SPECIALIST EDUCATION SERVICES

Access and Visitors Policy and Practice

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1 AIMS

- To ensure a young person's basic right to safety and security.
- To facilitate and monitor access to young people for approved/legitimate visitors i.e. parents and relatives, Local Authority personnel and others e.g. police.
- To prevent young people being targeted for improper purposes.
- To ensure that visits from professionals relate directly or indirectly to the enhancement of the overall provision of service to the young people
- To keep in mind at all times the young person's right to a domestic home environment

2 STATEMENT

Young people who live at SES establishments have a right to telephone and written contact with, and visits from, parents, carers and other bona-fide relatives/family friends.

Young people living in our establishments are the responsibility of the Registered Manager (and members of staff). Senior members of staff are responsible for keeping a record of the whereabouts of young people for whom they have specific or overall responsibility. Acting 'in loco parentis' carries with it a parallel responsibility of 'duty of care'. Within this responsibility is the onus to do what is reasonable at all times to safeguard the best interests of the young person in question. On occasions this test may need to be applied to the issue of making decisions in relation to access to young people and visitors to the home.

SES policy and procedures will take a common sense approach to welcoming and receiving visitors into a domestic setting and preserving as much as possible an open and domestic feel that is so important to the long term well being of our young people. We fundamentally believe that over cautious, institutional responses to short term perceived risks that in reality are minimal is far more damaging and 'risky' for our young people over the long term. All procedures are based upon a thorough and quantified security risk assessment, as well as the Appropriate and Suitable Location Review *(see Security Risk Assessment and Appropriate and Suitable Location review on the Network).*

The location of our establishments is risk assessed on an annual basis in consultation with Norfolk placing authority and the police. This forms part of the Security risk assessment and Appropriate and Suitable Location Review and is another indicator of the low risk location of both sites.

3 PROCEDURES FOR VISITORS

- Visitors are asked to arrange their visit at least 24 hours in advance.

- All young people will be made aware of visitors to their home and Learning Centre through a variety of ways that allow for differences in the relevance of visitors to individuals.

- In the case that a member of staff receives a telephone request for a visit to take place, and they are uncertain as to the credentials of the person requesting the visit they must discuss the request with the senior member of staff on duty. All prospective visitors will be asked to provide a telephone number for return contact.

- Requests from relatives other than parents will be checked for authenticity with the main parent (refer to 'definition of parent' guidelines). If the main parent wishes to deny access to any party this will be noted on the young person's file and the decision that a visit cannot be agreed will be conveyed to the person requesting the visit. A main parent may be requested to provide evidence of a Court Order if they wish to deny access to another 'parent.'

- In situations where the individual home has no knowledge of the alleged 'relative' who is making a request to visit, (most commonly a bogus 'uncle or aunt'), details of any such false request will subsequently be shared with social services or the local police.

- Local Authority or other agency visitors are expected to carry identification and sight of this will be requested on their first visit to Avocet House or Turnstone House. Access to a young person may be denied until such times as a visitor can prove their identity.

ALL VISITORS ARE EXPECTED TO REPORT TO THE MAIN OFFICE DURING OFFICE HOURS (MONDAY TO FRIDAY)

- The relevant staff will be alerted to the arrival of their visitor(s) and will normally be expected to meet and greet visitors at the office before proceeding to wherever they need to onsite.

- All visitors, including contractors, must sign the 'Visitors Book' on arrival, giving the date and time of their visit and car registration number etc, and similarly they must 'sign out' when they leave site. The 'Visitors Book' is located in the admin office during office hours, Monday to Friday, and the main house at all other times.

- When signing in for the first time, all visitors will be asked to read a safeguarding statement to ensure they have understood the protocols and information sharing relating to SES.

- Visitors are expected to behave reasonably and within the parameters of home policies during the course of their visit. If a visitor is judged to be intoxicated, or otherwise impaired, or becomes violent, abusive or otherwise threatening to the continuing good order of the environment they will be asked to leave the site.

- Visitors are expected to abide by the Specialist Education Services' rules that alcohol is not to be brought on to site and that smoking is not permitted on the whole site, including the grounds and the road immediately bordering the site.

As a matter of good practice all visitors will be asked to read a disclaimer before they 'sign in'.

- The disclaimer will also be printed on the 'Authorised Visitor' card, which will be handed to the visitor as they sign in. This card will be retained by the visitor whilst they are on site, and returned when they sign out. The card will also include information about fire procedures. *(See Appendix A for wording on the 'Authorised Visitor' card.)*

- The member of staff receiving visitors will alert the Duty Manager of their arrival.

- If the Manager, or their delegate, uses their judgement to deny a parent access to a young person, or has reason to terminate a visit for one of the aforementioned reasons, they will subsequently inform the responsible officer from the young person's Local Authority of their decision and follow this up with a letter/email confirming the facts that lead to the decision. The parent will be similarly provided with a written explanation of the decision. An alternative visit date will only be offered after a full assessment of the situation involving consultation with all appropriate parties.

- If a visitor asks to take a young person off the site the Duty Manager will be consulted. The in/out log in the house office will be completed accordingly. Upon returning to site the young person will be expected to advise a member of staff that they have returned.

- If a parent or other visitor removes a young person from site without permission advice will be immediately sought from the Duty Manager or the home's Registered Manager. Advice may also be requested from the young person's Local Authority officers, the home's adjacent social services or the local police.

- Young people are provided with the means to make private telephone calls.. Reasonable guidelines are given to young people as to when routine telephone calls might be made/received.

- If a member of staff has concerns as to the nature of a telephone call a young person might be receiving they will discuss their concerns with the Duty Manager. If a decision is made to deny any personal telephone access to a young person then the same procedures will apply as to when a prospective visitor to site is denied access to a young person.

- Young people will be encouraged to write letters or emails. They are entitled to privacy both in respect of what they choose to write and the content of any letters/messages they receive. However if a member of staff has concerns as to the contents (e.g. in the case of illegal substances) of a young person's mail they will discuss this with the Duty Manager. Parents/Social Services Department officers will then be contacted and an agreement will be reached as to what measures will be taken to prevent such material entering the home.

- Access to children extends beyond physical visits. Parents, family members and other significant people may maintain contact with children through technology, including mobile phones and tablets. Arrangements for this contact, including

any necessary safeguards or restrictions, should be outlined in each child's Daily Care arrangements and reflected in their Technology Agreement, which will be regularly reviewed.

- All members of staff will be required to 'reasonably challenge' any person they find on the home's site that they do not recognise.

- All members of staff are responsible for ensuring that all visitors have followed the signing in and out procedures, particularly where the visitor may have inadvertently bypassed it, and that they have an 'Authorised Visitor' card in their possession.

4 APPENDICES

Appendix A: Dealing with Unknown Visitors and Intruders

Daytime

Essentially no stranger on the site should go unchallenged, but this should be handled sensitively. Much will depend on the time of day, who else is on site, etc. Staff should be aware of predictable visitors that are in the diary, for example. Challenging strangers must not be aggressive or unwelcoming, but clear, pleasant and polite. If during daylight hours a person appears on site and it is not obvious that they are a pre-arranged visitor a greeting such as is given below is appropriate.

"Hello. Can I help you? Are you looking for someone?"

An easy follow up can be:

"Let me take you round to the office to sign in."

Usually the other person will respond with an explanation of why they are there and for the vast majority of times it there will be for a valid reason and the situation will be easily resolved.

If you have to leave the building to check out an unexplained person entering the site, inform a colleague or the duty DCM. A second adult should usually observe from a window or doorway.

If there is any hint of suspicion or disquiet about the response, politely withdraw and immediately inform the duty DCM.

Hours of Darkness

It is prudent for all external doors to be secured for the night once darkness approaches.

During the hours of darkness any stranger on site is potentially going to be seen either because they come to the front door (and trigger external lights) or they are making themselves visible elsewhere round the outside of the house.

A stranger at the door can be immediately visually assessed and greeted with the normal politeness and an enquiry as to what they want. This will again usually be a straightforward situation with an easy explanation. A stranger observed elsewhere on the site should be reported to the duty DCM.

Under no circumstances should staff exit the building to directly challenge.

During Sleeping in Times

Any suspicious activity during the sleeping in time should be immediately reported to the duty DCM. Under no circumstances should staff exit the building to directly challenge.

Procedures for Serious Concern about Intruders on site during daylight hours

Serious concern about a visitor or stranger on the site during daylight hours will be reported to the duty DCM who should involve/alert both the Registered Manager and Principal if they are on site. There will be a decision about who will take the lead in any action in these circumstances.

If the duty DCM is in sole charge the following points apply:

- DCM will assess the seriousness of the situation
- If required quietly and sensibly make sure all children are safely inside (and reassured if they are concerned) and staff alerted in a low-key fashion.
- Coach House staff will need to be alerted if the Coach House is occupied (Avocet House only)
- Stables Staff will need to be alerted if the Stables is occupied (Turnstone House only)
- An assessment will be made as to whether the police need to be informed
- If concern is high enough a calm but swift check of internal security should be organised (i.e. all exits/entrances are secured)
- Where applicable note any key features of the intruder (physical, voice, etc.,) and any vehicle registration
- Consider whether this falls into the critical incident definition as described in the critical incident policy
- Record your actions and the outcome

Procedures for Serious Concern about Intruders on site during darkness

- DCM will assess the seriousness of the situation
- Intruders on site during the hours of darkness will automatically be of a suspicious and potentially serious nature. Much may depend on their behaviour.
- There is an assumption that the house is secured for the night once darkness approaches.
- The time of evening will have a bearing on the DCM response (e.g. visibility outside, whether children are in bed, etc)
- If required quietly and sensibly make sure all children are safely in their rooms (and reassured if they are concerned) and staff alerted in a low-key fashion.

- Coach House staff will need to be alerted if the Coach House is occupied (Avocet House only)
- Stables Staff will need to be alerted if the Stables is occupied (Turnstone House only)
- An assessment will be made as to whether the police need to be informed
- Internal security should already have been checked
- Night time alarms can be set so that premises are secure
- If the intruder is detected on site after staff have settled for sleeping in then the DCM should alert the other adults and an assessment will be made as to whether the police need to be informed

When doing an external security check make sure that the other adults are alerted to the fact that you are going outside. There is a possibility that whilst doing an external security check an intruder is encountered. If this happens your primary aim is calmly return to the premises as best as possible with a view to protecting your own personal safety. For most of your "circuit" of the building you can be visually tracked by a colleague.

<u>Procedures for Serious Concern about Intruders in the building during darkness</u>

In the event of the main intruder alarm being activated:

- Check alarm pad – this will indicate where security has been breached
- If this is the case call the police
- Raise the other adults sleeping over
- Await police assistance.

If you are physically faced with intruders in the building make it clear the police are on their way and that there are other adults on site alerted.

Do not show any resistance in respect of protection for property, money or possessions. In the event of a realistic threat to personal safety, or the safety of children, the company would support any reasonable and proportionate action in the circumstances that an individual chooses to take.

Appendix B: Visitors Card Notice

- Visitors are expected to behave reasonably and within the policies and practice of SES, promoting equal opportunities and reporting any perceived racial or discriminatory incident, and should they not do so they may be asked to leave the site.
- The fire alarm is a continuously sounding bell. Should you hear the alarm, please proceed directly to the fire assembly point *(site specific information will be inserted here).*

Appendix C: Visitors Safeguarding Statement

See overleaf

INTRODUCTION

Safeguarding and child protection are central to everyone's role at Avocet House and Turnstone House.

Regardless of your role as an employee, a visitor or a volunteer whilst you are on our premises you must pay heed to our policies and procedures.

KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE

Specialist Education Services operates a policy of restricting unsupervised access to children and young people to those who have been correctly vetted.

All adults working regularly with our young people must undertake a Disclosure Barring Service Check which must be completed before they commence work.

Adults visiting the site for meetings and are accompanied at all times do not need to be checked. They will sign our visitor's book and be asked to carry a card which identifies them as a visitor. Upon departure, visitors will sign out and return the card.

SAFEGUARDING

FIRST AID

If you encounter a child with any medical concerns or who seems ill, or in case of an accident please alert the nearest adult. All adults are First Aid trained. First aid boxes are located throughout the site.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

The premises are regularly audited to ensure that everywhere is safe for young people, but you have a responsibility to ensure that your actions do not endanger anyone.

As a visitor you have a legal responsibility to care for your own as well as others health and safety and you are required to observe all health, safety and welfare rules.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE

There is a no smoking policy covering the whole site, including the grounds and the road immediately bordering the site.

Equally it is not acceptable for alcohol and/or illegal substances to be brought onto the site or into the house.

SPECIALIST EDUCATION SERVICES

Avocet House and Turnstone House

Safeguarding and Child Protection
A Quick Guide

SES Ltd is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

If you have any child protection concerns about a young person you meet at Avocet House or Turnstone House you should immediately report these to a member of the staff team.

If you feel the young person is at risk or the subject of abuse you should contact the Designated Safeguarding Officers who are:

- Any Deputy Care Manager
- The Head of Care
- The Registered Manager
- The Head of Education
- The Principal

Any adult will guide you to one of the above mentioned people.

CHILD PROTECTION

PLEASE REPORT ANYTHING THAT GIVES YOU CAUSE FOR CONCERN

REMEMBER…….

NEVER PROMISE TO KEEP A SECRET

ALWAYS PASS ON INFORMATION IMMEDIATELY

What if a child wants to tell me something?

If a child begins to tell you something that is happening to them you should: -

- Tell them that you want to make sure they are safe
- Tell them that you will have to pass on what they tell you to help keep them safe
- Listen carefully but try not to ask questions