**PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES**

**1 - STATEMENT OF EXPECTATIONS**

Staff at Omega Care Group are, given the nature of the service, in a significant position of trust, responsibility and influence.

Staff should be mindful of this, act with self-awareness, and ensure that they maintain appropriate professional boundaries. This awareness is placed within the wider context of safe working practices, safeguarding, risk management, well-being and positive behavioural practices.

The purpose of this policy, the term ‘young person’, includes both children and young people.

1. Working with young people should be characterised by honesty, integrity, a caring approach, mutuality and transparency.
2. Staff should ensure the fulfilment of all responsibilities and demonstrate integrity, maturity, consistency and good judgement.
3. Staff should be aware that they should work in a friendly manner but that we are not friends with the young people and should not present as such.
4. All staff should understand the importance of voicing concerns in a timely manner.
5. Staff should use opportunities for reflective practice, as a developmental tool and to address concerns.
6. Staff should fully understand and operate within the organisation’s policies, procedures and protocols.
7. Staff should show respect for individual difference and diversity.
8. Staff should treat every individual with fairness, integrity and dignity.
9. Staff should have contact with young people only through work time, any other incidents much be approved by a manager, recorded with the reasons for the contact, and the social worker informed.
10. Staff should be clear in their professional role – a friendly, trusting relationship, but not a friend.
11. Staff should always use appropriate language – calm, reasoned, non-confrontational and be aware of avoiding any pejorative or value laden terminology.
12. Staff should never share personal information with young people. This includes mobile, landline numbers, email addresses, home address, social media contacts etc.
13. Staff should not give young people money from their own pocket. This promotes a power imbalance and could be seen as grooming.
14. Staff should not give or accept personal gifts from young people. Any gift provided at, for example a birthday, would be from the organisation as a whole.
15. Any items which staff wish to give to an individual must be approved by the house manager and given to the house as a donation and then given to the young person.
16. Any instances where a young person displays an inappropriate emotional attachment (e.g. infatuation) to/with a member of staff should be reported to a manager immediately and working protocols put in place.
17. Staff should not develop or promote a relationship with any young person other than a professional, caring one. This includes any sexual relationship (this is also prohibited by law).
18. Staff must understand and maintain confidentiality, including the appropriate sharing of information.
19. Staff should not agree to keep secrets if asked to by a young person - the young person needs to be aware of staff responsibilities to report.
20. Staff should not share or discuss information about other young people’s issues with a young person.
21. Staff should not adopt a negative approach regarding other staff or discuss personal issues with young people.
22. Staff should avoid physical contact with young people. If first aid is necessary, it should be carried out in an observable area. Any physical contact should be recorded.
23. Staff should ensure appropriate appearance and clothing – no provocative or extreme clothing, no display of political or contentious slogans.
24. Staff should not purchase anything illegal or injurious to the well-being of the young person – even if asked. This includes tobacco and alcohol.
25. Staff should never attend work under the influence of any substance (including alcohol) which may impact on their ability to carry out their role.
26. Staff should avoid giving, lending or borrowing items to and from young people, as this raises issues of power control and equality.
27. Staff should avoid any behaviour that may be misinterpreted and record and report any such incident as soon as possible.
28. Staff should demonstrate good practice in challenging discrimination, bullying and issues of unfairness.
29. Any contact with young people should be via Omega Care Group equipment only and should be professional in nature. This includes any contact via e-mail, telephone or social media.
30. Staff should under **no** circumstances record images of any young person on their personal devices. Any image captured must be **solely** on the organisation’s equipment, with a clear mandate for use. Written consent from that young person and their social worker is required before photographs / images may be recorded. (see Digital and e-safety Policy).

**2 - ACTIONS OUTSIDE WORK**

1. Although we do not in general seek to regulate the private behaviour of employees, we recognise that on occasions an individual’s behaviour away from work may call into question their suitability to work in our company. It is the responsibility of all employees to behave both at work and outside, in a way which upholds their own credibility and the reputation of the company.

**3 - TRAINING**

1. All employees will be required to read this policy and related policies as part of their induction process and will be provided with training on professional boundaries.

**4 - Judgements**

1. There will be instances where staff members are required to make complex judgements. Advice from managers should be sought and the outcome of any decision taken recorded along with reasoning to support it.
2. Any decision taken should be based on being:

* Warranted
* Proportionate
* Safe
* Equitable.

Name of staff \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Review date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_