

**ROCHDALE METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL  
CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE SERVICES  
POLICY & PROCEDURE**

**DEALING WITH CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR IN FOSTER CARE**

**DEFINITIONS.**

**Carer**

The term "carer" refers to any RMBC approved foster carer acting on behalf of Rochdale Children's Social Care Services.

**LEGISLATION, REGULATION AND GUIDANCE**

- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013
- Every Child Matters 2003
- The Children Act 1989
- The Children Act 2004
- Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who Work with Children and Young People (DCSF Jan 2009)
- Rochdale Borough Safeguarding Children's Board Procedures ([www.rbscb.org](http://www.rbscb.org))
- Guidance for Restrictive Physical Interventions (DH 2002)

**INTRODUCTION**

1. The guidelines in this document should be based on a person centred approach which considers the specific needs of the child or young person when Foster Carers are presented with challenging behaviour.
2. This is particularly important when considering permitted and prohibited sanction that may or may not be applied to a particular child. There are many factors to consider when making a decision to apply sanctions, especially if physical intervention is considered. Examples are:
  - The age of the child
  - The child's background
  - Pre-existing physical / mental health or learning disabilities
  - Previous physical or sexual abuse
3. Any sanctions applied should be appropriate, proportionate, and frequently reviewed.
4. These guidelines must be applied in line with all other applicable legislation & guidance (see above)

<b>PROCEDURE</b>	<b>TASK ALLOCATION</b>
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**1 ENCOURAGING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR**

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<p>1.1 It is important that Foster Carers recognise that difficult and sometimes challenging behaviour is part of the natural process of growing up and is not a product of being a child who receives services from Children’s Social Care. It is a key parenting task to help children and young people develop self-control. However, many young people who are receiving our services have experienced either neglectful or abusive parenting with lack of warmth or control and with high levels of criticism and punishment.</p>	<p>All to note</p>
<p>1.2 <b>Understanding Children and Young People</b> Difficult or challenging behaviour in children can occur for a number of reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As an appropriate means of expressing emotions.</li> <li>• Because of developmental delays or learning disability.</li> <li>• Through early attachment difficulties with parents.</li> <li>• Through learned behaviours in which challenging responses have become habitual in the face of frustration or anxiety.</li> </ul> <p>It is helpful if Foster Carers can understand the causes of the child’s behaviour and provide them with the help and support they need to manage their difficulties in a more acceptable way.</p>	
<p>1.3 When working with, or caring for, children with challenging behaviour it is useful to bear in mind the following principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The age of the child or young person and an understanding of their emotional maturity.</li> <li>• That the object of positive behaviour management is not to punish or to keep the child under control but to help them learn how to behave more acceptably.</li> <li>• Challenging and undesirable behaviour should not lead to emotional distance between the child and Foster Carers.</li> <li>• No matter how difficult or challenging the child’s behaviour, Foster Carers should never resort to similar behaviour (although Foster Carers need to know their rights to keeping themselves safe).</li> <li>• The more Foster Carers can understand a child’s behaviour and the more able they are at meeting their needs in a fair, balanced and even handed way, then the less likely they are to encounter control difficulties.</li> </ul>	
<p>1.4 <b>Boundaries:</b> Children need clear boundaries and to know what is expected of them.</p> <p>At an early stage, Foster Carers should meet with the child</p>	

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<p>(and their social workers, parents/Foster Carers, other professionals, as appropriate) and negotiate a contract about the limits of acceptable behaviour. This contract should include a statement about rules and expectations.</p> <p>1.5 <b>The key points of a positive behaviour approach are that:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ground rules are discussed with the child and their family so their views can be taken into account.</li> <li>• Foster Carers should be honest about any non-negotiable issues, such as offensive language and violent behaviour. ‘Anything’ does not go.</li> <li>• Rules need to be realistic, ideally phrased as a ‘do’ rather than a ‘do not’ If you have mainly ‘do not’s’ in your rules, ask yourself, what are children supposed to do when faced with a situation that provokes unacceptable behaviour, if, for example, they can’t shout/swear or hit out? What is all right for them to say or do when they are cross for good reason? Children need to be helped to express their emotions positively and to be understood.</li> <li>• Children may need to be reminded of the ground rules and why we have rules for and expectations of behaviour.</li> </ul> <p>1.6 <b>Special needs</b></p> <p>Some children may need extra help to behave in line with expectations. Their life may be full of stresses that are hard for a child to manage, or else the child may have disabilities that affect their behaviour, social skills and understanding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is important to hold realistic expectations of children for their age and capabilities. However disabled children are unlikely to benefit when adults underestimate their ability to learn about behaviour. In an inclusive setting children will make appropriate allowances for disabled peers, but get very annoyed if those children are allowed to ‘get away with it’.</li> <li>• Foster Carers need to recognise that children under any kind of pressure can have strong feelings: annoyance, frustration, distress or embarrassment. Children can be helped to behave in more socially acceptable ways when adults acknowledge that their feelings are legitimate, i.e. you are prepared to talk about those feelings – but the way the emotions were expressed i.e. by hitting out or saying something very hurtful to another child for example – is not acceptable.</li> <li>• Disabled children may, because of their impairment, condition or difficulty in making themselves understood, resort to challenging or unpredictable behaviours.</li> </ul> <p>It is important that such behaviour is seen in the context</p>	

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<p>of a child or young person’s disability and/or communication needs. Any behaviour plans to address such situations should reflect sanctions that are appropriate and understood by the child and use communication methods appropriate to the child/young person’s needs.</p> <p><b>1.7 Diversity – Working with children from different backgrounds</b></p> <p>It is important that the services children receive, including those which seek to change, control or modify behaviour, are applied equally and ensure that there is fair access. Where we work with children from a range of different backgrounds or communities services need to respond flexibly to meet the diversity of need. The following points should be considered when formulating behaviour plans.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children and families from different cultural and ethnic background may have different expectations or standards of behaviour as cultural norms.</li> <li>• The use of language and its meaning for different groups. Avoiding conflict by using language or words which may be open to misinterpretation.</li> <li>• When informing children and young people about the expectations of behaviour and consequences etc. ensure that language and/or communication method used is appropriate to that child or young persons need. Consider translation services or sign language for example. Clarify understanding</li> </ul>	
<b>2 CHILDREN’S RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES</b>	
<p><b>2.1</b> Children have rights to be listened to, to be involved in decision making, to respect, to contact with their families and significant others, to respect for their race, culture, language and religion, to be prepared for their future, to information to complain and to independent legal redress. Over all this however, they have the right to concerned and consistent adult care including effective and appropriate control, even if they do not accept it at the time.</p> <p><b>2.2</b> Taking into account age and understanding, children must however learn that whilst they have rights they also have responsibilities. They need to be helped to respect the rights and responsibilities of others, both peers and Foster Foster Carers.</p> <p><b>2.3</b> Rights and responsibilities go hand in hand, so for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children have the right not to be ill treated but the responsibility not to ill treat others.</li> </ul>	<p>All to note</p>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The right to be heard, the responsibility to listen to others.</li> <li>• The right not to be put at risk and the responsibility not to put others at risk.</li> <li>• The right to live free from verbal or physical intimidation or bullying and the responsibility not to intimidate or bully others.</li> <li>• The right not to be discriminated against and responsibility not to make discriminatory remarks or take discriminatory action.</li> </ul> <p>2.4 Very young children or children with special needs may not understand these responsibilities, but nevertheless need to be helped to modify their behaviour to achieve greater responsibility.</p>	

### 3 DEVELOPING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN CHILDREN AND FOSTER FOSTER CARERS

<p>3.1 Children learn how the world works and their role in it mostly from the adults who care for them. They do this on the basis of trusting and caring relationships, usually with their parents. Unfortunately many children who receive services from the Children's Social Care Services have had poor experiences of relationships with adults and may have suffered abuse, neglect and rejection in the past. They may also have experienced disruptions in earlier placements. These experiences will have left them anxious and mistrustful about adults and they may have limited ability or inclination to accept another relationship with another adult. As a consequence, it is not unusual for children to test out new Foster Carers with difficult, non-compliant and sometimes challenging behaviour. They do this for a number of reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To test out a carer's 'solidity' before attaching themselves.</li> <li>• To feel safe and to keep Foster Carers at an emotional distance.</li> <li>• To retain power and control.</li> </ul>	<p>All to note</p>
<p>3.2 How Foster Carers respond to this behaviour is vital to helping the child develop successfully. It is important that Foster Carers recognise the behaviour for what it is and understand that even though it is often hurtful and directed towards them, it is not personal. Rather, it is the product of the child's past experience and a means of testing out a potentially risky investment in a new relationship with Foster Carers.</p>	
<p>3.3 Foster Carers should always seek to maintain relationships with children which are positive and based on mutual respect.</p>	

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<p>When Foster Carers intervene with children because of their behaviour, they should do so in a way that clearly differentiates disapproval of the behaviour from disapproval of the child him/herself.</p> <p>3.4 It is important that Foster Carers appreciate the need to take the initiative to sustain relationships with children who, at first, may not want to have such a relationship. Foster Carers can do this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Displaying a genuine commitment to sustain relationships with children with challenging behaviour.</li> <li>• Being clear about what children can expect, what the carer’s responsibilities are, and how they will be discharged.</li> <li>• Demonstrating an understanding of the child’s difficulties and reassuring them that the carer wants them to succeed, is on their side, and will be there when things are rough, as well as when they are smooth.</li> <li>• Understanding that mutual respect and confidence has to be earned and always showing respect, even though it may take time before it is returned.</li> <li>• Establishing what is fair.</li> <li>• Being clear about issues of confidentiality.</li> <li>• Not making promises they cannot keep.</li> <li>• Showing integrity – always be truthful, consistent and reliable. Never tell lies, always abiding by their side of the bargain even though the child may fail to do likewise.</li> <li>• Modelling appropriate behaviour and self-discipline. Express feelings appropriately, show care and concern, do not retaliate when provoked (remember who is the adult) and apologise if in the wrong.</li> <li>• Talking to the child about their behaviour (if it is a problem). Explain the benefits of change and tell them that you care too much to let their unacceptable behaviour continue and what you will do to help them change.</li> <li>• Always making sure the child’s needs are being met. Foster Carers need to demonstrate real concern for their welfare and put themselves out if they have to.</li> <li>• Encouraging them to do new things and praising their efforts.</li> <li>• Supporting them when necessary without colluding or defending inappropriate behaviour or actions. Encourage them to take responsibility for their behaviour and its consequences.</li> <li>• Never succumbing to negativity. Ensure that all interactions are positive and promote the child’s self-</li> </ul>	

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<p>esteem.</p> <p>3.5 <b>Positive Reinforcement</b> Many children who we work with have suffered abuse and neglect and have been raised in low warmth/high criticism environments. As a consequence, they will have repeatedly received negative messages about themselves, which will have impacted on their self esteem and self-confidence.</p> <p>3.6 The expectation of the Children’s Social Care Services and that specified in the National Minimum Standards is that Foster Carers in any setting will develop positive and supportive relationships with children and that they will generally be managed through the positive reinforcement of appropriate and desirable behaviours.</p> <p>3.7 At an early stage in any placement, Foster Carers need to discuss and negotiate expectations about acceptable and appropriate behaviour. It should not be assumed that children know instinctively how to behave in acceptable ways or understand general expectations of behaviour. They may never have learned how to control their behaviour nor realise how profitable self-control can be.</p> <p>3.8 It is a key task of Foster Carers to teach children how to behave appropriately. They can do this by always being aware of their own behaviour and modelling appropriate responses to a range of situations. They can also consistently provide feedback to children on their behaviour and how it impacts others.</p> <p>3.8 As children attempt to manage their behaviour they need encouragement and support both to reward their efforts and to promote further change. Foster Carers need to be optimistic that things can change, but realistic about how long it might take. Foster Carers should expect some setbacks, shortfalls and mistakes. They must resist the temptation to be negative as such responses will repeat earlier life experiences, reinforce children’s negative view of themselves and possibly persuade them that it is a waste of time to try to change. Instead, Foster Carers should praise and encourage the desirable behaviour, no matter how little of it has been displayed.</p> <p>3.9 It is important that Foster Carers always bear in mind when dealing with children with difficulties of self control that the object of the exercise is to promote change and help children manage their behaviour better, not simply about maintaining control</p>	
<p><b>4 POSITIVE PREVENTATIVE STRATEGIES</b></p>	

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<p>4.1 The best way of dealing with a difficult situation is to prevent it happening in the first place.</p> <p>A clear method of preventing negative behaviour is to thoroughly assess the behaviour and needs of any child for whom a service or care is being provided.</p>	<p>All to note</p>
<p>4.2 <b>Risk Assessment</b> Social workers and Foster Carers should make this a high priority. Where it is known a child can exhibit difficult or challenging behaviour, this should always be carried out prior to services being arranged.</p>	
<p>4.3 <b>Behaviour Management Plans</b> It is important that, where necessary, a risk assessment leads on to a creation of a clear and agreed Behaviour Management Plan for each child.</p>	
<p>4.4 Wherever possible any Behaviour Care Plan should be drawn up and agreed with the child, their parents and/or Foster Carers and including others who know them well. Hopefully involving the child themselves will help them to discuss all their strengths and interests as well as recognise their negative behaviour and how they can develop more self-control.</p>	
<p>4.5 <b>Verbal and Non Verbal Skills</b> Foster Carers need to be aware of the impact of both verbal and non verbal feedback to children in developing positive behaviours. The following is offered as additional advice in encouraging positive behaviour.</p>	
<p>4.6 <b>Verbal Feedback</b> Actively seek out opportunities to acknowledge positively when something has been attempted or achieved. Never miss an opportunity to say something positive and always acknowledge their efforts whether or not they succeed at what they are doing. Always acknowledge and thank a child when they comply with a request. Do things alongside the child and provide encouragement and support. Provide a 'running commentary' on how well they are doing and offer positive feedback. Avoid criticism. If the child needs to receive constructive negative feedback on their behaviour, tell them what is wrong about what they are doing and why and tell them what would be more useful to do instead. Over time, the child will then learn a range of alternative responses to things they have struggled to deal with in the past.</p>	
<p>4.7 Foster Carers can use their facial expressions and gestures to signal a positive attitude towards children and their approval of their behaviour. Such things as nods, smiles, eye contact, 'thumbs-up' signs are all effective means of conveying positive regard. Occasionally also a "well done" note or text message can</p>	

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<p>provide useful non-verbal feedback to young people trying to bring their behaviour under control.</p>	
<p>4.8 <b>The Prevention of Challenging Behaviour</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The priority for Foster Carers faced with challenging behaviour is to try to stay calm and defuse situations. The right intervention may prevent deterioration into violent or destructive behaviour.</li> <li>• The use of verbal reassurances can calm a child and allow for a 'cooling off' period.</li> <li>• Children can be helped to recognise their own 'triggers' and prevent further incidents.</li> <li>• Foster Carers can try to use positive, preventative, calming, diffusing and problem solving skills first</li> </ul> <p>4.9 <b>Preventative Skills which may be helpful include:-</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good eye contact</li> <li>• A calming tone.</li> <li>• Listening to the child/young person.</li> <li>• Giving them a chance to express themselves.</li> <li>• Giving space/privacy.</li> <li>• Positive reinforcement.</li> <li>• Consistency in communication.</li> <li>• Consistency in care plans.</li> <li>• Clear boundaries.</li> <li>• Physical reassurance.</li> <li>• Respecting their opinions whilst not necessarily agreeing with them.</li> <li>• Moving away from the situation to allow time to calm down.</li> </ul> <p>4.10 <b>Behaviour to be avoided:-</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Getting agitated.</li> <li>• Staring.</li> <li>• Confrontation.</li> <li>• Raised voices.</li> <li>• Inappropriate language.</li> <li>• Not listening and not respecting the child's views or opinions.</li> <li>• Shaking your head or shrugging shoulders in a disrespectful way.</li> <li>• Walking away angrily.</li> <li>• Taking control away.</li> </ul>	<p>All to note</p>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Verbal aggression.</li> <li>• Inconsistency in communication.</li> <li>• Unclear and unreasonable boundaries.</li> </ul>	
<b>5 PERMITTED AND PROHIBITED SANCTIONS</b>	
<p>5.1 <b>Use of Sanctions</b>                      Research suggests that over-reliance on the use of sanctions has little long term benefit in helping children change their behaviour. At best, the use of sanctions may teach them what not to do and suppress undesirable behaviour for a short while.</p> <p>5.2 Many people equate the use of sanctions with punishment. This is a mistake and it is important that Foster Carers bear in mind at all times that punishment has no place whatsoever in public care. Rather, sanctions should be seen as confronting the consequences of their actions and providing an incentive to reflect on and change their behaviour.</p> <p>5.3 While children often accept that undesirable behaviour should have consequences, they resent the impositions of sanctions arbitrarily imposed on them. To overcome this, Foster Carers need to talk to children about reasonable expectations in terms of their behaviour and explain to them the possible consequences of not meeting these expectations. Foster Carers can then negotiate with the child (when they are calm and in control) what a reasonable sanction might be in certain circumstances. By this means the child will have some ownership of the process and be aware that when they choose to behave in an unacceptable way, they have chosen to accept the sanction which is a consequence of their behaviour. Hopefully the child will learn to take responsibility for their actions and in the long term, change their behaviour.</p> <p>5.4 <b>When Foster Carers use sanctions they need to ensure that they meet the following criteria:</b>                      Sanctions need to be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proportionate and appropriate to the unacceptable behaviour.</li> <li>• Relevant to the child’s age, understanding and overall care plan.                          Realistic, enforceable and achievable.</li> <li>• Timely – applied as soon as appropriate after the unacceptable behaviour is discovered.</li> <li>• Not disruptive to other children in the placement.</li> <li>• Applied consistently and fairly.</li> </ul> <p>5.5 When imposing a sanction it is helpful if Foster Foster Carers</p>	<p>All to note</p>

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<p>express their regret and make it as easy as possible for the child to comply. Always remember that the carer and the child are on the same side and that what is wanted is for them to change their behaviour, not simply to come under control.</p> <p>However, when a child chooses to behave in a way that attracts a sanction, it is important that they routinely and consistently receive one. If not, the threat of a possible sanction becomes ineffective.</p> <p><b>5.6 Permissible Sanctions</b></p> <p>It is permissible for Foster Carers acting on behalf of Children’s Social Care to use the following sanctions. These will need to be applicable to the child or young person’s age and type of placement or setting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased supervision – both within and outside the home or other setting.</li> <li>• Verbal reprimand – this can be mild or severe. It is acceptable for Foster Carers to raise their voice and use a firm tone, but it is not acceptable to shout at children or to use threatening or demeaning language or behaviour.</li> <li>• Curtailment of leisure activities – these should be relevant, timely and time-limited. (may not be appropriate for children who need leisure activities to build self-esteem or where identified to help children who may be struggling with their weight.)</li> <li>• Additional household chores – the tasks should be achievable by the child, not demeaning and should be proportionate to the behaviour.</li> <li>• ‘Time-outs’ in safe parts of the home.</li> <li>• Reparation payments – (not fines) – to compensate for damage to property or theft. These should be no more than 50% of the child’s weekly pocket money allowance up to an agreed limit. This money is not to be refunded directly.</li> <li>• Grounding – not allowing the young person to leave home. This can only be done with the young person’s agreement. Only under certain circumstances can a carer prevent a child from leaving the house through locking their doors or the use of safe holding (see below).</li> </ul> <p><b>5.7 Prohibited Sanctions</b></p> <p>These are sanctions that must <b>not</b> be used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corporal punishment – any act intended to cause pain, including hitting, rough handling, pinching, biting etc.</li> <li>• Use of disrespectful or abusive language – children must be treated with respect at all times. The use of demeaning, degrading or humiliating language or</li> </ul>	

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<p>behaviour is prohibited.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deprivation of food and drink – not providing food and drink which is normally made available to a child or making them eat food they dislike.</li> <li>• Restrictions on visits or communication – with family or friends except in circumstances when there are concerns about risk or harm. In those cases, restrictions should be agreed in the child’s care plan and therefore is not a sanction.</li> <li>• Intentional deprivation of sleep.</li> <li>• Withholding medication or dental or medical treatment.</li> <li>• Enforced isolation – although requiring children to take time-out in their room is for short periods acceptable.</li> <li>• Restriction of liberty – it is illegal to lock children into premises or to otherwise restrict their liberty. In certain circumstances Foster Carers can refuse young people permission to go out but not restrain them if they chose to do so unless to prevent danger.</li> <li>• Requiring children to wear distinctive or inappropriate clothing – intended to either demean and humiliate or discourage absconding.</li> <li>• Imposition of fines – only fines imposed by Court.</li> <li>• Intimate physical searches – it is unacceptable to ask a young person to turn out their pockets or bags. If there are concerns about concealed drugs, weapons or contraband the Police should be called. It is not legal to detain a young person while awaiting the arrival of the Police. It is permissible to search a young person’s room in exceptional circumstances and with agreement from the Child Care Social Worker. However it is always advisable to have an additional person present if possible, to reduce the risk of allegations.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>6 THE USE OF PHYSICAL INTERVENTIONS / THE LAW</b></p>	
<p>6.1 <b>Physical Interventions.</b></p> <p>6.1.1 Physical Intervention refers to the use of appropriate physical means whereby a carer needs to control a child’s behaviour by holding on to them. It is always expected that this will be an exceptional method of control and any situation where physical intervention is being used frequently must be reviewed urgently.</p> <p>6.1.2 Physical intervention plays a very minor role in the control of children in foster care. It should teach Foster Carers how to “make movement safe” rather than to “overpower” the child.</p>	<p>All to note</p>

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<p>6.1.3 Through the de-escalation and behaviour management training commissioned by Children’s Social Care Services, Foster Carers will be advised how to safely care for children..</p>	
<p>6.1.4 The intent of any physical intervention is to calm a situation, prevent escalation and keep both children and Foster Carers safe in line with Standard 3.7 of the National Minimum standards (fostering) 2011.</p>	
<p>6.2 <b>Government Guidance</b>            Children Act guidance has set out the following practice principles relating to any use of physical intervention. Children’s Social Care Services endorses these principles and managers and Foster Carers are required to follow them. Helpful guidance regarding physical intervention is contained in Local Authority Circular 93 (13) - DH 1993. Although aimed at the residential care sector the guidance and principles are common across settings. It is a requirement that all incidents involving a physical intervention must be recorded appropriately and then reported to the link worker. (Children Act 1989 Regulations and Guidance, Care Standards Act 2000).            Even if already part of an agreed behaviour management plan, such incidents should also be reported to the relevant manager via use of Schedule 6 recording / monitoring.</p>	
<p>6.2.1 <b>Physical Intervention:</b>            The principles relating to the use of any physical intervention may be summarised as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. Foster Carers should have grounds for believing that immediate action is necessary to prevent a child from significantly injuring him/herself or others, or causing serious damage to property.</li> <li>II. Foster Carers should take steps in advance to avoid the need for physical intervention, e.g. through calm discussion. Children should be given a verbal warning that physical intervention will be used unless their behaviour improves.</li> <li>III. Only the minimum force necessary to prevent injury or damage should be used. Every effort should be made to ensure that others are present before using physical intervention. They can help or act as witnesses regarding the intervention.</li> <li>IV. As soon as it is safe, physical intervention should be gradually released to allow the child to regain self-control.</li> <li>V. Physical intervention should be an act of care and control, not punishment.</li> </ol>	

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<p>6.2.2 Foster Carers may be justified in holding or physical intervention if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) A child is in imminent danger of significant self harm through his/her own actions.</li> <li>b) A child is placing others in imminent danger of significant harm through his/her own actions.</li> <li>c) A child is about to cause or is causing serious damage to property.</li> </ul> <p>6.2.3 Physical intervention should <u>not</u> be employed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• retaliate for any reason;</li> <li>• punish the child or young person;</li> <li>• as any kind of treatment or therapy;</li> <li>• for convenience;</li> <li>• to instil fear.</li> </ul> <p>6.2.4 <b>Safe Touch and Holding</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Foster Carers may find the use of positive touch beneficial if a child is upset or becoming agitated. Examples of positive touch may include: (permission should always be sought from the child, before any of the below is considered) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cuddles.</li> <li>• An arm around the shoulder.</li> <li>• Holding hands.</li> <li>• Gently holding an arm.</li> <li>• Guiding away.</li> </ul> <p>This is not exhaustive but offers examples.</p> </li> <li>b) It is important that Foster Carers have full information about the significance to the particular child of physical contact with adults, particularly if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Previous abuse has occurred.</li> <li>2) Cultural factors determine unacceptable forms of physical contact.</li> </ul> </li> <li>c) It is much safer for all concerned that demonstrations of physical affection or comfort are made in the vicinity of others. Children/Young people should always be appropriately dressed (e.g. if in night clothes, in dressing gown as well as pyjamas/night dress). Bedroom doors should be open when Foster Carers are settling children/young people. Specific Safer Caring Policies should expand on this.</li> <li>d) <b>Other important principles are:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. Permission should be sought from a child or young person before physical contact is made.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

PROCEDURE	TASK ALLOCATION
<p>Where the child is very young, there should be a discussion with the parent or carer about what physical contact is acceptable and/or necessary. Children have a right to say “no” to physical contact and their privacy must be respected. However, in circumstances where a child is, in the judgement of Foster Carers, endangering or about to endanger themselves or others <u>safety is paramount</u>. In these circumstances the child’s wish not to be touched may have to be set aside to try to make the situation safe. Safer Caring must be implemented.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>II. In all circumstances, adults should only touch children in ways which are appropriate to their professional or agreed role and responsibilities.</li> <li>III. Affection should be based on the child’s need not the adult’s need. Physical contact should never be secretive, or for the gratification of the adult, or represent a misuse of authority. If an adult believes that their action could be misinterpreted, or if an action is observed by another as being inappropriate or possibly abusive, the incident and circumstances should be recorded and reported to their allocated worker / managers.</li> <li>IV. If physical contact makes either party feel uncomfortable, the carer should gently disengage.</li> </ul> <p>e) <b>How safe physical interventions can be used</b>            During physical intervention it will be helpful if Foster Carers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. Communicate with the child calmly, encouraging him/her to relax and become calm.</li> <li>II. Talk through the incident, explaining what you are doing, making it clear that holding will stop as soon as the child regains self control.</li> <li>III. Remain calm themselves to avoid overstepping safe limits.</li> <li>IV. Where appropriate, two Foster Carers to be involved to increase the safety of the child and themselves.</li> </ul> <p>The more confident Foster Carers are in safe de-escalation techniques physical intervention, the less likely they may need to employ them.</p> <p>These skills allow Foster Carers to move from touch to holding and if necessary to physical intervention and then to reverse the process as the child calms down. The above is always the last resort and training must be attended to ensure this is carried out as safely as possible.</p>	

PROCEDURE	TASK ALLOCATION
<p>f) <b>Physical methods which are unacceptable <u>include</u>:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) techniques designed to cause pain or risk of damage</li> <li>b) flexing or bending joints/twisting limbs</li> <li>c) restricting breathing or circulation</li> <li>d) sitting on a child</li> <li>e) striking a child</li> <li>f) pinning a child against a wall/furniture</li> <li>g) ways that could be viewed as sexual</li> <li>h) locking a child in a room</li> </ul> <p>6.2.5 <b>Children with Special Needs and Physical Intervention</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. The care of children with special needs is based on the same principles and good practice as for any other child's individual needs.</li> <li>II. For the purpose of this guidance, special needs include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) children who have identified medical conditions where physical interventions could precipitate symptoms or aggravate the condition (for example, asthma or epilepsy)</li> <li>b) any learning difficulty</li> <li>c) any physical disability or</li> <li>d) mental ill health</li> </ul> </li> <li>III. When formulating care plans, social workers and Foster Carers should inform themselves as fully as possible about any behaviour stemming from the child's special needs. Those individuals with previous knowledge of the child may well be valuable sources of information. Equally, professional advice on current behaviour may be important where there is an anticipated need for physical intervention.</li> <li>IV. Planning should take into account : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Knowledge about the child's special needs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the child's health, impairment or medical condition and what effect does it have on the child's behaviour?</li> <li>• Is the condition stable, in remission or unstable?</li> <li>• Who should be contacted for advice and what should be done if the child becomes ill?</li> <li>• What does the child understand of his/her condition or disability, and how does he/she feel about it?</li> <li>• Are there particular 'trigger' situations or frustrations to be avoided or minimised by</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

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<p style="text-align: center;">Foster Carers?</p> <p>b) Knowledge of any communication needs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there any difficulties with speech, hearing or any visual impairments and how might they be overcome or lessened?</li> <li>• Does the child use any other form of communication (for example, Makaton, PECS etc?)</li> <li>• Would advice from any expert, e.g. a speech and language therapist, be helpful?</li> </ul> <p>c) Knowledge or awareness of any physical dependency on others for basic care routines such as toileting, dressing that may routinely require physical handling.</p> <p>d) Knowledge of the origins of any challenging behaviour, for example children with severe hearing difficulties may resist guidance and support through lack of comprehension or a difficulty in communicating their wishes.</p> <p>6.2.6 Individual Behaviour Management Plans/ Safer Caring Policy should again be monitored and reviewed regularly to take into account any incidents or developments. Where a detailed risk assessment identifies physical holding as the appropriate means of keeping a child or carer safe, this should be clearly noted in the agreed Behaviour Management Plan, with the carer receiving guidance and support..</p> <p>6.3 <b>Keeping Safe &amp; The Right of Self Defence</b>            Where Foster Carers are vulnerable to injury i.e. in 1:1 situations where Foster Carers are alone and threatened with assault or other people are being attacked; then there is an emphasis on keeping oneself safe and where appropriate the right to use self defence.            This may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Getting away to call for help and assistance or failing this</li> <li>• Using “breakaway techniques” and using “reasonable force” to prevent injury to self or others.                (Reasonable force is not easy to define but must be the minimum force necessary to prevent harm to the carer and the child.)</li> <li>• The use of breakaway skills may be needed to prevent injury to self or others; either to get away or to get help to deal with the situation more safely.</li> <li>• Self defence differs from both retaliation and punishment, neither of which is acceptable.</li> </ul>	

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<b>7 POST INCIDENT SUPPORT AND DEBRIEFING</b>	
<p><b>7.1 Children</b></p> <p>7.1.1 Wherever possible, following any difficult incident the child involved should be given the opportunity to talk through and reflect on the circumstances which led to incident. This is particularly important if a physical intervention has been used to resolve the situation. The purpose of this meeting is to explore with the child, responsibility for what has happened and to identify alternative strategies to avoid similar situations occurring in the future.</p> <p>7.1.2 Judgement needs to be made on the timing of the meeting – balancing the need to allow sufficient time for the child to calm down fully without allowing too much time to pass so that the meeting loses its immediacy and impact. It is also important to think about who should conduct this interview. Ideally it should not be the person directly involved in the physical intervention. It would be preferable if the interview could be conducted by a person who has a good relationship with the child and who is seen as credible, fair and authoritative.</p> <p><b>7.2 Foster Carers</b></p> <p>7.2.1 Foster Carers will be supported in dealing with challenging behaviour and control issues. This is an area where Foster Carers may feel anxious and vulnerable to complaints and allegations as well as sometimes the threat or reality of violence. Where concerns exist Foster Carers should raise these at the earliest opportunity with their Supervising Social Worker or Manager. Use of the designated Psychologist and CAMHS service may also be beneficial.</p> <p>7.2.2 While RMBC expects the highest standards of professional practice, it is essential that Foster Carers are not immobilised from dealing with challenging situations by worrying whether they are doing the right thing, whether there will be a complaint or whether they are trespassing on the children’s rights.</p> <p>7.2.3 RMBC will fully support Foster Carers in the exercise of appropriate control of children, so long as the following conditions are met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) That they themselves have acted reasonably with due restraint and with as much considerations as possible. It is recognised that some control decisions have to be made very quickly, almost spontaneously, under great pressure. The Council does not expect Foster Carers to “get it right” in every conceivable situation. It does expect them to act reasonably and responsibly.</li> <li>b) That they have acted from a genuine concern for the safety of the child and others, and not for their own</li> </ul>	<p>All to note</p>

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<p>gratification or convenience.</p> <p>c) That they have acted in accordance with the overall Behaviour Management Policy statement and Safer caring guidelines.</p> <p>d) That all incidents are properly reported and recorded.</p> <p>It is clearly not possible to give any blanket guarantee of support to Foster Carers irrespective of the circumstances or their actions. Nevertheless the Council's emphasis is on supporting them in the difficult decisions they have to make.</p> <p><b>7.3 Complaints</b></p> <p>7.3.1 When young people are seriously out of control physical intervention may be unavoidable, occasionally this inadvertently results in the child being harmed or injured. It may also be that in these circumstances the child may be particularly distressed or feel that they have been treated unfairly or inappropriately.</p> <p>7.3.2 It is important in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children that Foster Carers and professionals give them every opportunity to comment on their experiences and make complaints if they so wish.</p> <p>7.3.3 Children using RMBC services should be made aware of the complaints policy and procedures and be given information about and access to the Children's Rights and Advocacy Services.</p> <p>7.3.4 If a child (or a person with parental responsibility) wishes to make a complaint about an incident of physical intervention then this will be taken seriously and investigated thoroughly, in line with the Child Protection and Complaints procedures. In these circumstances arrangements will be made to ensure that the carer who is the subject of the complaint receives appropriate advice and support.</p> <p>7.3.5 Where any allegation of the maltreatment or abuse of children by Foster Carers is made by a child, the allegation must be fully investigated, following local procedures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allegations Of Abuse Made Against Foster Carers (FO3(m))</li> </ul> <p>7.3.6 It is important to acknowledge also that Foster Carers have the right to complain if they feel aggrieved by the support or service they have been offered by Children's Social Care Services and such complaints will be taken seriously and investigated in line with applicable procedures.</p>	
<p><b>8 INVOLVEMENT OF THE POLICE</b></p>	
<p>8.1 Whilst it is hoped that the involvement of the Police will be exceptional, there will be times that this will be necessary if the</p>	

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<p>behaviour management strategies laid out in this guidance and behaviour management plans have not resolved a situation.</p> <p>Foster Carers should call the police if it is the only safe way to protect themselves or others from assault or property from serious damage or to prevent a crime.</p> <p>8.2 The Council recognises the right of individual Foster Carers to press charges of assault, damage to or theft of personal property against children/young people or their parents.</p> <p>8.3 Children/young people should expect that, if they are involved in criminal behaviour, depending on the wishes of the victim, the police may be informed. This does not of course mean that the young person will be prosecuted, and the full range of available diversion from prosecution strategies will be considered.</p> <p>8.4 Whilst trying to protect children/young people from endangering themselves, it may be necessary for Foster Carers to let children go, stating that they will call the police. This may be necessary if the carer is being seriously threatened or assaulted.</p> <p>8.5 There may also be other occasions when the police may need to be informed about a child's actions i.e. They are missing, they have breached bail or other court conditions etc.</p> <p>8.6 Where there is a likelihood of Foster Carers needing to involve the police, details of the circumstances and actions to be taken should be clearly detailed in the child's care plan. The circumstances and consequences should be discussed with the child or young person concerned.</p>	

<p><b>9 RECORDING AND MONITORING</b></p>
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<p>9.1 In order to establish clear outcomes from any care plan and behaviour management plan it is important to ensure incidents of concerning behaviour are clearly recorded, reported on (where appropriate) and analysed. This is to ensure the effectiveness of any interventions are evaluated and adapted if necessary. It will also ensure the progress of any child or young person working through periods of difficulty is recognised.</p> <p>9.2 It is also important to ensure that any pattern of risk, either to children or Foster Carers, is not emerging, and where they are action is taken promptly.</p> <p>9.3 Clear and accurate recording helps all involved in working and caring for a child analyse and act upon all the factors which may be influencing that child's behaviour.</p>	<p>All to note</p>
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<p>9.4 Children’s Guides or information packs about the services they receive should make clear the expectations and the consequences of behaviour. Wherever possible children should be included in any discussion about expectations agree on what sanctions would apply to poor behaviour.</p>	
<p>9.5 It is a requirement that all incidents involving physical interventions are recorded and reported according to the regulations that apply. (schedule 6 / 7) All incidents where a child’s behaviour has necessitated a physical intervention should be reported at the earliest opportunity to the relevant manager</p>	
<p>9.6 There is an agreed format and process for recording and reporting incidents of children’s behaviour. Log books and Schedule 6 forms should be clear and up to date. As well as ensuring that Child Specific Safer Caring documents are relevant, up to date and cover a Risk Assessment.</p>	
<p>9.7 Any incident recording format should include: (forms are issued to Foster Carers for use)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A brief but accurate description of the incident including “where was the child?”</li> <li>• Who was present?</li> <li>• How did it happen?</li> <li>• What action did you take</li> <li>• What physical holds did you use?</li> <li>• Is there anything that can be done to prevent this happening again?</li> <li>• Date, time etc.</li> </ul>	
<p>9.8 Day to day behaviour management issues are clearly part of the everyday interactions with the children we work with. These will usually be recorded as part of a child’s daily record i.e. in Foster Care Diary or on the child’s file. However they may be circumstances where behaviours become more frequent and or more challenging. In these circumstances consideration should be given to monitoring and reporting such in a more regularised way. This could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agreeing to monitor frequency or intensity of a particular behaviour over a fixed period. Stage 1 planning meetings could be the forum for monitoring this.</li> <li>• Through the child’s care plan, agreeing a particular strategy for dealing with behaviour and recording its effectiveness.</li> <li>• Implementing an overall behaviour management plan</li> </ul>	

PROCEDURE	TASK ALLOCATION
<p>with clear recording and reporting parameters.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implementing clear guidance as to how behaviours will be managed, particularly if physical intervention may be used. If so under what circumstances. This should be clear and agreed as part of the child's care plan and a specific recording sheet drawn up.</li> </ul> <p>9.9 However even though we may be dealing with a child's negative behaviours it is important to continue to reward the positive ones!</p> <p>9.10 It is unfortunate but from time to time more serious incidents may occur. When they do they can be traumatic for all concerned, particularly if they are not predicted or out of character. When such incidents do occur the following factors should be considered by Foster Carers, Social Worker and/or Line Manager and appropriately recorded:</p> <p><b><i>The build up to the incident.</i></b>            What happened immediately before that led up to this incident? e.g. was the child not getting his/her own way, or not wanting to do as required, were difficult issues being raised by an adult with the child?</p> <p><b><i>The child's behaviour</i></b>            What exactly did the child do, how did he/she respond to the incident? Did violence or damage to the property continue or was there a cooling down period?</p> <p><b><i>The consequences of the incident</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How was the incident handled? Was the child sanctioned? Has this caused a disruption in placement? Was physical intervention – touch, holding, or breakaway skill required?</li> <li>Wherever possible and appropriate, the child should be involved in discussions.</li> </ul> <p>9.11 The recording and monitoring of incidents of challenging behaviour and physical intervention are important for various purposes.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The child's Behaviour Care Plan and or Risk Assessment should be adapted to help prevent further incidents.</li> <li>Repeated incidents of physical intervention will be significant for the child's care plan. Where physical interventions are needed a further column should be added to the Behaviour Care Plan stating what skills are needed.</li> <li>There may be lessons for the carer's own professional development and training needs.</li> <li>The Service will be afforded an opportunity to monitor such incidents on a regular basis for service</li> </ol>	

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<p>development purposes. Serious incidents must be reported to Ofsted (Schedule 7).</p> <p>9.12 All occurrences of Foster Carers facing difficult or challenging behaviour and its monitoring must be properly acknowledged and acted upon by Children’s Social Care Managers. The aim of this monitoring process will be for lessons to be learned to reduce challenging behaviour and promote the safety of both children and Foster Carers.</p>	
<b>10 TRAINING</b>	
<p>10.2 Training programmes should include: .</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive strategies to manage behaviour</li> <li>• Preventative strategies and skills</li> <li>• Assessment of incidents and issues re. challenging behaviour.</li> <li>• Risk assessment and Behaviour Care Planning.</li> <li>• Understanding the ‘Cycle of Aggression’.</li> <li>• Rights of self defence</li> <li>• Use of ‘reasonable force’.</li> <li>• Observation and practice of safe touch and holding skills.</li> <li>• Personal skills and strengths, triggers and support needs.</li> <li>• Action Plans re. practice of physical skills.</li> <li>• Recording and reporting incidents and concerns.</li> <li>• The impact of behaviour management issues when working with children from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds.</li> </ul>	All to note
<b>11 RISKS TO FOSTER CARERS</b>	
<p>11.1 Whilst this policy sets out guidelines for managing challenging behaviour, it is very important to minimise risk and protect Foster Carers from such behaviours.</p> <p>11.2 Foster Carers should take reasonable precautions to avoid putting themselves at risk and should inform their manager of any incidents so that they can give appropriate guidance and support. Violent or abusive behaviour must be treated seriously and always reported.</p>	All to note
<b>12 GUIDANCE FOR SPECIFIC SETTINGS OR SERVICES</b>	
<p>12.1 It is important to consider the content of this guide, however will be need to consider the following specific child care needs:</p>	All to note

<b>PROCEDURE</b>	<b>TASK ALLOCATION</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) The child's age, ability and understanding.</li><li>b) Any needs arising from a child's cultural or ethnic background.</li><li>c) Any issues relating to disability, health condition or other special needs and understanding</li><li>d) Involvement of parents or family in the child's care</li><li>e) Involvement of other services e.g. Youth Offending Team.</li><li>f) Particular aspects of Safer Caring</li></ul>	