**Visitors Policy**

1. **Statement of Intent** 
   * Omega Care Group aims to be an active figure in the communities that all provisions are based in whilst maintaining a balance in protecting the interests of the children and young people.
   * Omega Care Group wish to promote a homely and positive environment where Children and Young People can flourish whilst cautiously balancing safeguarding measures.
2. **Purpose**
   * Omega Care Group acknowledge a wide range of individuals may wish to attend the home. This policy will outline procedures which staff, individuals representing Omega and stakeholders must adhere to.
   * For this policy, the term ‘child’ is inclusive of children and young people.
3. **Categories of visitors**
   * + Social workers
     + Parents, relatives or friends of children
     + Prospective employees
     + Inspectors
     + Neighbours or representatives of community/agency groups
     + Contractors
     + Delivery drivers, meter readers etc

3.1. All measures should be used to verify the identity of an individual.

3.2. Visitors at times should be briefed to any potential risk in which they are exposed to whilst protecting the confidentiality of the young people in the home.

1. **Visitors who are likely to spend a long period of time in the home:**
   * They should have a clear understanding of the purpose and function of the home. This does not mean that they should be required to read our Statement of Purpose, but they should be briefed on the purpose of the home and risks they may encounter.
   * The visit should normally be planned/announced and agreed by the manager or staff (e.g. for social worker visits).  Visits to children by parents, relatives and friends must be planned as set out further on within this policy.
   * The manager/member of staff must ensure the visitor has received and/or understands the key elements of running of the home.
   * The visitor should be briefed on what behaviour they are likely to encounter, what to do if an incident occurs, practical matters such as fire precautions, location of toilets, mealtimes, etc;
   * Any visitors that are unchecked (Disclosure and Barring Service Checks) must be chaperoned when on the home’s premises.
2. **Visitors attending the home for a short period of time**

* Individuals may visit the home for short periods of time and are not authorised to have unsupervised contact with children. Employees are expected to note the times of delivery drivers in the logbook. Anyone entering the home should be recorded in the visitors’ book.
* Their arrival and departure must be recorded in the Daily Log, Visitors Book and, if an individual child has been visits, his/her daily record.

1. **Parents, Relatives and Friends**

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 relevant documentation:

* 16 plus is Family, Friends and Associates.
* Children Residential is the Residential care Plan.

Omega Care Group will encourage contact with parents and relatives whilst maintaining the child’s rights and all contact arrangement within the children’s residential services must be clearly stipulated within care plans.

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, before or upon arrival parents, friends and relatives will need a more insightful briefing to the running of the home and H&S operational protocols i.e. Evacuation Protocol especially if they are staying longer periods particularly overnight they will need a full fire precautions briefing.

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 and asked to leave.

1. **Maintenance Workers and Contractors**

* Prior to any work being undertaken by contractors in the home, the house 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.
* Contractor’s Risk Assessment must be completed.
* All contractors must be asked 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.
* Under no circumstances may contractors have unsupervised contact with children, even if they have obtained Disclosure and Barring Service checks
* All arrivals and departures must be recorded in the Daily Log and Visitors Book, any concerns raised by the Contractors or by staff within the home must immediately be brought to the attention of the manager.

1. **Officials (e.g. Social Workers, Personal Advisors, Regulatory Bodies)**

* Should Official Visitors require unsupervised contact with children, this is acceptable but they should not be alone with children in their bedrooms.
* Police Officers, Social Workers, LAC Nurses, CAMHS Nurses, Independent Reviewing Officers or Representatives of Regulatory Authority will not need to provide detail of DBS checks, however caution should be applied to Independent Visitors and Advocates in ensuring a valid DBS check has been completed.

1. **Employees and Children From other homes**

* Staff and children not working/living at the home must be treated as visitors; their arrival and departure must be recorded in the Daily Log and Visitors Book.
* Should family members of employees visit the home, they must not be allowed to have unsupervised contact with children.

1. **Neighbours**
   * Omega Care Group is keen to develop meaningful links within the community however must respect and uphold the rights of the children in the home.
   * Omega Care Group does not permit Neighbours spending time alone with the children and young people
   * Omega Care Group acknowledges the effect homes can have on local communities even when they are run well. Therefore, Omega Care Group places emphasis on the consideration of the area when planning on operating a service there.
   * Omega Care Group may embed measures to reduce the impact such as sound proofing and double glaze windows.
   * The home manager is responsible in ensuring a positive relationship is developed with the neighbours.
   * Neighbours should be given practical advice on dealing with our children which might include not inviting them into their homes, not lending money or offering cigarettes, etc;
   * If an incident occurs, it must be taken seriously. All phone calls or visits should be dealt with calmly and politely, even if aggressive. A manager should contact neighbours as soon as possible and if possible, arrange a visit to the neighbour. If the neighbour wishes to make a complaint, the manager should refer to the complaint policy.
2. **Home Protocol**

**16 plus**

1. All Visitors in the leaving care should leave by 10 pm Sunday to Thursday and 10:30 pm Friday and Saturday.
2. No Child under the age of 15 should be left accompanied and in the responsibility of the child admitted into the service as a general rule of thumb.
3. In some cases, children from the age of 13-15 unaccompanied and in the care of the child admitted into the home. This must be permitted by the Social Worker, agreed with the Home Manager, Service Manager, Designated Safeguarding Lead and Director. In such circumstance there must be a clear and concise plan in which the staff on duty follow accordingly.
4. Should any visitors become aggressive or present a behaviour or a concern, the home manager and senior are permitted to facilitate a temporary or permanent barring from the provision.

Children Residential

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