

**Outcomes
First
Group.**

**ACORN EDUCATION
AND CARE**

OptionsAutism

Children's Homes

VISITORS GUIDANCE

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The presence of any persons not employed at the home, including staff from other company establishments are to be recorded in the Visitor's book. The Visitor's book is to include the Visitor's full name, the reasons for their visit and times entering and leaving the home.

Staff are to confirm on the Visitor's book that the Visitor's identification has been verified and Visitors may be required to wear a badge indicating their status as a visitor whilst at the home. Staff are to confirm on the Visitor's book that emergency fire procedures have been explained. The Visitor is to sign the Visitor's book as they arrive and leave the home.

Being mindful of the balance to be struck between "normality" and protection of children/young people placed, the management of visitors to any of the company's children's homes needs careful consideration.

Staff are responsible for ensuring that records are kept of those attending the home. All arrivals and departures must be recorded in the Daily Log and Visitors Book. Staff must ask the Visitor to prove their identity before entering the home. If the person is unable to do so or there is any doubt or concerns on the part of staff, they may not come into the home and should be politely referred to a Manager. Staff must record the purpose of the visit and the time that the Visitor arrives and leaves the home. Staff are responsible for ensuring that Visitors whilst at the home are safe by explaining the homes fire evacuation procedures and where fire assembly points are upon their arrival.

All visits to our homes by individuals external to the company should normally be by prior arrangement.

The exception to this are visits by regulatory authorities such as Ofsted and Environmental Health, whose Inspectors have the right of access to a home at any time without prior notice.

A visit by the Independent Visitor for the purpose of Regulation 44 monitoring may be unannounced.

Visits to homes will be risk assessed in line with current Public Health Guidance and current Government restrictions in relation to managing COVID-19. Independent Visitors will complete a Travelling Worker COVID-19 risk assessment prior to visiting the home.

2.0 GENERAL VISITORS

A young person's Social Worker has the right of unsupervised access to their client. All other visitors will be observed and/or supervised by a designated member of staff whilst they are visiting and/or performing some assigned task in the home to ensure that at no time is there unsupervised contact with resident young people.

The Home Manager has the discretion to allow unsupervised visits by known or DBS checked persons.

All visits to young people should take place in a designated area, unless other arrangements have been agreed in advance of the visit by the young person's Social Worker and the Home Manager. This is to provide privacy to the young person and their visitor, and to prevent the visit impinging on others living at the home

3.0 PARENTS AND RELATIVES

See Section 2, General.

No contact may be permitted between children and their parents, siblings, relatives or friends without the approval of the Social Worker - preferably outlined in the Placement Plan. We will do all we reasonably can to encourage contact with parents and relatives, but we have a duty to protect children's rights and interests. Therefore, contact with parents or relatives must be planned/agreed with social workers in consultation with children, and clearly set out in Placement Plans, with staff supervising as required.

If parents or relatives arrive without prior agreement, staff should politely and sensitively explain that they cannot allow contact until the Manager/Social Worker has been consulted; and then consult the Manager. If there appear to be any immediate risks to the child or others, staff should seek guidance and support from a Manager or, in exceptional circumstances, the Police.

In relation to planned contacts risk assessments are to be completed when deemed necessary to support visitors to the home in line with the young person they are visiting and the group as a whole.

Staff take reasonable precautions to prove the identity of parents, relatives or friends before entering the home. If the person is unable to do so or there is any doubt or concerns on the part of staff, they may not come into the home and should be politely referred to a manager.

4.0 YOUNG PEOPLES FRIENDS

Young people should be encouraged to develop and maintain friendships with their peers in the community, including visiting one another's homes. In supporting this, home managers will need to make decisions about the 'suitability' of a young person's friendships in the same way that any reasonable parent might. If staff are unsure about the appropriateness of a particular friendship or the suitability of having that young person visit the home/meet with other young people living there, then the issue should be discussed with the relevant Social Workers to reach an agreed decision.

In order to avoid stigmatisation of children/young people, it might not be appropriate to ask their friends from the local community/school etc. to sign in and out of the visitor's book. To ensure a full and accurate record is maintained of all visitors to the home, staff should complete this on their behalf.

5.0 MAINTENANCE, WORKDERS AND CONTRACTORS

Before Contractors are permitted to undertake work in the home, the Manager must ensure that they are properly briefed on the purpose and function of the home, and that any parameters are agreed, preferably in writing e.g. which parts of the home they may access, safe management of tools/equipment.

Under no circumstances may contractors have unsupervised contact with children, even if they have obtained DBS checks, unless the relevant Social Worker approves it. Contractors must not engage with the young people resident at the home unless they are accompanied by a member of staff.

Any concerns raised by the workers or by staff within the home must immediately be brought to the attention of the Home Manager.

Contractors are responsible for the safety and security of their tools, plant, machinery and equipment of any description. No items should be left unattended at any time. All vehicles must be locked at all times, with windows closed. Anyone working on site must be appropriately dressed and shirts must be worn at all times.

Smoking is not permitted within the building or in front of the young people anywhere on the site. Contractors must not give cigarettes, food, sweets or beverages of any kind to the young people or accept anything from a young person.

Contractors are requested not to bring inappropriate reading material on to the site, including daily newspapers containing explicit photographs

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Family, by working together we will build
incredible futures by empowering vulnerable
children, young people and adults in the UK
to be happy and make their way in the world

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