

Young People and Weapons

STANDARDS AND REGULATIONS

The Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011:

- [Regulation 11 - Independent fostering agencies—duty to secure welfare.](#)
- [Regulation 12 - Arrangements for the protection of children.](#)

Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards

- [Standard 4 - Safeguarding Children.](#)

BFFC's IFA does not support the possession of any weapons or dangerous knives by children looked after unless this is safely related to them attending specific clubs. For example, if a child placed with you is or wants to become a member of a professional shooting club or martial arts club and in line with this requires possessing weapons such as air rifles, shotguns, swords, etc, a specific suitability and risk assessment will be completed together with the placing authority and clear guidelines around the storage, use and transport agreed. Please note, that permission for any possession of weapons can only be given by the child's placing authority, this includes ceremonial swords.

If foster carers own any weapons or guns, this is addressed in the Home Safety check and measures to manage any risks around those would have been put in place as part of the Form F assessment. Your supervising social will review this regularly and at least as part of the annual review.

If you are in a situation where a foster child is found with weapons, it's important to approach the situation with caution, care, and adherence to proper procedures.

Here are the steps to follow:

1. **Prioritize Safety:** Ensure that everyone's safety, including your own and the foster child's, is the top priority. If the situation is immediate and potentially dangerous, contact local law enforcement immediately.
2. **Stay Calm:** Maintain a calm and composed demeanour. Avoid showing panic or anger, as this could escalate the situation.
3. **Do Not Confront Directly:** Avoid confronting the foster child about the weapons yourself, especially if the situation appears to be dangerous. If you're concerned about the immediate safety of yourself or others, call the appropriate authorities.
4. **Notify Authorities:** If the situation is of immediate threat, inform the Police and await support. This should be followed by an immediate update to the IFA and the child's placing authority at the earliest time possible. However, if the threat is not an immediate one, contact your IFA and the appropriate child protection services to

report the situation. Provide them with all necessary details, including the type of weapons involved, the circumstances, and the location.

5. **Involve BfC's IFA:** Inform your IFA SSW about the situation as soon as possible. They will provide guidance on how to proceed, including whether to involve law enforcement or other professionals. If you can't get hold of them, please ask to speak with the duty worker or a manager.
6. **Cooperate with Authorities:** If the Police becomes involved, cooperate fully with their instructions and provide them with any information they need. Your priority is to ensure the safety and well-being of the foster child and those around them.
7. **Maintain Documentation:** Keep accurate records of the incident, including dates, times, involved individuals, actions taken, and any conversations. This documentation might be required for reporting and future reference.
8. **Assessment and Support:** Work with your agency and other professionals to assess the situation. Determine whether the presence of weapons was an isolated incident or part of a larger pattern of behaviour. Develop a plan to address the child's needs and any necessary interventions. Complete or update any risk assessments in place.
9. **Re-evaluate the Placement:** Depending on the severity of the situation, it might be necessary to re-evaluate the foster child's placement with your family. This could involve temporarily relocating the child, reassessing their needs, and determining the appropriate level of support. It might be appropriate to arrange a Placement Stability Meeting.

Remember that every situation is unique, and it's crucial to involve professionals who are experienced in dealing with such situations, potentially dangerous and risky child behaviour, and potential threats.

Consider in your approach the child's development, and safety while also considering the overall well-being of the community.