



Stowe Court Children's Home

Rooms Search Policy

Status: Recommended

Audience: Parents/Carers
Children and young people
Placing Authorities
Staff
Directors

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Introduction

Stowe Court is a registered children's home with the ethos of offering equal opportunities to all children and young people residing at the home. Stowe Court will always respect the rights, privacy and belongings of all young people. However, on some occasions members of staff may have reasons to believe that a young person may be hiding something that will have a detrimental effect on him/herself, other persons within the home or community or which may interfere with the smooth running of the home. In these circumstances it may be necessary to search a young person's room and belongings. However, given the cognitive level of the young people at Stowe Court routine room searches are not necessary and are therefore not carried out.

Purpose

The purpose of room search is to ensure the health and safety of the young people. Room searches, if and when necessary, must be carried out with the uttermost respect for the rights and privacy of the young person.

Scope

Any room search procedure can cover searching the bedroom, bags, wardrobes and personal belongings of any young person. This must be done only when the search is essential to ensure the health and safety of the young person involved, the health and safety of other young people and/or the health and safety of the staff of the home.

Directions for staff

Staff are not to conduct any physical or intimate search on any young person.

Staff can ask a young person to hand over dangerous items he/she may have in his/her possession or empty pockets or bags or drawers and cupboards.

Staff must have clear grounds in their belief that a young person has something hidden in his possessions that could put the welfare of the young person and others at risk and failure to carry out a search of possessions would result in such a risk.

All efforts must be made by staff to resolve the situation without resorting to a search.

Before proceeding to a search, the young person must be informed and asked if they would like to be present during the search.

All searches should be conducted in a sensitive manner and away from other young people.

Should anything be found that would have a detrimental effect on the young person or possibly others, the manager/senior member of staff on duty must be informed to decide any further action.

If a young person refuses to allow a search of his possessions and staff believe he may be in possession of a weapon or illegal substances the Police may be called only with the agreement of the Director of Care and Education, the Deputy Director of Care and Education or the Registered Manager.

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Documentation

All searches must be documented giving the time and date, the reason for the search and noting what, if anything, was found. Please use the search book located in the office.

The person carrying out the search must be named and anyone present at the time must be noted.

Such records must be signed by both the lead person and the witness.

The completed search record book should be reviewed and signed off by the Registered Manager.

The young person should also be asked if they would like to make any comment following the room search. This should be recorded in the search record and signed by the young person. If the young person does not want to add a comment staff should record this to show the young person has been asked.

Whenever outside agencies such as the Police are involved in a search this needs to be reported to both the parents, social services and Ofsted.