



The Orchards

Statement of Purpose and Function

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**ACORN EDUCATION
AND CARE**
Better days, Better lives[®]

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1. MISSION STATEMENT

Acorn Education and Care is part of the Outcomes First Group, the largest combined children's services group in the UK. Our operating businesses successfully deliver frontline fostering, educational and care services to children, their families and local authority customers.

Our purpose is to provide outstanding care and education to the UK's most vulnerable and difficult to place children and young people whether with specialist foster parents, within education or in a supportive and understanding environment of residential care.

We offer each and every child and young person courtesy and respect, and work in conjunction with local authorities to deliver a range of care, education and other specialist services which offer best value whilst ensuring the best possible outcomes for each child.

As a group, we benefit from a wealth of experience allowing young people the opportunity to thrive and develop by realising their potential whilst being happy and feeling valued.

2. Objectives of The Orchards

The Orchards is an Acorn Education and Care home committed to providing care to children/young people on a long/medium/short-term basis depending on the needs of the young person. The Orchards provides a holistic, safe, stimulating and supporting family environment where children/young people cared for can live, learn and develop.

The home provides a high standard of care, educational support and accommodation for up to five young people, aged eight to eighteen who have learning disabilities. We work in partnership with relevant Social Services departments, and other agencies within a clear and comprehensive policy framework.

The staff teams at The Orchards are highly committed to working intensively, providing care and support to all young people who come to live here.

The home endeavours to avoid the negative aspects usually associated with institutional residential living and create an environment and atmosphere, which reflects many of the positive aspects of a normal family home.

The aims of the home are to work towards the following for each young person (depending on their identified individual needs)

- To return to live with their family
- To live with foster carers
- To move into supported semi-independent living accommodation
- To move into fully independent living accommodation
- To move into another form of residential placement.

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- Promote opportunities to help children with disabilities and young people achieve their full potential
- Provide accommodation, which is suitably adapted and meets the needs of children with disabilities
- Provide a safe and supportive environment where children and young people are listened to and encouraged to express their needs, wishes and feelings
- Promote confidence and independence
- Provide opportunities for children and young people to make choices.
- Develop individual care plans to meet the needs of each child or young person.
- Work in partnership with children, their families and significant others.
- Assess and take acceptable risks in order to enable children and young people to develop their full potential.

Prior to admission, every effort is made to establish the long-term plans for each young person and a care plan is prepared which clearly focuses on his or her individual needs. If necessary, the care plan can encompass access to counselling, behaviour support, the development of life skills and semi/full independent living packages and anger management.

Progress by the young person towards achieving the main objectives of the care plan is monitored and reviewed monthly and with other professional representatives of the responsible local authority at statutory intervals. Should there be a marked decline in the young person's behaviour, their Social Worker would be contacted immediately.

The staff teams at the home value the role of the keyworker and on arrival, each young person will be allocated one, together with a co-keyworker who can act on the keyworker's behalf when they are not available. The role of the keyworker will include responsibility for:

- Promoting the young person's participation in and the ownership of their care plan or semi/full independent package
- Actively putting the care plan as well as any independent package into action
- Ensuring the care plan or independent package is reviewed at appropriate intervals
- Ensuring the main aims of the placement are kept on target
- Ensuring that the young person's file is kept in order and up to date
- Ensuring that all necessary appointments are arranged and social workers, parents or significant others are kept well informed.
- Being a contact person for the young person to approach if they have any concerns, worries or aspirations they want to discuss.
- Being responsible for promoting personal health and hygiene, active participation in all individual or group activities and the attendance at the resident's meetings and discussions relating to planning the weekly menus and activities.
- Assisting the young person to establish, promote and maintain positive links with school, family members (or significant others) and other professionals involved in their care.

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Acorn Education and Care believe that:

Residential care should provide children and young people with skilled support from committed staff in a safe, caring and ordered environment.

We have a responsibility to ensure that children and young people in residential care are protected from abuse and neglect.

Care should form part of a range of services, which combine to meet children and young people's needs and support their families and carers.

We should recruit and support staff that are carefully selected and have opportunities to develop skills and professional practice through training and supervision.

Children with disabilities are put first.

We have a number of values, which are important to the home and for the children and young people who are looked after:

- **Dignity and Respect:** recognising the value of young people, their uniqueness and their right to be treated with dignity and respect. A commitment to treat children and young people well.
- **Equality:** ensuring that the services and facilities of the home are accessible and available to all. The service provided by our staff should not judge children and young people's circumstances, backgrounds and lifestyles. It should not discriminate on the grounds of race, culture, language, religious beliefs, gender, sexuality or disability. Individuality will be valued. A commitment to treat children and young people fairly.
- **Quality:** promoting quality services which are based on agreed standards and meet legal and good practice requirements. A commitment to ensure that staff working with children and young people will do what they say they do.
- **Independence:** a commitment to provide opportunities for children and young people to think and act independently whilst ensuring their safety at all times. To include a child or young person's need for privacy.
- **Rights:** a commitment to children and young people, rights and entitlements as set out in the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child.
- **Listening:** a commitment to listen to children and young people and help them express their wishes and needs in whatever way is best suited to the individual child or young person.
- **Development and fulfilment:** a recognition that children with disabilities are children first; all encouragement will be given to realise their full potential and to help children and young people achieve their hopes and ambitions and to develop their abilities in their daily lives. A commitment to ensure they have a good start in life.
- **Confidentiality:** treating all personal information in confidence.

The objectives of the care plan are to:

- Assist the young person to come to terms with any traumatic events in their past

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- Supportively challenge those behaviours, which are unacceptable for the young person and/or others.
- Develop those life skills which have been inadequately developed in the past
- Assist the young person to form, maintain and build relationships with other young people and adults and to integrate into social groups.
- Progress by the young person towards achieving the main objectives of the care plan is monitored and reviewed monthly and with other professional representatives of the responsible local authority at statutory intervals.

3. Facilities Provided by The Orchards

- Four generously sized first floor double children's bedrooms
- One generously sized ground floor bedroom adjacent to the sleep room
- One bathroom including bath and shower, wash basins and toilet
- One wet room with toilet and wash basin
- En-suite shower room for staff with toilet and wash basin with another staff sleep room
- Communal Lounge
- Sensory/resource room off the lounge
- Education / Activities Room
- Kitchen
- Staff Office Room
- Large Garden
- Staff sleep in room
- Conservatory-Dining Room

Location and Accommodation

Nottingham is a vibrant and friendly city that is a centre of excellence in many fields with a unique combination of strong historical roots, coupled with a fast expanding business and retail sector. This cosmopolitan city offers unrivalled state of the art leisure and entertainment opportunities, as well as excellent health and education facilities.

Based within the pleasant, highly sought after residential area of Mapperley and conveniently situated near to the City Centre, The Orchards is ideally suited for children/young people. It has a location close to the city centre with easily accessible bus links and routes to schools, colleges and key locations across the city of Nottingham.

The Orchards is a large detached house with many attractive and practical features, including large sized rooms and creative enclosed gardens and a private, secluded location. The garden to the rear of the property is enclosed and thoughtfully designed to create a safe and imaginative environment for children.

All bedrooms are large in size, furnished and equipped to a high standard, and decorated in consultation with the children/young people resident in the room at the time. Children at The Orchards do not share bedrooms unless the placing authority stipulates this as a planned care requirement.

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The communal space includes a T.V. room equipped with a DVD, television and a variety of games. There is also a homework/quiet room which is equipped with a computer and other games. There are also a variety of games and books and other general knowledge material. There is also a sensory/resource room.

The home has kitchen with a joining conservatory with dining area, which provides for a homely, friendly atmosphere conducive in size for preparation and enjoyment of meals by both staff and children.

There are adequate laundry facilities which the more independent children can use. There are a number of bathrooms/shower rooms located within the property.

Staff are provided with well-equipped sleeping accommodation located close to the bedrooms occupied by the children. There are 2 staff sleep in rooms, one of which is en-suite. We operate a waking night staff system and when required are able to provide a 1:1 staff to child ratio. There is a location risk assessment for the home which includes the local crime statistics; this is updated annually.

4. Responsible Body for The Orchards

The Responsible body and the Director for Acorn Education and Care is located at our Head Offices at:

Acorn Education and Care
C/O Westbourne School
Huthwaite Road
Sutton In Ashfield
NG17 2EL

Telephone number- 01623 392438

Regional Director for Yorkshire and the Midlands: Lynette Edwards

Principal of Westbourne School with whom the Home is Aligned: Leo Guy

Responsible Individual and Head of Care: Donna Carlin

Donna has been with Acorn Education and Care since 2004.

Prior to working for Acorn Education and Care Donna worked as a children and families social worker for Nottinghamshire and is DIPSW qualified.

This compliments her DIP 5 in Leadership and Management in Health and Social Care [2013]

In her spare time Donna enjoys watching her boys play football in the Notts Young Elizabethan league

Registered Manager: Mrs Katherine Adkins

Katie has experience of working with young people, she has worked at schools and nurseries before joining Acorn Education and Care. Katie joined Acorn Education and Care in 2008 working at an array of different homes within Acorn Education and Care. Katie progressed to assistant manager at the Orchards and was in situ from January 2011. Katie is now the Homes Manager which commenced in May 2016.

The manager Katherine Adkins holds the following qualifications:

- NVQ Level 3 in Child Care Learning and Development.
- NVQ Level 3 in Health and Social Care.
- Diploma Level 5 in Leadership and management for Children and young people,
- Leadership induction training,
- Safeguarding training and safeguarding training with Nottingham county council
- Equality and diversity training
- Social work practice educator training
- Deep pressure training
- Autism and Asperger's training
- Makaton training
- Epilepsy training
- MAPA training (Managing Actual and Potential Aggression).
- Fire Safety training
- Food Safety
- Health and Safety training
- First Aid training
- Boots Medication training and advanced medication training.
- Manual handling training
- Attachment disorder
- Neurofibromatosis training
- Massage and aromatherapy
- Supervision training
- Female, genital mutilation training,
- Four-day social work practice educator course
- Three-day course on Learning Disabilities Induction Plan
- IOSh training
- Radicalisation training
- CSE
- Sensory training
- Mental health first aid training
- Health and nutrition training
- Drugs training
- Data protection training

5. Staffing Qualifications and Experience

The staff team at The Orchards is made up of:

- 1 x Registered Manager
- 1x Assistant Manager
- Senior Residential Child Care
- Residential Child Care Workers
- Bank workers

Please refer to the staffing matrix for additional information on the residential team's qualifications and experience.

The team at the Orchards comprise male and female staff with a good mix of age ranges, culture and religious backgrounds therefore providing a balance of adult support and guidance throughout a young person's stay.

The staff team come from various backgrounds and bring to their work a varying level of skills, experience and qualifications. All recent new starters have completed an induction course which includes several essential training elements with a requirement to complete the diploma qualification at either Level 3 or 5 and the Learning Disability Induction Programme. Within the standard training which is provided by the company, staff are also given the opportunity to participate in training courses which focus on specific areas, e.g. risk assessments and child care practices, safeguarding, communication, sensory modification disorder, autism, administration of medication and many others.

Staff are encouraged to keep up to date with legislation within residential childcare and have access to relevant resources such as Children's Homes Regulations 2015 and the Quality Care Standards.

6. Staff Support and supervision

All staff have been, or will be trained in the following:

- Health & Safety (including food hygiene)
- Learning Disabilities induction programme
- Safeguarding
- Equality & Diversity
- Admin of medication training
- First Aid
- Specialist training to enable to support the children and young people's individual diverse needs e.g. diabetes
- Physical intervention – MAPA
- Fire training

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Acorn Education and Care will adhere to staff qualification targets as set out in the Children's Homes regulations 2015. Staff receive regular supervision and training and are required to hold or pursue NVQ/ diploma Level 3 Caring for Children and young People (as a minimum). Managers must hold or pursue the Diploma in Social Work or a minimum of Diploma level 4 (or equivalent). All staff undertake their Learning Disability Induction Programme (LDIP) which enhances knowledge on communication and understanding autism.

Each young person has a designated keyworker. The Orchards is staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. All Acorn Education and Care staff are committed to providing high quality user-friendly services to the young people in our care. Young People benefit from Acorn Education and Care commitment to a small homes policy and a high staff to child ratio, this ensures that young people get the focused care and attention they need and deserve.

7. Organisational Structure of the Home

The Orchards adopts a holistic approach to care and development addressing the emotional, social, cultural, physical and educational needs of the children.

We believe that our children/young people should be cared for in a positive non-discriminatory environment. Soon after admission each young person has a Placement Plan which aims to develop them and foster a relationship with them based on equality and trust where they can feel valued and respected. We provide a safe and accepting environment where issues such as loss and separation will be addressed and expression of feelings encouraged in a positive and appropriate manner. The Orchards aims to deal with issues such as:

- Education & Leisure
- Health, Hygiene and Self Maintenance
- Behavioural Issues
- Child Protection Issues
- Sex Education
- Interpersonal Skills & Socially acceptable behaviour
- Family contact
- Self Esteem/Confidence
- Skills/Emotional maturity
- Self-harm

Accurate and regular communication is ensured to protect the safety of the children/young people in our care. In addition to these issues, the arrangements made are as follows:

- Main meals are eaten together in a family style atmosphere and special dietary needs are catered for.
- Children/young people have their own bedroom key where appropriate in line with their understanding and needs
- Communal as well as individual leisure/recreational activities are made available and pro-actively encouraged.

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- The Orchards is well equipped with a variety of therapeutic tools and equipment, e.g. games, DVDs, books, music, crafts and other resources. We also have a resource room with arts and crafts and outdoor games.
- A variety of working methods are used with children/young people. These are tailored to suit individual need and include one to one direct work and group work

Whilst living at The Orchards all children/young people receive the following allowances:

- o Pocket money & Phone money
- o Clothing Money
- o Personal allowances for activities/interests
- o Birthday and Christmas Money

8. Who may be referred to The Orchards

The Orchards is able to accommodate

- Up to five young people
- Male or female
- Aged between 8 to 18.
- Children with moderate to severe learning difficulties
- Children with Autistic Spectrum disorder, Sensory Modulation Disorder and /or associated disorder (such as PDA)

In accordance with Acorn Education and Care Equal Opportunities Policy, Acorn Education and Care positively welcomes referrals of children and young people from Black & Minority Ethnic Groups. Acorn Education and Care are a culturally competent business.

By cultural competence, Acorn Education and Care mean the following: The term culture is used to mean a person's life experiences drawn from their family, their community, their disability, their race, religion and gender and their personal history. Therefore, everyone has her, or his, own unique culture.

Cultural Competence refers to the way in which individuals and organisation's aim to respond respectfully and effectively to people of all cultures.

When children are placed at the Orchards, staff will receive focused guidance and support to ensure they understand the young person's world: how s/he views the world; how s/he is likely to develop as a young child and how s/he can be expected to develop cognitively, emotional, physically and socially.

All specialist guidance will inform how staff will develop, review and refine young people's care plans; how they will interact with his/her school and most importantly, how staff will develop and keep the young person safe and happy from the perspective of understanding the needs, development and worldview of young child in residential care.

Acorn Education and Care carefully considers all referrals as part of a caring and responsible approach to admissions. However, in recognition of the extreme pressures faced by Case Managers, our decision-making processes are fast and effective.

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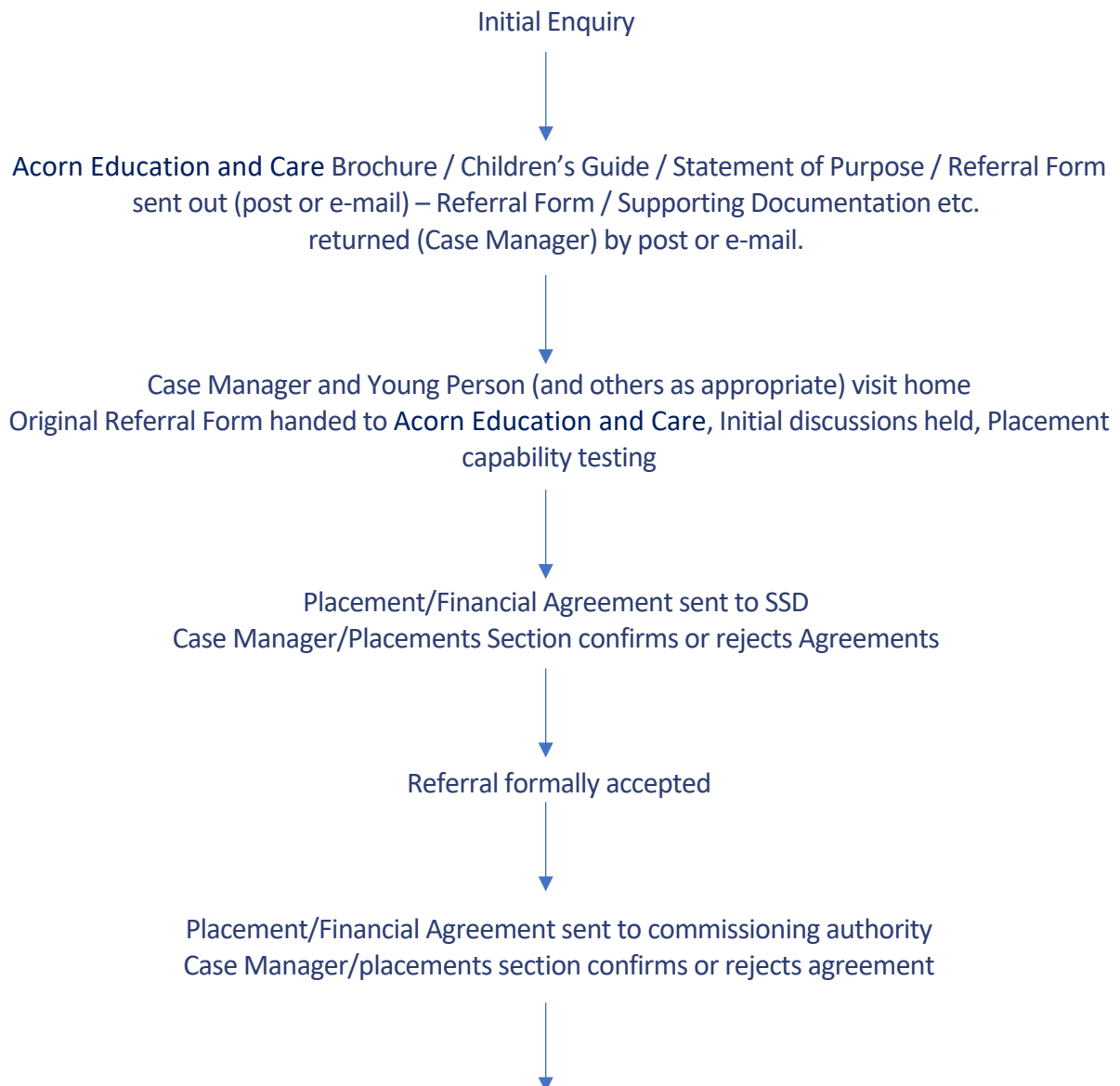
When the children reach their 18th Birthday and up until their 19th, we will support the children in a transition to adult services.

The Orchards has a composite placement plan for the home which looks at age, behavioural needs, emotional needs etc. of all young people to assess that needs are catered for and effectively met.

9. Admissions Procedure

We always aim to ensure the referral process is as speedy and straight forward as possible. Preferably, placements should be planned, providing for as smooth a transition as possible for the child/young person concerned, However, Acorn Education and Care will consider Crisis Referrals, acceptance of Crisis Referrals will be dependent upon vacancies and child-suitability (child's needs / existing residents of respective home).

The flow chart below shows the normal Referral/Admissions Process. The process can be adjusted to accommodate individual referral circumstances.



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Referral formally accepted, Placement/financial agreement signed, Key Worker introduced



Care/Placement Planning Meeting: aims, objectives, time-scales etc.



Internal Preparatory Work, Admission into The Orchards

10. Available Services

Residential Placements

- Short, Medium and Long Term Residential placements
- Assessment
- Enabling care – therapeutic support services which may incur an additional fee

East of England and North East

Dr Leanne Johnson, Consultant Clinical Psychologist

leanne.johnson@hillcrest-cs.co.uk

Before training in Clinical Psychology, I was a qualified Special Needs Teacher. I have worked in a variety of services supporting early trauma, such as CAMHS, inpatient services, and residential care. I love supporting young people to gain the best outcomes for now and their future.



11. Ethos and Philosophy

The underlying ethos and philosophy of The Orchards is that every child has individual recognition as to their health and well-being. The staff team ensure that the young people have opportunities to express their feelings and concerns using basic listening skills, signs and symbols to provide comfort and assurance and encourage the child to actively refocus their thoughts and help alleviate some of their feelings.

Teaching basic problem-solving skills when upsetting situations arise, help the young people to make better choices and an acknowledgement of good behaviour with rewards, praise and positive feedback helps reinforce their strengths and builds awareness of his/her own talents and abilities.

12. Health Care Provision at The Orchards

The Orchards adopts a consistent and proactive approach to health and health education by both staff and children. The central focus of our Health Policy is to empower the child/young person and to provide them with the tools to make informed decisions about their health.

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Upon admission into The Orchards, every child/young person, where they are unable to remain at their own GP surgery, is required to undertake a new patient health check when registering at another practice. We can access a range of other health care facilities, which include:

- Dentists
- Chiropodists
- Counsellors
- Opticians
- Social- Psychological Services if applicable
- Other Therapeutic services as appropriate

Health education is promoted via structured keyworker or group sessions, whichever are thought to be more appropriate in accordance with the feelings of the children/young people.

The Orchards Health Care Policy includes providing information on physical, emotional & sexual health. Our philosophy and approach is that good health is achieved through paying attention to basic needs such as nutrition, adequate sleep, regard for safety, and appropriate medical attention when required.

13. Education, Educational Services Offered and Local Schools

The Orchards believes that all our young people have the right to an education suited to their needs, ability and personal aspirations. We acknowledge research suggesting that children within the care system are potentially at risk of poor educational achievement due in part to many extrinsic factors.

Therefore, we believe that we have an Absolute Duty to ensure that children in our care achieve generally and educationally, to their highest potential. The Orchards staff are all involved in proactively implementing needs assessed Individual Education, Health and care plans for each child. Keyworkers/Managers oversee the implementation of EHCs and SENs and monitor progress in order to evaluate and modify EHC's to maximise achievement.

The Orchards creates a positive culture and environment for valuing education with adequate space and facilities for children to do their homework, including quiet, well equipped study areas including personal computers.

We can offer:

- Mainstream education at comprehensive and junior schools within the catchment areas of Sherwood and Mapperley in addition to local colleges.
- Also, we have strong links with schools for children with Special Educational Needs
- Good relationship with Nottinghamshire Local Education Authority
- In-house personal tuition where applicable and necessary. We have access to other education providers e.g. REAL in addition to a high range of highly qualified, experienced and fully checked tutors, specially trained to deliver educational tuition to Looked after Children.

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- Youth development opportunities
- Active promotion, co-operation and dialogue with relevant educational establishments through attendance at appropriate school functions, continuous discussions and dialogue regarding the needs of the child/young person. Particular attention is paid to the attendance levels.
- Active promotion action plans to help the child/young person to overcome any specific educational difficulties they encounter.

14. Recreational Sporting and Cultural Arrangements

There are a wide range of leisure, recreational, and social activities that are available for the child/young person to pursue whilst residing at The Orchards. The home is deliberately located in close proximity to various facilities. Our staff team ensure that every child/young person is encouraged to participate in communal and group activities of their own choice.

All The Orchards staff recognise the importance of monitoring the participation in leisure, recreational, and social activities, whilst ensuring that adequate alternatives are offered to every child/young person, as and when required. We also acknowledge that a child/young person is entitled to time when she or is doing nothing in particular.

There are a number of leisure, recreational, and social activities available, including access to and use of fitness gyms, youth clubs, tennis, badminton, cinemas, football, cookery, bowling, ice skating etc. We also access Planet Bounce and rock climbing.

Each child/young person, with support completes a weekly Personal Planner that sets out the structure of the week ahead. This ensures that both children and staff are able to form a picture of their plans ensuring balance and variety.

15. Consultation Arrangements

The way the home functions enhances every young person's independence and opportunity to make everyday choices. Significant views, discussions and expressed opinions are recorded promptly in the relevant places and the young people receive regular feedback following consultation. Keyworker sessions, meetings with the appropriate people and residents' meetings are systems that reflect the young people's needs.

All young people receive pocket money on a regular basis.

The Orchards operates an open access policy in relation to young people having access to their personal files. Under the Access to Personal Files Act 1987 and the Access to Personal Files (Social Services Regulations) 1989 however, there may be specific reasons to withhold certain information from young people.

The young people will be allowed regular access to their files; their appointed key worker will undertake this task.

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The young people will be given guidance on their rights regarding information contained in their personal file. They are also actively encouraged to see files held by their Social Workers as a positive feature

16. Methods of Control and Discipline

The Orchard look to promote positive relationships between the adults and children within a clearly defined policy framework.

None of the disciplinary measures prohibited under Regulation 8 of the Children's Act 1989 are permitted at The Orchards. All staff at The Orchards aim to work together with children as a team to enhance our ethos of a family home within a framework of continuous positive reinforcement of good behaviour. In addition, appropriate use of [age/understanding-sensitive] sanctions and disciplinary measures are only applied after careful consideration as defined within Acorn Education and Care policy and procedures.

Our approach encourages reparation and restitution and we seek not to allow negative behaviour to become the focus of attention. Acorn Education and Care staff will not make excessive or unreasonable use of sanctions or physical Intervention.

Physical Intervention (MAPA – the management of actual and potential aggression) is used only in specified circumstances i.e. to prevent likely injury to the child concerned or to others, or likely serious damage to property. All Acorn Education and Care staff are trained in the use of Physical Intervention techniques, which include Avoidance and Reduction techniques. Clear records are kept of the use of sanctions and physical restraint ensuring that the application of the same can be monitored and reviewed at regular intervals.

MAPA (positive options) is indorsed by the British institute of learning disabilities (BILD). PSC are an approved training centre for MAPA and BILD- Silver members.

Acorn Education and Care support and advocate for BILD positive behaviour, support and philosophy which makes sure that all people with learning disabilities can exercise their human rights and be valued members of their local communities and eliminate all unnecessary restrictive practice

17. Safeguarding / Child Protection / Bullying

Statement of Principles

Acorn Education and Care believes that all children have the right to be protected from all forms of abuse, whether this be physical, sexual or emotional abuse or neglect. Our approach to all aspects of care delivery is child centred. With regard to Child Protection we firmly believe that the blame for abuse will rest solely on the abuser and that the welfare of the child will always remain centre-stage.

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Concerns over the safety or well-being of a child will never be ignored.

The child protection procedures are consistent with the local policies and procedures agreed by the Local Safe Guarding Board.

Acorn Education and Care are an S11 children's act 2004 compliant business.

Written records of all incidents are taken by staff and reported to the relevant bodies.

The atmosphere created at The Orchards is one where bullying is known to be unacceptable.

There is a policy on countering bullying, which is known to children and staff. Any child experiencing bullying is supported and regular risk assessments of the times places and circumstances are recorded, and action is taken where feasible to reduce the risk of bullying

To define abuse, Acorn Education and Care has adopted the definition provided by the National Commission of Inquiry into the Prevention of Child Abuse, 'Childhood Matters'

"Anything which individuals, institutions or processes do or fail to do, which directly or indirectly harms children or damages their prospects of safe and healthy development into adulthood."

Nottinghamshire LADO
Children & Families strategic services
County Hall,
Nottingham,
NG2 7QP
Tel: 0115 97773921

Nottingham City Principal Contact:
Head of Safeguarding Children and Families,
Nottingham City Council,
Loxley House, Station Street,
Nottingham, NG2 3NG
Tel: 0115 9150900

Our Safeguarding / Child Protection policy aims to:

- Provide clear and specific guidelines to enable staff to deal with safeguarding issues effectively.
- Set high internal standards to ensure that the children cared for by Acorn Education and Care are well protected
- Ensure Acorn Education and Care credibility as a professional care organisation remains high and that purchasers feel assured that Acorn Education and Care is a 'safe' organisation
- Ensure that every individual working for Acorn Education and Care knows what to do in a safeguarding emergency.

Safeguarding / Child Protection Policy

At The Orchards, everything we do is geared to the protection, happiness and development of the child. Our safeguarding Policy (hereafter referred to as 'the policy') is detailed, extensive and child-centred.

The policy provides detailed definitions of physical, sexual and emotional abuse, mental cruelty and neglect.

Also, the policy sets out clearly, and in considerable detail, who is responsible for dealing with suspected or actual incidents of abuse, defines how matters of abuse should be dealt with and provides supportive guidance to officers who may be involved in dealing with such matters.

Other aspects covered under the policy include:

- Disciplining children
- Direct Work with Children – Protecting Staff
- Whistle Blowing
- Confidentiality
- The duty of care and public liability insurance
- Records and Record Keeping
- Computer Safety
- Working with Social Workers.

The Acorn Education and Care policy framework and management approach is designed to minimise the risk of child abuse. However, we recognise that with the best will in the world there is always a chance that a child located in the safest of environments may fall victim to abuse. At Acorn Education and Care, no child protection issue is ignored. Our response to any allegation or suspicion is child-centred, transparent, swift and affirmative.

Copies of the Acorn Education and Care safeguarding Policy are available upon request.

Bullying

The Orchards is committed to providing a residential environment where young people can live safely without the fear of oppressive behaviour from peers by any form of bullying or intimidation.

Acorn Education and Care provides all staff and children in our homes with clear definitions of bullying. We believe bullying can take many forms from verbal, cyber, emotional, sexual or racial abuse to actual physical assault.

In all cases Acorn Education and Care staff will:

- Investigate fully any indication of bullying.

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- Support the victim to prevent any further oppressive behaviour from others.
- Re-assure the victim that being bullied is not acceptable and that it is not their fault they are bullied.
- Minimise any further opportunities for bullying to occur by whatever strategies are realistic and achievable.
- Confront the bully with their actions so their oppressive behaviour is not condoned by inertia.
- Pursue legal action should the nature of bullying indicate the need for this.
- Arrange for an urgent review to include all involved parties from whatever agency to identify an action plan to deal with the bullying including the appropriateness of placements.
- Identify and action positive alternatives for both victim perpetrator to develop those skills necessary for positive relationships.
- Keep a written record of all incidents and actions taken

Bullying and oppressive behaviour has no place within our society of which Acorn Education and Care homes are a part. We are committed to an equality of service that demands a safe and caring environment for all service users.

18. Unauthorised Absence from the Home

The Orchards provides all Residential staff and children with written procedures, which are clearly followed when a child is absent without Permission. The application of the Absence procedures is consistent but at the same time take account of the individual child's needs which are clearly set out in his or her Placement Plan.

Any child that is away from a Acorn Education and Care home is made welcome upon. return – the principal aim will be work with child/young person to find out why he or she felt the need to leave his or her home without consulting or seeking permission from staff. Wherever possible, and in any case as soon as possible after he or she has returned, the child/young person will be seen by his or her social worker or a person who is independent of the home. If this is not possible, Acorn Education and Care will always record the reasons given by the child and these are reported to child/young person's social worker, if appropriate, changes to Placement / Care plans are recommended and agreed with appropriate people, including the child/young person.

At The Orchards, all young people are staffed on a 1:1 basis so the chances of young people leaving the home unaccompanied are minimal. Our front door is kept locked as we are close to a road which is risk assessed.

Any reports from a child that indicates he or she went missing in response to being abused will be immediately reported to Social Services and appropriate measures are made to protect the child/young person.

When a young person is absent from the home or the supervision of a member of staff without consent or authority, and then the following procedure will be followed:

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- Staff will initially conduct a search of the interior of the home then the outside surrounding area to locate and confirm the whereabouts of the young person and their safety.
- If the young person has not returned to the home within a previously specified time then a member of staff should go out and look for the young person. This should only be done after consultation with a colleague and it has been agreed that such action will not place the other young people or staff at risk.
- If the search by staff has proved inconclusive then the member of staff searching for the young person should report the young person as missing to the local police. They should also notify the young person's Social Worker, parents and any significant others. If outside normal office hours then the young person's Out of Hours Duty Team must be contacted.
- The time period for reporting young people missing to the Police when they are out with a member of staff would be made after consideration has been given to their age, personal circumstances, vulnerability and previous history. This time period should be clearly noted in the young person's care plan and risk assessment and updated according to need.

19. Surveillance

There are sensors on the landings which sound when young people leave their bedroom, this is only in operation at night time once the young people are settled in bed. This is an added safeguard measure to ensure young people receive the support they need promptly in the night and all social workers and where appropriate, parents are asked to sign their consent for this. There is a bedroom on the ground floor which has an alarm on the door which again, is only set at night and this is independent of the alarms upstairs.

20. Fire Precautions Adopted within The Orchards

All Acorn Education and Care homes are subject to Fire Officer Inspections and any recommendations are implemented with the utmost priority.

Fire precautions are conducted within the appropriate regulations of the Regulatory reform (Fire safety) order 2005 (FSO).

The Orchards has appropriate fire equipment, smoke alarms and heat detectors, which are regularly tested and serviced by a designated Fire and Safety Officer.

All staff and children at The Orchards should be familiar with all aspects of the fire policy and procedures. Regular fire drills are conducted within home, with the outcome and results recorded and monitored within a logbook, in accordance with The Orchards fire policy and procedure. Such drills are undertaken to identify, clarify and resolve any issues or problems with regards to the fire safety policy. Fire Safety procedure is clearly visible throughout appropriate locations in The Orchards.

21. Arrangements for Pursuing Cultural Identity and Religious Observance

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As a culturally competent care provider, Acorn Education and Care are committed to facilitating and supporting the cultural and religious practices of the children and young people in our care.

In the interests of maintaining the balanced development of the child/young person and in keeping with Equality and Diversity good practice, all The Orchards staff ensures that every child/young person will be given the opportunity to uphold their cultural identity, and religious beliefs. All staff will be responsible for ensuring that opportunities for religious observance are understood and respected by themselves and other children within the home.

Each young person is provided with the opportunity, as far as is reasonable and practicable, to attend religious services and receive religious instruction as are appropriate to his/her religious beliefs.

Special attention is given where religious observances may involve the provision of special facilities.

We will develop and maintain links with venues for recreational, religious, cultural and social activities, particularly those within the locality of The Orchards, ensuring a balanced and structured programme for development of the child/young person is achieved.

22. Contact Arrangements

The organisations policies and procedures within The Orchards are all carefully followed by all staff, and are geared towards: -

- Maintaining, supporting and actively encouraging regular and consistent contact with the child's/young person's family, friends, as well as significant others. This is achieved through telephone calls, letters; home visits in addition to visits to see the child/young person within the home.
- Maintaining and encouraging regular access to, and contact with, the child's/young person's Social Worker, ensuring any issues or concerns can be discussed between the child/young person and his or her social worker.
- To maintain regular contact and co-operation with other psychologists, psychiatrists, professional associations, and workers when it is appropriate. This will ensure that our core philosophy, which is that the welfare and support of the child is central to all aspects of related care policies, is maintained.

23. Complaints, Comments and Compliments

The Orchards deals with all representations and complaints seriously, sensitively and as close to the originating point as possible, ensuring that the child's best interests are of paramount importance in such proceedings. We endeavour to ensure that all children, staff, and parents are aware of, and understand Acorn Education and Care written policy and procedures on representations and complaints. Furthermore, Acorn Education and Care operates a transparent complaints procedure, which is clearly visible on notice boards and other appropriate locations.

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Each young person has the right to make representations by way of comments, compliments or complaints regarding their care and accommodation whilst being looked after by Acorn Education and Care. A record is maintained in the home of such comments, compliments and complaints.

There is a child friendly complaints procedure which young people receive on admission and is also mentioned in the welcome book. This procedure uses PECS symbols as well as words.

Complaints Procedures

Each young person in the home has access to:

- Acorn Education and Care Internal Complaints Procedures and the services of an independent representative.
- The Complaints Procedure of the responsible local authority
- Ofsted Tel: 0300 123 1231

Write to Ofsted:

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

Organisations representing the interest of young people being looked after, e.g. Child-line and Voice for the Child in Care.

Additionally, all young people are actively encouraged to express their concerns regarding the quality of care they are receiving or any other issue during individual meetings with their key worker, during the residents' meetings or directly to the Manager of the home. Each young person is provided with a copy of the Acorn Education and Care Complaints Procedure on his or her admission to the home.

The Acorn Education and Care Complaints Procedure consists of three stages:

Stage 1 Informal Stage – Discussion with the Manager – recorded and signed by the young person if she/he is satisfied.

Stage 2 Formal Stage – Investigation by a Complaints Investigation Officer (i.e. someone from outside of the home)

Stage 3 Review Stage- Consideration by Senior Managers of Acorn Education and Care

24. Arrangements for Reviews

Internal Placement Review Arrangements

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In consultation with the child, his or her social workers and all significant others, a Placement Plan is formulated within 72 hours of the child's admission. Within 20 days, the Plan is reviewed then at 3 months then every 6 months thereafter.

Who can attend an internal Placement Review?

- The child/young person.
- The Parents (unless they are prevented from doing so by any court orders).
- The Reviewing Officer from the young person's area office.
- The young person's Social Worker.
- The young person's keyworker.
- A Senior Manager.
- Teachers, Doctors, & Psychologists.
- Independent visitor, race advisor, interpreter.
- Other family members.

External Care Plan Reviews

In addition to the arrangements at Acorn Education and Care for internal reviews, there will be arrangements led by the child's social worker for external reviews. Typically, arrangements for external reviews will comprise:

- Core Group Meetings
- Statutory Reviews
- Inter-agency meetings

Acorn Education and Care will co-operate and support all arrangements for external reviews. We will endeavour to provide written reports in advance of all review meetings to aid and assist discussion and will provide meeting facilities when required to do so.

25. Provisions Made Available by The Orchards

All Residential Child Care Workers within the home are responsible for providing, and promoting the provision of various developmental aspects in the life of the child/young person, which includes their health, physical needs, emotional security, social experience, sleep, clothing, and diet. Furthermore, all Residential Child Care Workers and supporting residential staff will ensure that they:

- Develop and sustain a manner of living, which encourages within each child/young person a sense of stability, security, worth and responsibility.
- Positively promote and encourage awareness within each child of intellectual, religious, and cultural matters as part of their overall development plan.
- Develop and maintain a sound professional relationship with the child/young person, based on the principle of mutual respect, and continuous consultation. Staff will ensure that this principle is still maintained even though there may be specific periods where the behaviour of the child/young person may be seen as unacceptable.

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- Promote and encourage the understanding, acceptance, and operation of acceptable forms of behaviour amongst every child/young person within The Orchards.
- Develop an understanding of the individual needs of each child/young person, whilst encouraging the exchange of views and opinions between the staff and child/young person.

Child/Young Person Participation and Involvement

At Acorn Education and Care, children and young people are encouraged and supported in self-expression. They are encouraged and helped to recognise their rights and responsibilities. In support of the above, children/young people are encouraged to participate in residents' meetings which are designed to allow children to express their views and concerns and to celebrate things that they like or make them happy. Also, children are supported and encouraged to take part in the reviews of their Care and Placement Plans.

Some children and young people struggle to participate in the group setting, although they will receive ongoing support and encouragement, regular one to one key working sessions allow them to feed into the Acorn Education and Care/home's decision-making processes. Through whatever channel, Acorn Education and Care staff are encouraged and expected to elicit the views of our children and to ensure these are taken into account in the day to day running of our homes.

26. Therapeutic techniques

If necessary, the team are able to access other professionals within the local community, which could also be beneficial to a young person, i.e. Speech therapist, CAMHS, Futures, Base 51 and Specialist Schools.

A diagnosis of an autistic spectrum disorder or learning disability does not predict the complex needs and associated behaviours of any individual young person. Our therapeutic environment can provide an opportunity for young people to gradually gain a better understanding of themselves and their needs, wishes, behaviours, strengths and challenges.

It's this environment, together with the multi-disciplinary support we provide, that can make The Orchards a suitable residential placement for young people, who on a day-to-day basis have to deal with their own complex needs in the context of a world that can, at times, be very challenging for them.

The care and well-being of the young people we support are paramount and everything we do is to ensure that each young person's best interests are met.

To keep young people safe there are times when the use of physical interventions may be needed (MAPA). This would be as a last resort to support young people in crisis, to reduce both stress and risk. In such instances, we follow BILD guidance. Acorn Education and Care have BILD accreditation for children's services.

In relation to the therapeutic methods used by staff at the home with regard to the way we work with young people at the home a specialised therapist does not always provide 'therapy'.

Purposefully planned intervention is implemented in a structured way to aid the progression of

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all young people at the home and any specialist service may incur an additional fee. Such intervention is clearly limited to the identified needs contained within the young person's care plan and any alterations to this plan in regard to the young person's behaviour would automatically result in a change to the method of planned intervention. If necessary, the team are able to access other professionals within the local community, which could also be beneficial to a young person, i.e. Speech therapist, CAMHS, Connexions, and Specialist Schools.

27. Anti-discrimination at The Orchards

The Orchards is a Child Centred unit with its policy, procedural and practice framework designed to promote, in both philosophical and practical terms, the premise that the 'welfare of the child should be the paramount consideration' in any given care situation.

Our company name depicts our view that good, effective and appropriate comprehensive Care can serve to provide for the short or long-term Solutions necessary to block, reverse, prevent or stem those prohibitive and harmful factors that serve to interfere with the healthy and progressive development of our children. We believe that effective, well-planned care arrangements should serve as a Pathway to Independence.

Acorn Education and Care believes that happiness should not be a destination but rather, a journey. Children have the right to enjoy the journey through early life to independence, following a Pathway, underpinned by the following key principles:

All of our children deserve and should be afforded the opportunity to:

- Be as physically and mentally healthy and able as possible
- Enjoy maximum benefit and levels of attainment through good quality and appropriate educational and developmental opportunities
- Live in an environment that assures safety and protection from harm
- Feel loved, respected and valued. Be encouraged, guided, motivated and supported through a network of reliable, affectionate and safe relationships
- Experience and enjoy emotional, mental and physical well-being
- Feel empowered and enabled to become competent in self-care and everyday living
Be encouraged to believe in themselves, through the development and maintenance of positive self-esteem, confidence and respect
- Have a secure and informed sense of identity, including cultural, racial and gender-based identity
- Understand and enjoy a sense of community and citizenship through the development and use of good inter-personal skills and confidence in social settings and opportunities to play a part
- To understand and enjoy rights and responsibilities and to be able to exercise effectively both principles, both in the care setting and in later life.

Acorn Education and Care firmly believes in its care philosophy, which impacts on and guides all areas of our service provision to every child/young person.

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