



TRAFFORD
COUNCIL

Services for Children, Young People and Families

Children in care

Children's homes

Contacting the Police

(Foster Care and Children's Homes)

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This procedure applies to children placed in Children's Homes and Foster Homes managed by the Authority, but the principles apply to the placement of all children in care. Therefore, where children in care are placed with parents, relatives or friends or in placements not managed by the authority, the social worker must ensure these or other adequate procedures are applied.

It summarises the measures to be taken in developing effective working relationships with the Police and in managing specific incidents involving Serious Disruption, Violence/Assaults, Thefts and Damage to Property.

Relationships with the police

Everyone involved in looking after children must develop co-operative relationships with the Police and should seek their advice on matters of concern, security and crime prevention.

Illegal behaviour should not be condoned, but it is important to be mindful of our duty to consider the overall welfare of children; which may mean recognising that illegal activity is taking place and working to minimise risks and consequences.

Unless otherwise set out in writing, for example in a child's Placement Information Record, any suspicion on the part of residential staff/foster carers that a child has or is likely to commit an offence must be discussed with the manager/supervising social worker; who should consult the child's social worker if the behaviour is persistent or serious.

Any decision to report matters to the Police or consult them should normally only be taken in consultation with the manager/supervising social worker and the child's social worker.

Where there are concerns that a child is engaged or likely to be engaged in offending behaviour, measures must be adopted to reduce or prevent it. Where the behaviour is persistent or serious, the child's Placement Information Record must include a summary of the concerns and the strategies being adopted to change the behaviour.

In this respect, other relevant agencies, including the Police, may be consulted and involved.

If necessary the Placement Information Record should indicate whether and in what circumstances the Police should be contacted should suspicions arise about offending behaviour.

Restorative practice will be implemented within Trafford Children's Homes and good relationships with the police are formed. Staff at the homes must contact the police

for assistance when control of a situation is lost or reporting assault or violent incidents.

Managing serious disruption

Staff/carers are expected to do all that is reasonable to manage children in care placed with them; this includes the management of confrontational and disruptive behaviour.

As a last resort Physical Intervention can be used to prevent children or others being injured or to prevent damage to property (Refer to Behaviour Management and Restrictive Physical Restraint policies).

If the potential injury is significant or the potential damage is serious, Restraint can also be used by carers trained to use the Team Teach techniques but if this is not possible or control is lost and the risks of injury or damage escalate, the Police may be called for assistance.

If possible, the child's social worker should give authorisation to such action, but if this is not possible, staff/carers should act as they see fit and then inform the child's social worker as soon as possible thereafter.

Theft or damage to property

If there is a suspicion that a child may be engaged or likely to be engaged in any criminal activity including theft or malicious damage, staff/carers must act to reduce or prevent the behaviour.

This may include taking steps to recover, repair or restore the property rather than contacting the Police.

If the offending behaviour is persistent, serious or involves major damage to property, the Police may be contacted.

Violence/assaults

If a child is known to be violent, the concerns and strategies designed to reduce or prevent the behaviour must be set out in a Behaviour Management Plan, Placement Information Record and Risk Assessment.

Apart from individual Placement Information Records, staff/carers must do all they can to create a safe and positive living environment for children.

However, staff/carers must take what action is immediately necessary to prevent violence or assaults from occurring.

This may include the use of Restraint or other forms of Physical Intervention in accordance with Trafford policies.

Reporting violence/assaults to the police

The Police will not normally be contacted unless the violence is serious and life or limb are endangered, persistent or the victim wishes to make a complaint to the Police.

If victims wish to make such a complaint they should be encouraged only to do so after having given consideration to the implications and consequences for all concerned.

If victims do decide to contact the Police they should be offered support and advice by a manager/supervisor.

Notifications and recording

If the Police are called to provide assistance in managing an Incident of any kind in a home, the child's social worker and manager/supervising social worker must be notified as soon as practicable afterwards.

There are a number of records that must be completed in the event of an incident, whether or not the Police were called for assistance. For foster cares this will be recorded in the daily log, for children's homes it should be recorded in the homes Incident Log and on the child's recording sheet.

Where the Police have been involved in an incident, any incident record should be forwarded to the child's social worker, Team Manager and where applicable Ofsted for notification of the incident.

Those requesting Police assistance should resist referring to a "breach of the peace" and should await advice from attending Police officers regarding the nature of the offences being committed. They should also resist, wherever possible, requesting that bail conditions be imposed which state that a child should not be returned to a particular home. Any such request should only be made following discussions with a manager as to the risks to other children in the home.