



**TIME OUT**  
fostering

*valuing individual needs*

## **SECTION THIRTEEN**

### **SAFER CARING POLICY**

**2007**

#### **Introduction**

It is important to consider why allegations of abuse or complaints may be made. Children can misinterpret an innocent action when they have experienced inappropriate behaviour in their past. They may want to draw some attention to previous abuse because they can now trust their carer, or to exercise some sort of control over their life.

Foster carers can abuse children and therefore any allegations need to be investigated.

You should safeguard as much as possible against the risk of false allegations to you or your family, but remember to keep a balance within this. All young people and children have the right to be loved and receive appropriate affection.

Ultimately, there is a risk in anything we do and children should not suffer neglect or lack of affection because of the risk.

Safe Caring is designed to minimise the risk to carers, their families and the children staying with them. It reduces the risk of allegations. You and your family may wish to expand on this policy for each child staying with you, as appropriate.

#### **Bedroom**

All children and young people will have their own bedroom. When it is agreed at the beginning of the placement, same sex siblings may share a room.

Bedrooms should be entered by invitation only, and it is good practise to knock on the bedroom door before entering.

If other children are using the bedroom as a play area, it is good practise to leave the door open.

## **Bathroom**

Young people who are able to wash and bath themselves should be encouraged to do so and privacy should be given to them. This should be balanced with the risks of drowning in water; for instance no child under five should be left unsupervised in the bath.

## **Playing**

Except when the children are playing alone, doors should be left open, so that carers can keep an eye on what is happening.

It is advisable to discourage play fighting, unless carefully supervised.

It is best to avoid tickling and wrestling games altogether.

## **Dress**

It is essential that everyone should wear pyjamas and/or a dressing gown as underwear or nudity can give some children the wrong message.

## **Car journeys**

Ensure that children travelling in your care are using appropriate car or booster seats. All children under eleven should be in a BS children's seat or booster seat. Older children must wear seat belts. It is usually a good idea to put looked after children / young people in the back of a car.

Ensure that your insurance company is notified that you are carrying Looked After Children. This should not incur any more cost.

## **Babysitters**

Regular babysitters should have been police checked and overnight stays should be agreed with the Time Out Fostering social worker on each occasion.

## **General Guidelines**

### **Affection**

It is good to show appropriate affection to the child or young person, but care should be taken that the child is ready to receive it. Teach children that they can say no to cuddles.

When a child or young person demands too much or inappropriate affection, a cushion etc. can be used as a subtle barrier.

### **Photo or video**

Ensure that the child or young person is appropriately dressed when taking photographs or videos.

Always record on your daily diary all incidents that concern you, e.g. worrying phone calls or inappropriate behaviour. Talk to your supervising social worker about this.

Be aware that misunderstandings may arise because children and young people staying with a foster family do not necessarily share the same value system, therefore, a particular behaviour may have a different meaning. Please ring a Time Out Fostering supervising social worker to discuss any behaviour that is concerning.

**It is good practise to develop a family policy for all at the beginning of the placement. The house rules are then clear from the beginning and there is less room for misinterpretation.**