

OAK HOUSE YOUNG PERSONS GUIDE



WELCOME FROM
THE MANAGER OF

OAK HOUSE

Hello, I'm Tania, the Manager of Oak House. I have been at this home for over 3 years and feel really happy here and I want you to feel the same way. I would like, along with the staff team, to welcome you to Oak House. I have been looking after and helping young people for over 14 years. It is both the staff team's job and mine to make sure you are cared for, feel safe, secure and happy. We can only do this with your help and by you telling us how you are feeling and how we can do things to help you.

We all do this job because we love working with young people. We respect and understand that you are an individual coming to live with a new group of people and this can be difficult. We too are all very different and we will all help you in different ways and our aims are the same: to support you to overcome barriers and enjoy positive life experiences.

We will not always agree on everything, but together we will find ways for you to achieve good things by working closely with you. We have lots of sports and activities to offer you but if we don't already do what you would like to do, we will try to find something you like and arrange this for you.

This will be your home for a short time or maybe a long time but either way all we ask is that you give us a chance to help and support you reach your goals. Details of how to contact me or Keith Riley, Responsible Individual, are on the back page.

Welcome and enjoy.

At Oak House we have devised a great way of helping young people to learn to enjoy and get the most from life. We do this through a programme of sports and active pursuits which encourage individual and team work and helps young people feel better about themselves and others.

This may be the first time you have lived away from your family or you may have moved here from another placement.

This booklet is designed to help you settle in and explain some of our expectations of you, as well as some of your rights as a young person being 'looked after'.



THESE ARE SOME OF THE QUESTIONS

WE EXPECT TO BE ASKED

BY YOUNG PEOPLE WHEN THEY MOVE IN

What posters can I put up?

We know that most young people want to put up pictures of their favourite stars, football teams, and celebrities. However, we do not allow pictures that show violence, drugs or inappropriate images.

Can I watch television in my room?

Yes, you can have a television, this is a comfort for most young people.

Will I have my own bedroom?

All young people have their own room and you will have a key. There may be rules around who is allowed in your bedroom, but that's a conversation we will have with you directly.

Can I bring my personal belongings?

Yes, we think it is important that you bring your personal items to the home. Most young people like to personalise their room with pictures and books etc.

Can I bring my mobile phone?

Phones are allowed, you will be expected to use your phone responsibly, hand it in during school time and before you go to bed.

What time do I have to go to bed?

Bedtimes are something that we will discuss and agree on – your bedtime will be age appropriate and usually between 7.00pm and 10.00pm

Mealtimes

Mealtimes are not set; we try to be like any other family and have some routine but we are flexible and encourage eating together.





KEY WORKING

Each young person is allocated a Key Worker who will make sure that all your day-to-day needs are met. For example: you receive the appropriate health and medical care, talk to your social worker and youth-worker and arrange home-visits when needed. They will also help you develop your living skills and prepare you for leaving care, but most of all they are there for you to talk to and confide in if needed.

Am I allowed to smoke?

For the benefit of your own health and in line with the law you will not be allowed to smoke inside or anywhere within the house grounds. If you have permission from your social worker or parent then you may, at certain times, smoke outside the building in an agreed area. However, if you are a smoker then staff will help you to give up, together with support from the local GP or Nurse.

What if I use illegal drugs?

We are committed to providing a healthy and safe place for all the children and young people who live there. Therefore the use or storage of illegal drugs in the homes is not allowed. We have a zero tolerance policy towards illegal drugs. You have the right to privacy for yourself and your property, however, if staff believe you are carrying drugs members of staff will carry out any searches.

Do I get pocket money?

What you receive is dependent upon your age. We also provide you with the opportunity to earn more money by completing extra chores or tasks around the house.

Will I get money for clothes?

Everyone receives a monthly allowance for clothing.

Can I make telephone calls?

Yes, you have the right to make calls to people that are important to you. This will be according to the direction and approval of your Social Worker.

Do I have to wear a school uniform?

If you attend a school where uniforms are worn then you will have to wear one along with everybody else.

What happens if I break the rules or mess up?

Staff will discuss this with you and listen to you before making a decision about any consequences. Behaving poorly or breaking rules can result in sanctions below. Loss of free/trust time, loss of privileges e.g. not allowed to go on a trip or out for a treat. Sanctions are not intended to be a punishment, they are put in place to encourage young people to behave positively and succeed. We want to provide a homely and welcoming place for you to live in and we think it is important for everyone to respect the home furnishings inside it. If you intentionally damage or break something in the home, you will be expected to pay for or help repair it.

CHARTER OF RIGHTS

AS A YOUNG PERSON YOU HAVE
THE FOLLOWING RIGHT TO:

- Have your personal dignity respected.
- Be treated as an individual.
- Have personal independence, personal choice and responsibility for your actions.
- Have your religious, cultural and emotional needs promoted and respected.
- Be treated fairly by those around you.
- Have an advocate or advisor present when your care is planned or reviewed in meetings.
- Be spoken to when changes are to take place and have your say.
- Be supported to complain when you need to.
- Be involved as fully as possible in the writing of your own care plan before and during your stay.
- Stay in touch with people that are important to you and hobbies you enjoy.
- Be able to request to look at your file and what has been said about you.
- Always be valued and listened to.



Advocacy

Staff can also arrange an independent advocate to come and meet with you. An advocate ensures that the views, wishes and feelings of young people are heard when decisions are made about their lives. Advocates are independent of the home which means they don't work for us or must do what we say.

The advocate will ensure that you have a voice in decisions that are made about your life and, they play an important role in helping you access services that you may need, this may be a school, a social worker or somebody else. Remember, it is your right to contact an advocate.

Anti-bullying Policy

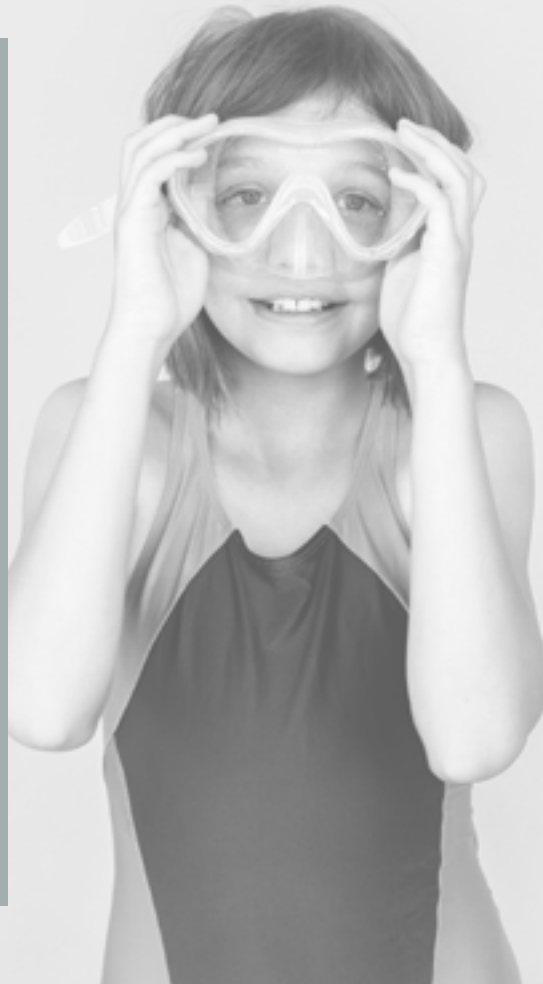
Your safety and protection is the most important thing for us and we will always try and prevent you feeling that you are being treated unfairly. Bullying is unusual in our home, but sometimes young people can feel bullied for a number of different reasons. Staff are quick to respond to any signs that bullying may be taking place and will support you if you feel unhappy about the way other people are treating you. We will also ask you to think about how you treat other people and it is just as important that other people do not feel that we are bullying or being unfair to them also. If there are occasions when young people fall out, disagree or feel unhappy with one another, staff will work with you to get you through this.

Relationships and friendships can be difficult for all of us. All our staff are reminded that they too were once young people and understood how difficult relationships can be at times. At this home, you will be helped to understand how to build and keep relationships with others, the important part you play in these relationships and what you can expect from friendships and relationships. Finally, remember, you are not alone, we are here to support you and it is our job to make sure we do this properly. We would encourage you to feel that you can come to us for anything and we will always work with you to resolve any difficulties.

Unhappy? Want to complain?

No problem, we take all complaints very seriously and we have a formal complaint system. First speak to your key worker, tell them what's up, normally they will be able to sort things out. If you feel it is more serious you will be helped to make a formal complaint. I will be able to deal with your complaint quickly, I will investigate your complaint and ensure you are kept up to date with the progress and ultimately the outcome. If this still does not satisfy you, you can raise your concerns with your social worker. If your complaint is against me (The Registered Manager), you can contact the Responsible Individual, their details are on the back page, and they will be able to assist you further.

We are really pleased you have come to live with us and we will do our best to make a difference. If we have missed anything in this guide that you think should be included, do let us know. The space below is for you to write down any ideas and to make notes you may find useful. Above all, try to remember, the staff are here to help.



YOUR NOTES

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If English is not your first language or you have different communication needs, we can help you with this. Staff will also be happy to read through this guide with you and answer any of your questions you may have, if you would prefer.

USEFUL INFO

Home Contact Number: 01843 482048

Email: oakhouse@ahgroup.org

Home Managers Name: Tania Smith

Direct Dial: 01843 482049

Child Line: 0800 11 11

NSPCC: 0808 8005 000

Kent Multi Agency Partnership:

03000 421126

Independent advocate – Coram Voice:

0808 800 5792

Children’s Commissioner: 0800 528 0731

**Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector of
Education, Children’s Services and Skills:**

Amanda Spielman

Ofsted: 0300 1231 231

Textphone / Minicom Users: 0161 618 8524

By Post: Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street,
Manchester M1 2WD

Responsible Individual: Keith Riley

Direct Dial: 01843 808454 / 07955 439155

Acorn Homes Head Office:

73-74 Maple Leaf Business Park
Ramsgate, Kent, CT12 5GD

Tel: 01843 808454

Email: info@ahgroup.org

Web: www.ahgroup.org

Your Local Authority Tel No:

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Your Local Authority Address:

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Your Social Worker Name:

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Social Workers Contact No:

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Independent Reviewing Officer Name:

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Independent Reviewing Officer Contact No:

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