

Code of Conduct for Central Bedfordshire Council Residential Staff

A great place to live and work.

1. Introduction

1.1 As part of Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC), the Children's Homes are bound by the Code of Conduct for Officers. This can be found on the CBC Internet:

<https://centralbedfordshire.app.box.com/s/rhxuftp7dceuewpcg375gpnocla5ki0g>

1.2 This Code of Conduct offers guidance and advice on how the Council expects officers to conduct themselves when carrying out duties and responsibilities associated with their employment.

1.3 The below does not cover all areas of the Code of Conduct however does offer guidance to all who work at the Children's Homes and sets out the expectations of staff who are employed by CBC.

2. Aims, Visions and Values

2.1 Staff must follow and uphold the core values and expected standards of behaviour of the Council in carrying out their duties and responsibilities.

2.2 All Central Bedfordshire Children's Homes have shared values as to what is important while caring for children:

- Respect of young people and each other
- Understanding and celebrating our differences
- Celebrate young people and their achievements
- Creating a safe and supportive environment for young people where they feel loved and valued
- Creating a learning environment and culture where we develop

3. Signing in and out

3.1 Each Home logs the time that staff arrive and leave the premises. This may be via a fob, access card or a written logbook. The logbook should always be a true account of who is in the building therefore staff must ensure all times are correct when recording this information.

4. Timekeeping

4.1 Staff will be expected to be at work and ready to begin their shift as per the rota, therefore arriving slightly before their start time. If applicable, staff should record the time they arrive or leave the site accurately so there is a true reflection as to who is on site at any one time. For example, if a member of staff is scheduled for a 7am start time this is the time they will be expected to start work. If they want a drink as soon as they arrive at work, they should arrive in time to make one and be ready for the handover at the given time.

4.2 If the member of staff is a smoker, they should not expect to have a cigarette break as soon as they arrive on shift and should not have more than two cigarettes breaks per shift. Any cigarette breaks will be agreed by each individual home manager/supervisor.

5. Handover

5.1 A thorough handover should be given at the end and the beginning of each shift. There will be an expectation that once the handover is finished, the staff coming on shift are happy with what has been handed over to them both verbally and in writing. Staff coming onto shift should sign to say they are happy with the handover information, but should they have any concerns or questions this should be raised directly with the individual before they leave shift. If there are any ongoing concerns these should be reported directly to the line manager.

6. Shift Planning

6.1 Following handovers staff will be expected to plan the shift. This should include planning for any activities, the administration of medications and supporting children with any personal or health needs. Children should be fully supervised at all times.

6.2 One support officer will be identified on the rota as a shift leader and they will take responsibility for oversight of the shift and ensure all tasks are completed and signed for.

7. Mealtimes

7.1 Staff should sit with and support the children and young people during mealtimes. Staff mealtimes should be agreed between staff but must ensure children and young people are supervised at all times as required.

8. Smoking

8.1 CBC is a non-smoking council, CBC's non-smoking policy can be found on the intranet: <https://centralbedfordshire.app.box.com/file/360862419317?s=uubz54av3235e4jv2d1qdjn226eqiknn>. There is no automatic right to smoking (or vaping with e-cigarette) breaks. Smoking/vaping breaks may be agreed at the discretion of the manager/team leader but should not be more than once every three hours.

8.2 Staff must **only** smoke or vape at the designated smoking / vaping points agreed for their site, where available. Smoking and vaping points must be separate, to protect those not smoking from tobacco smoke. For this reason, e-cigarette users are encouraged not to use smoking areas for vaping. Designating a location for smoking where permitted on site is essential, to ensure that there are facilities to safely dispose of smoking materials, which are a fire risk. Where it is not possible to designate an additional area for e-cigarette users, staff may do so in a safe and discreet outside area that is not in public view.

8.3 At the smoking point, staff should use the cigarette bins provided, ensuring that smoking materials are fully extinguished before placing them in the bin. The site manager must have arrangements in place to ensure that smoking bins are emptied regularly.

8.4 Where a smoking or vaping point is not provided, staff should ensure that they are out of sight of the home and children. It is the responsibility of staff to ensure that they dispose of smoking materials or storing e-cigarettes safely.

8.5 On return from a smoking/vaping break, it is important that staff wash their hands.

8.6 It is the responsibility of smokers/vapers to ensure that cigarettes, lighters/matches and e-cigarettes and their materials are kept in a secure place and out of the way of the children/young people. They should **not** be left in areas that the young people may have access to or in open bags in the office.

8.7 E-cigarettes/vaping devices **must not** be placed on charge on council premises. Users must ensure they bring a suitably charged device with them, if choosing to do so.

8.8 Staff must:

- not smoke or vape whilst supporting young people, including in the community.
 - not smoke or vape in council vehicles, or in personally owned vehicles when used for business journeys.
- follow smoking and vaping rules of other workplaces/organisations when attending them for work purposes.

9. Staff belongings

9.1 Any bag or belongings of a member of staff should remain within the staff office. Staff should only bring what they need for their shift. Staff are responsible for any items they bring on site. The office door should remain locked at all times.

10. Use of personal equipment mobile telephones/iPad/tablets

10.1 Use of personal mobile telephones, iPads/tablets during shift is not permitted (please see children's home staff mobile telephone policy).

11. Use of CBC equipment

11.1 If staff are provided with a laptop they will be expected to have read and signed the ICT Acceptable use policy: <https://www.intranet.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/info/25/new-starters/203/acceptable-use-policy-1>

11.2 Staff are responsible for storing their laptop safely and securely. They may be charged for any loss or damage.

11.3 If using any equipment belonging to the home it is the staff members responsibility to log off at the end of use. Failure to log off could result in a breach of security and GDPR.

12. Unit/CBC property

12.1 Everything within the home is for use by the children and young people being supported in the home and is owned by CBC. Misuse of property could be deemed to be misconduct. Items in and around the building should never be taken home by members of staff for their own personal use (apart from laptops that have been agreed for staff use). **If any staff are seen by others to be misusing property, stealing, taking food, using anything for their own gain it is important that this is reported.** Taking anything from the Home without prior agreement could be deemed as theft which may amount to gross misconduct and result in disciplinary action in accordance with CBC's Disciplinary Policy & Procedure.

13. Sickness absence

13.1 CBC have a policy around managing sickness absence:

<https://centralbedfordshire.app.box.com/file/360916699269?s=78nsu5k78tbzvnf1o52kg3inw7k6jhd8>

13.2 Any staff who feel unwell and are unable to come into work must inform their home as soon as is reasonably possible. Staff should inform their manager what is wrong and how long they are likely to be off for. Members of staff should ring into the home/speak to a manager to inform of their sickness. If there is no manager available when they call, they should call back later to speak with a manager.

13.3 Staff should be contactable during their absence and keep management regularly updated. If they are unable to call themselves, a call from someone close to them would be acceptable. Sick pay is not a certainty and unless the policy is followed staff members may not be eligible for sick pay.

14. Shopping/loyalty cards

14.1 When doing any shopping for the home a cash payment should be used if possible. In order to be reimbursed members of staff will need a receipt. Staff personal loyalty cards should never be used when paying for work related shopping. When shopping with young people members of staff should not purchase their own shopping.

15. Social Media

15.1 CBC have a social media policy all staff should familiarise themselves with:

<https://www.intranet.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/info/48/residents-1/47/social-media>

15.2 The social media policy details expectations of staff members personal use of social media; "Off-duty hours are the concern of officers but conduct at all times must not in any way bring the Council into disrepute or weaken the public's confidence in officers or the Council."

15.3 The guide also provides information for employees working with children. Staff should also familiarise themselves with the Children's Homes e-safety policy which details the importance of internet safety and how to help keep our children and young people safe in the online world.

16. Duty of Care

16.1 All staff employed at the home have a 'duty of care' not only to themselves but to the children/young people and also to their colleagues. By 'duty of care' we mean that all staff are responsible for ensuring all young people in our care and colleagues are treated with the utmost dignity and respect. Staff have a duty not to finish their shift unless the home is safely staffed. Personal circumstances will be taken into consideration, but the safety of children/young people and colleagues is paramount.

16.2 Any mistreatment, neglect or questionable practice should be challenged immediately and recorded. The on-call manager must be notified. All staff have a duty for reporting any mistreatment/inequality of any young person or member of staff to the management team and to

be able to challenge one another appropriately. Bullying/unkind words being spoken about anyone in our care, or a staff member will be taken seriously.

17. Accurate recording /records

17.1 As part of the role members of staff will be expected to record a number of written records. These must be signed and dated. Records written and held within the home could be used at a later date should the need arise therefore it is essential that anything written about the young people and colleagues/staff are accurate and factual. Staff opinions should not be included in these records.

17.2 Use of words deemed as negative/detrimental should not be used to describe a child or young person or their behaviour.

17.3 Staff should not be falsifying records, this includes saying someone is in the building when they are not i.e., Signing another member of staff in for work when they have not yet arrived for their shift.

18. Professionalism

18.1 Staff must ensure they have their identification badges on their person and are easily accessible at all times.

18.2 When working at the home it is important that we respect and listen to one another which includes the wider professional network. As a professional it is important that members of staff recognise that they are representing the home and CBC.

18.3 The young people should not under any circumstances have the personal telephone numbers or addresses of members of staff. Neither should they have email addresses, be Facebook friends or have any other social media contact. If they already have this information, it should be deleted/blocked immediately. This is against both Council and Ofsted expectations.

19. Dress code

19.1 CBC considers the way that employees dress and their appearance is of significant importance in portraying a professional image to all users of its services. The Council recognises and embraces the diversity of cultures and beliefs of its employees and will take a sensitive approach when this affects dress and uniform requirements. However, priority will be given to health and safety and security issues.

19.2 Employees are individually responsible for their general presentation, appearance, and personal hygiene and have a responsibility to consider how their appearance may be perceived by others.

19.3 The manager may send staff to go home to change if their clothing is deemed inappropriate for their duties or activities.

19.4 When supporting young people at the home members of staff need to be dressed appropriately. This means wearing clothes that they can easily move in and footwear that they

can run in should the need arise. It is important to think about the client group they are supporting. Wearing short dresses/skirts or short shorts is not appropriate or acceptable nor is wearing low cut tops. During the course of their work, they will be expected to support young people in the bathroom, be that bathing or toileting therefore they will be in close contact with the young people.

20. Visitors

20.1 Any visitor attending the home must provide identification, and only be allowed in once the member of staff has confirmed the reason for their attendance. The visitors/logbook should be completed with the time 'in and time out' being recorded. These visits may need to be supervised.

21. Petty cash

21.1 Cash is available at the home for sundry items. This should be regularly counted and tallied up. The petty cash container is the responsibility of staff. There is a petty cash book kept on top of the safe in the staff office which needs to be completed when any monies are used.

22. Children's belongings including pocket money

22.1 For short breaks children/young people will often bring in clothing and belongings during their stay. Young people's clothing should be booked in and out and only washed if there is a need for it to be washed i.e., if soiled. Information regarding whether clothing should be washed or not should be recorded in the care plan.

22.2 iPad / tablets / chargers / other equipment must also be signed in and out.

22.3 Pocket money should be signed in and out. It may be used for activities or items they wish to purchase. Receipts should be kept for anything the child/young person purchases and staff should log these purchases. For short breaks the family should be informed when the pocket money is getting low.

23. Confidentiality

23.1 Within the role at the home members of staff will have access to records of the young people we support. Parents/carers and professionals will also share information regarding the young people with staff. This information is confidential and should not be shared with anyone outside of the home. Any official requests for information should be discussed with the line manager, if in doubt, always ask before sharing any information.

23.2 If someone (child, young person, or adult) makes a disclosure that raises concerns about a risk to themselves or someone else members of staff have a duty to report these concerns to their manager so that the relevant agency can be informed, and steps taken to safeguard those involved.

23.3 When discussing young people this should be done in a professional manner. There should be no negative or unkind comments made about young people in front of other young people. Members of staff should not be discussing any young person with another young person.

23.4 Staff should not discuss staff issues with colleagues. If there is an issue it should be dealt with the individual directly or should be raised with a manager who will address the issue.

24. Conflicts of interests

24.1 Members of staff must not allow their private interests to conflict with their job role. If they find themselves in a position that they feel could give rise to a conflict of interest between themselves or some other person, and the council they should immediately let their manager know. All potential conflicts of interests must be declared.

24.2 If members of staff plan to take on a second job this must be declared and agreed by their manager. For further details see:

<https://www.intranet.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/info/54/conditions-service/573/secondary-employment-second-job>

25. Hospitality and gifts

25.1 During the course of a member of staffs work they may be given a gift from a family that they support. CBC have a policy around this:

<https://centralbedfordshire.app.box.com/file/365809397043?s=ulr3cph9qxygvulw1d9jjz9e8ozuuhzy>

25.2 Gifts should not be taken however if it is a gesture/thanks i.e., Box of chocolates at Christmas etc, then a record should be kept, and the manager informed. Staff should never buy gifts for individual children or young people.

26. Integrity and personal conduct

26.1 The conduct of anyone working within the home /CBC are the concern of us, and members of staff must not bring the Council into disrepute either during their work or outside of work. Please refer to the CBC Code of Conduct for Officers:

<https://centralbedfordshire.app.box.com/s/rhxuftw7dceuewpcg375gpnocla5ki0g>

27. Equality and respect for others/professional relationships

27.1 During a member of staff's time at the home it is important that they treat the young people/parents/carers/colleagues and all professionals they may come into contact with respect and dignity. They should not share their personal experiences and situations with family members or young people. Staff must maintain professional boundaries at all times.

28. Whistleblowing/confidential reporting

28.1 CBC have a whistle blowing policy (also known as confidential reporting):

https://centralbedfordshirechildcare.proceduresonline.com/files/whistleblowing_policy.pdf?zoom_highlight=confidential+reporting#search=%22confidential%20reporting%22

28.2 As a member of CBC staff there is an expectation that individuals familiarise themselves with this policy and report any behaviour of concern following this guidance.

Name:

I can confirm that I have read and understood the 'Code of Conduct' for CBC Residential Staff and agree to abide by it.

Signed:

Date:

Central Bedfordshire in contact

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