

Thurrock Council

Disabled Children's Short Breaks and Outreach Service Sunshine Centre, Hannah's Place and Befriending

Supervision of children policy

Includes Staff Code of Conduct.

Legislation:

- Child and Family Act 2014
- Ofsted
- Workplace Health and Safety- Risk Management Advisory Standard 2000

Policy statement

The Short Break and Outreach Service (SBOS) strives to ensure that all children and young people are supervised to the highest level while in the care of our staff. We recognise that the very nature of the children or young people who access our service means they generally need high levels of support to keep themselves safe.

With this in mind we aim to create a culture of vigilance and be aware of the variables relating to supervision. Through procedures and practices, SBOS will ensure that the potential for accidents and injury is reduced within the setting as well as for children and young people participating in outside excursions.

Rationale

Supervision is perhaps one of the key requirements in the prevention of accidents and injury throughout the service and should be active and interactive. Staff must be alert to possible dangers within the setting and ensure that they can see or hear all the children at all times.

To do this, staff require the skills to be able to assess potential risks during supervision and be able to implement changes to supervision to avoid accident or injury. All staff should be briefed on potential supervisory risks according to each individual child in a confidential and sensitive way.

Implementation

Staff and managers

All staff will have an orientation that includes information about the children (where appropriate), obligations and responsibilities, including the importance of supervision and vigilance.

The Team Manager will ensure that sufficient staff are on duty to comply with ratios and staff have appropriate qualifications, skills and experience.

Staff teams will set up their room environments with consideration to the practicalities of supervising all children and areas (visibility, accessibility, potential hazards).

Staff will position themselves in the indoor and outdoor environments with consideration for the activities being offered, the mix of children and staff and to allow the greatest vision of the whole area. Staff will position themselves to see children and remain mindful of all the children in the setting not just those in immediate vicinity.

Children will be within sight or hearing of staff members at all times during the day.

Staff will focus on active interactions with the children and refrain from congregating together to hold personal conversations that take their concentration away from their primary responsibility of ensuring the safety of the children in their care. Staff will discuss best position points of supervision to avoid this clustering.

Staff will be mindful at all times of assessed ratios and if for any reason they find themselves outside of ratio they will take steps to address it immediately.

Staff will ensure they are following and are familiar with any procedures for a child taking medication including following protocol for storing medication correctly in either a locked cupboard or the appropriate bag which should be kept on their person at all times. This will be properly communicated to any member of trained staff allocated to the child at the beginning of the session.

Staff will be fit for duty and not under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

When multiple areas are available to children at the same time, (indoor/ outdoor activities), all areas will be supervised.

Staff will do regular head counts on children in their care (especially on entering or departing areas – that is, play area or when closing their room/centre down for the day) and be aware of every child at all times.

Children will never be unattended on the changing table or while eating or drinking, including from bottles.

Staff will communicate effectively by informing other staff if they are leaving an area for any reason.

Staff will encourage children to inform a staff member when they are leaving an area to use the bathroom.

Staff will question strangers in a friendly and helpful manner, such as "Hello, can I help you?" and assist through the authorised person's collection process – that is, check ID, name, and so on.

The Management will support staff through regularly providing opportunities for staff to evaluate and provide feedback on supervisory practices through staff meetings, staff room discussions and displays and at other times as required.

Plans will be developed and reviewed for improving facilities and correcting problems if effective supervision is difficult due to design or change in grounds or buildings.

Staff will ensure parents and carers:

- hand over children to a staff member on arrival and ensure a staff member is informed when departing
- inform staff if someone else other than those who are authorised to will be collecting their child

- ensure the 'authorised person to collect' information is up to date
- inform staff of any current or pending court orders affecting the child and provide the centre with a photocopy of the court order to be kept with the child's enrolment forms
- adhere to correct sign in and out procedures
- ensure all gates and doors are closed after entry or exit
- update staff with any information they need around behaviour, medical needs and communication, to ensure children are safe and receive a high quality of care

Supervision when in the community – responsibilities:

- session leaders to ensure trips are risk assessed and from that manage ratios for the group accordingly
- ensure the ratios are adhered to and sufficient staff are available that have the appropriate skills and qualifications
- ensure that all the correct information goes with the leaders of the trip including contact numbers and paperwork for any gastro feeding regimes and medication
- allocate individual children to key workers for the duration of the trip
- ensure that the responsible person has contact details for on call managers.
- supervising staff member to ensure all staff have read and understood any policy that relates to areas of supervision. namely:
 - supervision policy
 - behaviour support policy
 - medication policy
 - 'what to do if a child goes missing' policy
- ensure they are following and are familiar with any procedures for a child taking medication, including following protocol for storing medication correctly in either a locked cupboard or the appropriate bag which should be kept on their person at all times – this will be properly communicated to any member of trained staff allocated to the child at the beginning of the session

Before the transport finally leaves a location and all adults and children are seated, a final head count must be done.

Staff Code of Conduct

This code of conduct for the Short Break and Outreach Service is written in line with the behaviour framework laid out by Thurrock Council.

These are the expectations laid out for every member of staff to ensure the council as a whole is able to achieve its aims.

The four behaviours considered to be fundamental to everything we do in Thurrock are known as the four C's:

- customer excellence
- consistency and trust
- collaboration
- continuous improvement

To put these into the context of The Short Break and Outreach Service, themes and indicators are outlined below:

Customer excellence

Although we might not see the children and young people in our care as customers, they are who we are here for and striving for the highest level of care for them must be at the heart of all we do.

Indicators:

- to provide a high standard of supervision and care for the children and young people who access our service
- be approachable and flexible with a positive, professional attitude towards the children and their families
- take responsibility to respond to the needs and demands of those using the service to the best of your abilities
- set high standards and deliver what is promised
- always provide an enriching, stimulating and fun experience for the children in your care.
- seek out ways to go over and above for the children and families you work with

Consistency and trust

The children who access our service are amongst some of the most vulnerable in our community. Building relationships based on openness and trust is vital to instil confidence with families and the children themselves. The Councils commitment to equal opportunities, equally valuing both those using our service and colleagues, must be visible through our values and behaviours.

Indicators:

- always do what you say you will do
- uphold the trust placed in you by parents and carers by respecting their wishes and feelings and providing the highest standard of care for their children
- make time to build relationships with and engage with colleagues and service users
- act and communicate in a consistent manner which shows equal courtesy and fairness to all
- show consideration, concern and respect for other people's feelings and opinions
- value equality and diversity throughout your practice and actively promote equality in all your behaviour
- challenge any behaviours and attitudes that undermine our absolute commitment to eliminating all forms of discrimination including, but not exclusively: racism, homophobia, gender stereotyping and inequality through disability

Collaboration

Providing an outstanding service requires an outstanding team. Working together to achieve our goals and a common objective builds relationships and fosters a culture of mutual respect amongst colleagues.

Indicators:

- be an active team player and put forward ideas to benefit the team, children and the parents/carers
- share skills and knowledge and encourage ideas from others
- celebrate team success and help to create a positive team spirit
- support fellow team members by doing your fair share of the work
- make time to build relationships and engage with colleagues

Continuous improvement

The ability to reflect on your practice is the mark of a strong practitioner; always striving to improve and showing a willingness and ability to adapt and change. Taking personal responsibility to develop individual skills and knowledge will ultimately result in a high performing team and excellent service.

Indicators:

- display commitment to learning new things
- reflect on one's own practice, building on strengths and looking to improve on weaknesses.
- question poor service and look at ways to enhance it
- try to identify ways to do your job better, suggesting new ideas and processes
- motivate and encourage others to improve and develop their performance, pushing the boundaries of excellent service

Document review

It was last reviewed by Lauren Riddick and Laura Hayden – September 2023.