

## Health and Wellbeing Policy

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#### 1. Introduction

ISP is committed to promoting the health, safety and wellbeing of young people. This includes providing young people with information about all aspects of their physical, psychological and emotional health and wellbeing, as well as supporting them to make healthy lifestyle decisions appropriate to their maturity and understanding. ISP also recognises the role that staff and foster parents have in protecting the health and wellbeing of young people and is committed to ensuring that adequate support is available to assist them in this role.

#### 2. Principles and Values

- A child's health includes their physical, psychological, emotional and social wellbeing;
- Actively promoting and protecting a child's health is as important as detecting and responding to their ill-health;
- ISP values diversity and is committed to achieving equality of opportunity for young people, with respect for their individual needs;

- The child's dignity must be maintained at all times;
- Young people should be helped to take appropriate responsibility for the protection, promotion and maintenance of their own health;
- A good health assessment of a child should be child-centred and recognise the holistic nature of good health;
- Young people should be enabled to give appropriate informed consent to any treatment, investigation or other medical intervention.

### **3. Obtaining Health Information**

The young person's Health Plan is the primary source of information about their current health needs and on-going health conditions. The Health Plan is part of the young person's statutory Care Plan.

When a child is placed, ISP will request full health information, including a copy of the child's current Health Plan, from the Local Authority, if it has not yet been provided. Where possible, this request will be made prior to the placement starting. ISP will make this information available to the foster parent and take the necessary action to ensure that any ongoing health needs can continue to be met locally.

After each Statutory Health Assessment, the Local Authority should provide the foster parent and ISP with a copy of the new Health Plan. If this is not received, ISP will contact the Local Authority to request a copy.

### **4. Maintaining Health Records**

ISP is required to keep records of the young person's health conditions and appointments with health professionals. This information will be held securely and in compliance with data protection law, as part of the child's record on the Charms database.

Foster parents must keep a record of all medication given to a young person and the Agency. **See Medication & First Aid Policy.**

### **5. Meeting the Child's Health Needs**

- I. At the time of placement, ISP will request written permission from the Local Authority for the foster parent to give consent to medical treatment and administer medication within the remit of delegated authority. A copy of the signed permission will be given to the foster parent.  
**See Delegated Authority to Foster Parents Policy.**

- II. When it is not possible for the child to remain with their current GP, the foster parent is expected to register the child as soon as possible with a local GP. The registration should be permanent to ensure that the child's medical records are transferred. If there is a choice of GP, young people should be enabled to make an informed decision about who they wish to register with.
- III. ISP expects foster parents to involve young people in making decisions about their health and enable them to take increasing responsibility for managing their health conditions, in line with their maturity and understanding. Young people should be included in decisions about the type of support that is needed to manage any health conditions with consideration given to their dignity – particularly when the health condition is potentially embarrassing.
- IV. The child's consent to a Statutory Health Assessment should be obtained and he or she should be prepared in advance to make the best use of this opportunity to ask questions and seek advice. It is often beneficial to the young person for the Health Assessment to be undertaken by a Looked-After-Children's Nurse who will ensure that the assessment is holistic and meets the child's developmental needs.
- V. The young person has the right to give and to withhold their consent to medical examination or treatment. This right is automatic for young people aged 16 and older, and can be granted for younger children subject to them being judged competent to make these decisions (known as 'Gillick competent'). This decision can only be made by a qualified medical practitioner.
- VI. The foster parent must respond to the recommendations of the Health Plan that results from the Statutory Health Assessment. The child's progress will be reviewed as part of the foster parent's supervision process.
- VII. The foster parent should ensure that the young person attends scheduled health appointments (including the Statutory Health Assessment as arranged by the Local Authority Social Worker) and accompany them during the appointment unless the young person does not wish it. Foster parents are expected to respect a young person's right to obtain confidential advice from a medical practitioner, but are often able to advocate on behalf of a young person so that their concerns and wishes are heard.

- VIII. Foster parents are expected to provide a healthy and caring home environment that promotes good health and wellbeing, and to work with the young person to actively promote a healthy lifestyle. Young people should be encouraged to eat a varied and healthy diet and be involved in the planning and preparation of their meals. They should also be encouraged to participate in regular exercise and have access to leisure and social facilities. Foster parents have a role to play in modelling a healthy lifestyle and what it means to look after oneself.
  
- IX. Children with disabilities will have additional care needs which require foster parents to give more time and attention to their needs on a day to day basis, take them to appointments and activities and administer medicines and other treatment plans. Foster parents can apply for statutory disability benefits that are paid in recognition of the additional living costs incurred when meeting the needs of disabled children. ISP will provide help when needed to complete application forms and foster parents must not apply for these benefits without the knowledge of the Agency. Foster parents are expected to use these payments to provide experiences for the young person that promote and maintain positive wellbeing, and are accountable for how the money is spent. Foster parents must keep clear records of expenditure.

## **6. Responding to Significant Events and Medical Emergencies**

Foster parents are expected to notify their local ISP Office, or the Out of Hours service, of any significant health events including: injuries, illnesses and accidents, medical treatment and First Aid, self-harm and the outbreak of infectious diseases in the foster home. ISP will take the necessary action to monitor and/or notify authorities about these events (this might include notifying the Health and Safety Executive with a [RIDDOR report\\*](#)).

When recording significant events (e.g. daily log/progress action on CHARMS/incident report/Significant Event form), care should be taken to divulge only the details necessary for an understanding of the situation. This is particularly important when the event relates to the young person's sexual health. The young person's dignity and right to privacy must be taken into consideration.

Foster parents have a duty to ensure that they know what permissions have been obtained, and from whom, for any kind of medical or other intervention. If in doubt and in the case of a life or death decision, they should do what they consider to be best for the child and act in good faith to protect and promote their health.

## **7. Support for Foster Parents**

ISP will maintain links with local external service providers and Looked-After Children's Nurses, and will assist foster parents to access local services to meet the child's health needs.

Periodically, health promotion events for young people might be arranged. These events will enable young people to receive information and advice from health professionals. Young people will be invited to relevant events and foster parents are asked to encourage their young people to attend and assist them in making the journey to the event.

Foster parents are encouraged to attend training events, both related to general health issues and any additional training organised to assist them in meeting the child's specific health needs. They are also encouraged to attend courses that focus on how foster parents can look after their own health.

Foster parents can approach their Supervising Social Worker with specific queries and concerns, or requests for support.