission specialist training such as Team Teach when this is required.

### 5.2 Safer Caring \Risk assessment

## 6. Touching and Holding

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Physical contact is an important aspect of human relationships and is a normal part of the relationship between good parents and their children. Nothing in this policy should preclude a foster carer for comforting or reassuring a child or returning a hug when this is instigated by the child. Foster carers need to be led by the child about the level of contact they are happy with.

Foster carers should be cautious if they are aware that the child has experienced abuse or if they think that the child is seeking inappropriate physical contact and should discuss this with their supervising social worker and the child's social worker and record any incidents they are concerned about.

There will also be situations when foster carers will hold children to keep them safe. For example, they may hold a younger child's hand if they are walking down or crossing a road or prevent a child from touching something which may harm them. This is what good parents do and should not be considered restraint.

## 7. De-escalation

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Wherever possible, rewarding acceptable behaviour should be the preferred and usual method of reinforcing and encouraging acceptable behaviour. If possible, foster carers should try to defuse the situation before it escalates and their knowledge of the child will help them to know what is likely to work although the following suggestions provides some guidance.

- Ignore the particular behaviour (if safe to do so) and address it in a positive way at another time
- Acknowledge that they are becoming upset and that you have noticed that they are finding something hard but that you have also noticed how hard they have tried to control their temper/behaviour and think they have done a good job
- Divert attention
- Be calm, reasonable and reassuring both verbally and in body language
- Establish eye contact
- Work on any positives, confirming any positive statement or behaviour from the child
- Try to involve the child in solving the problem/situation
- Help the young person see there is a way out of the situation
- Offer a compromise if this is appropriate and can be delivered.
- Give personal space
- Provide empathy for the child in an active way
- Look at what the child is doing rather than just what they are saying
- It is important for foster carers to remember that the child or young person's comments are not to be taken personally – they are more likely to be a measure of the frustration and anger that the child or young person is feeling
- Re-frame what is happening by trying to make it positive: i.e. a child may be on the verge of flying into a temper when they could not achieve a task, be positive about how far they did get and suggest they try

## 8. Using Sanctions

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There are a wide range of sanctions, which are permitted and available for use by foster carers when disciplinary measures are needed to control children's behaviour.

Research shows that discipline is more effective when coupled with empathy for the child's feelings. E.g. "You must have been feeling really angry to do that, but you know that throwing things is not allowed, and you could have broken the window and been hurt. We can talk about how you feel, but you know that what you did was

safe place to be alone? For older children the foster carer might ask them to go outside, for space, but this will not be safe for little ones. Foster carers may also have to consider the needs of other children in the home.

- » Foster Carers should also give some thought to the child's previous history of rejection. If the



- Deprivation of food and drink. Foster children must not be deprived of normal meals or drinks, as a punishment. Foster carers have a duty of care to other people's children to promote their health and welfare. Depriving children of normal meals or drinks is not consistent with this. Children who stay out without permission and miss meals should be offered some sort of nourishment, on their return.
- Family Time. This is part of the agreed Care Plan and foster carers do not have the right to stop a child having contact with any family member. Stopping agreed contact or threatening to do so must never be used as a sanction. This means contact in all its forms, visits, telephone calls, texts etc. There are times when late night phone calls might disrupt a household. This should be discussed with the child's social worker to find a solution. If this is a persistent or very disruptive problem that cannot be resolved by discussion, the agreed solution could be to remove the child's telephone between certain hours, or to assist the carers to change their telephone number.
- Deprivation of sleep. Children need rest and sleep to promote health and welfare, both mental and physical. Having said this, older teenagers who come in late must accept some responsibility for this and be prepared to be woken up for school or work, the next day.
- Changing prescribed medication or medical or dental treatment. Foster carers do not have the right to change any treatment prescribed by a medical practitioner. This must not be used as a sanction or means of control. To do so would not be consistent with promoting the health or welfare of the child

## 9. 9.Recording

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It cannot be stressed too much; foster carers must record, on their recording sheets, and where appropriate on an incident sheet, when sanctions are imposed and why. (please see WF's Recording for Foster Carers). Foster carers must ensure that their supervising social worker, and the child's social worker see the recording and are fully aware of the sanctions being used.

As a foster carer, it is vital that you follow WF's recording policy for carers. This will ensure that you can demonstrate the following:

- That you are using only permitted sanctions
- That you are fair and consistent in your use of sanctions
- That you are following the Placement Plan.

Clear and careful recording will also enable the foster carer to review with the social workers (supervising and the child's) the effectiveness of the strategies they are using to manage aspects of a child's behaviour, or to promote their health and development. It will also greatly assist the foster carer if any of their actions are queried, or if an allegation is made against them.

## 10.



Each decision will be, at least, in part, a risk assessment. That assessment may need to be made rapidly. It should be based on the following factors:

NB: It is unlikely that any carer will be able to sit down and read this list, at the time of an incident, but it is important that carers are aware of it, and to check it after any incident where restraint has been used.

- The age and understanding of the child
- The likely impact of the child's intended actions on themselves or others
- Whether the foster carer will be able to apply restraint successfully - will it achieve the desired result
- Whether the foster carer can apply restraint without hurting the child
- Whether there are sufficient adults present to deal with the whole situation; to restrain the child concerned and cope with the actions of any other children present
- Other children should never be asked to help in restraining a child,
- Whether all appropriate defusing and preventative techniques have been exhausted
- Restraint should be used for the least time possible, and the child released as soon as it is judged safe to do so
- After restraining a child, check that no first aid or medical treatment is needed, by the child or by the carer.

There may be some circumstances when a child's behaviour is so dangerous that the emergency services need to be involved. If possible the foster carer should discuss whether this is needed with WF, the child's social worker or EDT. However, in situations where there is a risk of serious harm to the child or others this should not delay calling the emergency services.

It is important to deal firmly and sensitively with the aftermath of an incident requiring restraint. Forcibly restricting a child's liberty and invading personal space may have a significant impact on his/her wellbeing. Foster carers need to ensure that time and space are created, that the incident can be talked through. The child needs to talk through their feelings about it. Both the foster carer and child need to be able to agree on the next steps. The foster carer who has restrained the child may not be the right person to see through the whole of this process. It is important to consider who is the best person to undertake this task.

The foster carer may also need to find someone to whom they can "debrief", and in most instances this should be their supervising social worker. It is important that foster carers are supported to deal with their feelings about what has happened as well as the child

## 10.3 Damage to Property

## 10.4 Action required after a Restraint

Every incident of restraint must be reported by the foster carers to their supervising social worker and the child's social worker as soon as possible. WF monitors the use of restraints by foster carer and the supervising social worker will complete a notification form which is seen by the relevant team manager and the Registered Manager (please refer to WF's Recording for Foster Carers).

If it is out of hours foster carers should consider whether it needs reporting to be must be reported to the Emergency Duty Team. Social workers will need to ensure that the child and the foster carer are safe and decide whether any immediate action is needed.

Foster Carers must record the incident, including what lead up to it and what the aftermath was, as soon as they possibly can, and whilst it is fresh in their memory. If a second carer was present, each carer should write out a separate account their supervising social worker will need to have this recording, ideally on the next working day.

Following an incident of restraint, the foster carers supervising social worker should discuss the incident with the foster carers. As with the foster carer's record the discussion should cover

- what lead up to the incident?
- what other interventions were used prior to the physical restraint?
- why the foster carer felt it was necessary to use restraint (i.e. what was the risk)?
- what outcome the foster carer was hoping for and whether this was achieved?
- What is the quality of the relationship between the foster carer and the child following the incident?

The supervising social worker must ensure that the child's social worker has been informed and agree with them who will speak to the child to gain their view on what has happened.

The supervising social worker needs to recognise that both child and foster carer are likely to have been distressed by what has taken place and consideration needs to be given to what support they need.

Consideration should be given to whether a discussion between the foster carer and child facilitated by either the child's social worker and/or the supervising social worker would be helpful. This would be beneficial to both child and foster carers and may help them understand the impact that the incident has had on each of them. It would also be an opportunity to discuss what lead up to the incident and for the child to talk to the foster carer about what they would like them to do if a similar set of circumstances occurred.

The supervising social worker should also discuss with the foster carer whether any training needs have been highlighted. The child's Safer Caring Policy\Individual Risk assessment should be reviewed and if necessary updated. The supervising social worker should record all discussions on the foster carers record.

## 10.5 Monitoring

The relevant team manager having viewed the foster carer's record and the notes of the supervising social worker discussion with the foster carers will discuss the incident with the supervising social worker and decide whether any further action is required. If there is any concern that the restraint was not proportionate a referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer will need to be considered. ( please refer to WF's Safeguarding Children).

The Registered Manager also monitor all incidents of restraint. They will consider whether the intervention was necessary and proportionate and whether they are satisfied that any required action has been completed.

The Registered Manager will report on the use of restraint in the quarterly and annual report. They will consider whether the training needs of carers and whether this policy needs review in light of any learning from the reported incidents.

