

Children's Guide and Handbook

Welcome to Outdoor Care

We are happy to welcome you to Outdoor Care. This handbook is for you to keep and will help you understand the house, the people who work here, and what you can expect during your stay.

We want your time here to feel safe, comfortable, and positive. If you don't understand something, please ask your key worker, a staff member, or the Registered Manager.

We understand that your past may have been difficult so we are here to help you look forward and move towards the future you want.

Updated – 30.4.26

About Outdoor Care

- *Outdoor Care has supported young people since 1999.*
- *We are here to support, listen, and encourage you.*
- *Everyone is welcome here — discrimination is not accepted.*
- *We follow the Equality Act 2010 which means you will always be treated fairly, whatever your age, race, gender, sexuality, religion, disability, or background.*

Our House Rules

- *Staff bedrooms and the office are for staff only.*
- *No smoking or vaping in the house or in vehicles.*
- *If staff believe there are drugs in the house, they must call the police and may search bedrooms.*
- *Keep music at a level that does not disturb others.*
- *Get up between 8:00–8:30am on school days. If you are not in school, you will take part in daily learning activities (Monday–Friday, 9am–3pm).*
- *Bedtime is usually no later than 11:00pm.*
- *Do not go into other young people's bedrooms after 10:00pm.*
- *Staff will check bedrooms daily and help with cleaning and bedding weekly.*
- *TVs, phones, and music must be kept at a sensible volume. If they disturb others or affect your routine, staff may remove them at night.*
- *Rules will be reviewed after four weeks.*

You will be asked to sign to confirm you understand these rules.

Fire Safety

- *Staff will explain fire procedures when you arrive.*

- *If you see a fire, raise the alarm immediately.*
- *Fire drills will take place regularly. You must take part for your own safety.*

Clothes and Personal Belongings

- *When you arrive, staff will make a list of your belongings so nothing is lost.*
- *You will receive £65 per month for clothes and up to £20 per month for phone credit.*
- *Staff will help you shop and learn how to do laundry.*
- *You are responsible for your belongings (such as phones, games, and TVs). If they stop you joining in or disturb others, staff may remove them for a while.*
- *Inappropriate items (such as 18+ games or films) will be kept safe in restricted property until you leave.*

Your Bedroom

- *Your bedroom is your private space, and you may decorate it with staff agreement.*
- *You are responsible for keeping your room clean and tidy. Staff will help you.*
- *Staff will ask before entering your room, unless they are concerned for safety.*
- *Room searches will only take place if there are serious concerns.*

Meetings

- *Each week you will meet with staff to talk about how things are going and to make a plan for the week.*
- *You will also have Looked After Child (LAC) Reviews with an Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO). They make that sure your needs are being met and your voice is heard.*

Pocket Money

- *You will receive £1 per day (unless you are missing from care).*
- *You can earn extra by joining in positively. (PPB)*

Pocket money is linked to:

- *Looking after yourself and your space.*
- *Helping with chores.*
- *Taking part in education and activities.*

If you cause damage, you may need to use part of your pocket money to pay towards repairs.

Daily Achievements

- *Brush teeth*
- *Shower*
- *Change bedding weekly*
- *Wash, dry, and put away clothes*
- *Keep bedroom tidy*
- *Help with meals and clearing up*
- *Help keep the house clean*
- *Do homework (with staff help if needed)*
- *Join daily consultation*

Smoking

- *Smoking and vaping are not allowed inside the house or vehicles.*
- *If your social worker or guardian agrees, you may smoke or vape outside.*
- *Staff will not buy or give you cigarettes.*
- *By law, you must be 18+ to buy cigarettes.*

Family Contact

- *Staff will ask for important contact numbers when you arrive.*
- *You will receive phone credit each month for your mobile.*
- *Family contact (approved by your social worker) is encouraged. Staff will take you to and from visits.*

Physical Intervention

- *Staff may hold you safely if they think you could hurt yourself, others, or cause serious damage.*
- *This is never a punishment — it is to keep you safe.*
- *Afterwards, you will have the chance to talk about what happened.*

Going Missing

- *Please talk to staff if you feel like leaving.*
- *If you do leave, staff will try to find you and may call the police.*
- *When you return, staff and your social worker will meet with you within 24 hours.*

Complaints

If you are unhappy about something:

1. *Talk to staff or the manager.*
2. *Write it down (staff can help).*
3. *You will get a receipt, and your social worker will be told.*
4. *We will try to resolve it within 28 days.*
5. *If not, it will be passed to the Safeguarding & LAC Quality Assurance Officer.*

You can also complain directly to:

- *Social Worker*
- *IRO (Independent Reviewing Officer)*
- *Ofsted – 0300 123 1231*
- *Action for Children – 0800 085 0621*
- *Childline – 0800 1111*

You will not get into trouble for making a complaint.

Children's Rights

- *You have the right to be listened to.*
- *You can contact the Children's Commissioner if you feel your views are not being heard:*
 - *Tel: 020 7783 8330*
 - *Web: www.rights4me.org*

Mental Health and Support

It is normal to struggle sometimes. Staff are here to listen and help you find the right support.

Helpful organisations include:

- *Childline – 0800 1111 (free helpline and chat)*
- *Children North East – 0191 256 2444*
- *NSPCC – 0800 1111*
- *Barnardo's – barnardos.org.uk*
- *The Mix – themix.org.uk / text 85258*
- *Mind (Tyneside & Northumberland) – 0191 477 4545*
- *Streetwise North – 0191 230 5400*
- *CYPS / CAMHS – NHS mental health service for young people*

Drugs and Alcohol Support

- *Frank – talktofrank.com / 0300 123 6600*
- *Change Grow Live (CGL) – changegrowlive.org*
- *Newcastle Treatment and Recovery Service (NTaR) – 0191 206 1117*

Placement Agreement

This is an agreement between you, Outdoor Care, and your placing authority.

You agree to:

- *Treat staff and the house with respect.*
- *Take part in activities and education.*
- *Follow house rules.*
- *Talk to staff if you have concerns.*

Outdoor Care agrees to:

- *Support you and keep you safe.*
- *Provide activities, education, and care.*
- *Work with your social worker to meet your needs.*

Your placing authority agrees to:

- *Make sure you have the clothes and essentials you need.*
- *Support your placement and review it regularly.*
- *Ensure family contact is arranged safely.*

This agreement will be signed by you, your social worker, and Outdoor Care staff.

Remember: *This is your placement and your time. We are here to support you, to listen to you, and to help you plan for your future.*