

Statement of Purpose

SC422415



S-----
Bedford

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INTRODUCTION

St Christopher's Fellowship is a registered children's charity and provider of social housing, which has been in existence for more than one hundred and forty years. It offers a range of services, providing care and accommodation to children and young people and continues to grow and develop to keep pace with their changing needs in today's society.

This Statement of Purpose is designed to accurately describe what S----- sets out to do for the children it accommodates and the manner in which care is provided. It will be reviewed and revised annually to ensure it continues to reflect best practice in children's residential care.

OUR MISSION AND VISION

Our mission is to support children, young people and vulnerable adults to recognise and achieve their potential.

We believe that children and young people, regardless of their background or journey so far, deserve the chance to shine.

When young people meet us for the first time they have often lost belief in family, society and themselves. Through a combination of experience, specially designed services and perseverance we help young people to start rebuilding their lives. Regardless of whether they come to us as young children, or teenagers making their transition into adulthood, we support them to have rich, rewarding and fulfilling lives.

Our services include:

- fostering
- children's homes
- services for young runaways
- advice and guidance for young people leaving care
- supported housing
- support for young people living in their own accommodation
- educational support
- advice on training, employment and health
- service improvement consultancy

At St Christopher's we listen and learn from our own experiences and from those of others in order to:

- Ensure that the views of the young people who use our services are central to everything we do;
- Continuously improve and develop our services and outcomes for children and young people based on learning from their participation;
- Provide an innovative and diverse range of services.

OUR VALUES

St Christopher's believes that high quality residential childcare has a vital role to play in achieving positive outcomes for looked after young people.

Our approach is summarised in the Statement of Values that follows:

- *An affirmation of the positive value of residential care focused on meeting the individual needs of young people within a group living experience*
- *An acceptance of the worth and dignity of each child, and a commitment to acknowledge and maximise each child's potential for growth and development*
- *That young people, their parents and other significant adults should be involved in decisions made about their future, in such a way as to reduce their dependence and empower them to take responsibility for their own lives, and to achieve the fullest independence of which they are capable*
- *A child's family and community links should be maintained and no child should be placed at such a distance from their home that it inhibits maintaining these links, unless there are compelling reasons to justify such a placement as being in the best interests of the child*
- *Services should be provided that actively promote equal opportunities for staff and young people and that are relevant to each child's creed, culture, gender, sexual orientation and specific needs, in an environment that acknowledges and celebrates each person's culture and adopts an anti-discriminatory*
- *Recognition of the rights of young people and a commitment to take action to uphold them.*

QUALITY & PURPOSE OF CARE

Young People at S-----

S----- is a single occupancy home for young people of either gender, who are aged between 12 and 17 years of age and including those with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. In exceptional circumstances some young people stay on after their 18th birthday, but only where this is part of their agreed independence plan. The length of time young people live at S----- depends on their individual needs and circumstances. We strive to ensure that young people living at S----- are safe and feel safe, achieve their goals and enjoy their teenage years.

Placements are provided for those young people:

- Who are unable to live with their families due to abuse, neglect, family dysfunction or rejection, or where families are unable to meet their needs
- Who require a placement with the aim of rehabilitation to their families
- Whose placements have broken down and who need a period in which appropriate plans can be made for their future
- Who need a period of stability and preparation for moving to an identified future placement
- Who require a long term placement in residential care providing them with stability and nurture until independence
- Who have been remanded into the care of the local authority by the courts
- Who require a placement in Bedfordshire in order to maintain existing family contact and keep them close to their home, community, school and support services in their local area

S----- does not provide accommodation for children and young people with severe physical disabilities, severe learning disabilities or with sensory impairment.

Purpose

S----- is a children's home registered under Section 60 of the Children Act 1989 to provide periods of residential care for one young person, of either gender, aged between 12 and 18 years (12-16 years on admission).

S----- offers periods of planned care, usually lasting from 6-18 months, but this can be varied if required, with the agreement of the Homes Manager, Regional Manager and the Central Bedfordshire Commissioning Team.

The staff at S----- will carefully consider all referrals to ensure that the provision meets the needs of the individual young person, whilst ensuring that risk is appropriately managed.

St Christopher's approach to working with young people has been developed over time to incorporate a variety of methods, with the emphasis on the importance of relationships and support tailored to individual need.

When a young person first moves in, the initial objectives are to welcome them, provide them with a safe and secure environment and to undertake a detailed, relevant and evidence based assessment using our unique Q-pack assessment framework. This assessment is used to inform future placement and planning decisions and is reviewed regularly to ensure that the plan continues to meet the young person's needs.

We work to ensure that each young person feels safe and wanted and is treated and accepted as an individual and that they feel sufficiently comfortable in their surroundings to make a positive move forward.

Staff work closely with the young person living in the home, their parents or carers and the professionals involved in their care. As a single occupancy home young people will typically have high levels of need and the staff at S---- will work in partnership with all specialist agencies that may be involved with the young person in providing therapeutic or specialist intervention. Staff ensure that those involved have a good understanding of how the placement is progressing, including agreed tasks and how the young person is experiencing the placement.

Staff have high aspirations for the young person living in the home and help them to realise their potential. Education is an important part of this and the young person will be supported to attend, enjoy and succeed in school or college.

The team ensures that the young person is safe and has positive day-to-day living experiences. They are supported and encouraged to learn life skills appropriate to their age and to gradually move towards independence. The young person is supported to maintain positive enduring relationships. Where appropriate and as part of their agreed care plan they are actively and practically supported to maintain relationships with their family and friends.

ETHOS – OUR APPROACH TO CARE

The home's approach is rooted in the use of positive relationships to enable young people's holistic development and wellbeing. The team use concepts and theoretical models drawn from social pedagogy and attachment theory in their work with young people. Central to our work is the use of reflective, ethical practice and positive, practical activities in building respectful, trusting relationships with young people. We have a strong commitment to children's rights in daily practice and empowering them to actively participate in decisions about their care and future plans.

Staff members aim to establish safe relationships with the young people that will enable young people to speak freely about their feelings without condemnation or disapproval and which recognises their emotional and cultural experiences. We believe such an environment empowers the young people in their development and growth.

In partnership with Middlesex University, St Christopher's has developed the Q-Pack, an evidence-based assessment and outcomes measurement tool. The Q-Pack measures vulnerability of attachment style, emotional and behavioural disorder and significant life events for each child. Staff complete the Q-Pack with young people shortly after admission and at regular intervals during their placement. Reports are produced based on analysis of the results which are used to inform care planning and evidence outcomes for young people. The Q-Pack enables the team to provide individualised care for each young person based on robust assessment of their needs and progress during their placement.

Our model of practice is based on a belief in the positive value of residential care focused on meeting the individual needs of young people within a group living experience. It focuses on strengths and seeks opportunities for building on young people's attributes and skills to promote emotional growth and resilience.

Overall, we have created a caring, structured and stimulating environment that is responsive to the individual needs of children by providing:

- An inclusive approach, involving children and young people in the day-to-day running of the home.
- Physical care and comfort to young people with reassuring dependability, which includes regular mealtimes and bedtimes.
- A comfortable and well-furnished home.
- Planned activities during the week and outings at weekends and in holidays.
- Support and encouragement with education and integrated learning support from the staff team.
- Recognition of achievement and encouragement of individual skills.
- Recognition that to achieve the best outcomes for children it is important to involve other agencies such as health and education in collaborative interventions.
- Ensuring that carers provide the range of values, standards and boundaries that would be afforded to any young person through good parenting.

By providing young people with a period of stability, together with opportunities to develop their practical, educational, social and emotional

skills, they will be enabled to function at a level which will enhance their confidence and belief in themselves.

Through planned individual programmes with each young person, the aim is to set clear, realistic and achievable goals and to focus on positive interactions, reinforcement and support.

About the home

The home has two bedrooms - one for the young person and one for staff, a fenced garden, conservatory, lounge/dining room, kitchen and office area.

The home has been decorated to feel homely and comfortable, with input on design and decoration from the young person. Home entertainment includes a computer, television, films, music, radio, books, games and magazines. At S----- we aim to provide a pleasant atmosphere where the young person can relax, have companionship and feel comfortable about inviting family and friends. We ensure that the young person is able to make private phone calls.

Location of S-----

The home is located at the bottom of single track road of in S-----; a small village situated 6 miles from Bedford.

Public Transport

Stweratby is a rural village on the outskirts of Bedford. There is a mainline train station situated in Bedford and a local train station in Stewartby. There are regular buses between Kempston, Bedford and the surrounding areas. The home has an allocated car to overcome any transport issues.

Cultural, Linguistic and Religious needs

St Christopher's respects and celebrates the diversity of cultures, ethnic identities and traditions. We request information about the young person's cultural and religious needs at the point of referral and ensure that this is taken into account when planning his or her care. We ensure that young people in our homes have the opportunity and support to follow their religious beliefs. Staff have a strong commitment to ensuring that an atmosphere prevails where a young person is able to openly practise their religion and be proud of their culture. Where appropriate the staff team will work in partnership with a young person's family and community to facilitate religious observances, including attendance at services, following any dietary requirements and any religious rituals a young person may wish to observe either in the home or the community.

Children who do not speak English as a first language are able to use Language Line in order to communicate with others in the home. Staff at S---- work in partnership with the placing authority for each child with language needs to ensure that they are able to access the local services which meet their needs. The staff team also seek to learn about the culture, language and heritage of each child and share and celebrate their own backgrounds in order to foster a positive understanding of diversity among young people.

Complaints and Positive feedback

We would love our homes to run smoothly all the time but unfortunately sometimes things go wrong and we will want to put that right. We want young people to tell us if they think we are doing something wrong, or are acting unfairly in some way.

Complaints will always be treated seriously and we will try to put things right as quickly as possible. The head of home will, in line with clear procedures, deal with complaints in the first instance.

Information about how to make a complaint is included in the Welcome Pack given to every young person when they first arrive. Staff talk to young people about their right to make a complaint and ensure that all young people living in the home know how to. Staff support young people when they wish to make a complaint. If a young person would like help from someone outside the staff team, they are helped to access advocacy through the Local Authority's Children's Rights Officer.

The local authority responsible for placing a young person at S----- investigate complaints as required, including when the young person requests this.

Ofsted have responsibility for the regulation and inspection of Children's homes. Young people can also contact the OFSTED office if they have any concerns.

The contact details for Ofsted National Business Unit [NBU] are

Telephone 0300 123 1231 (and then select option 1)

Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Of course we are always delighted when we receive positive feedback. It tells us where we are getting things right and helps us to continue improving.

VIEWS, WISHES & FEELINGS

Participation

St Christopher's are committed to involving the young people who use our services in the design, delivery and continuous improvement of them. There are many different ways for young people to get involved, either for a couple of hours or as a more regular commitment.

Young people are encouraged to join St Christopher's participation panel. This is made up of young people from across our services, members of the Council of Trustees and the Senior Management Team. The panel is charged with collecting the views of all service users to ensure that they are involved in the running of the organisation and their views are heard at the highest level within the organisation. The panel members also:

- Produce newsletters and film shorts
- Interview potential staff as part of our recruitment process
- Assess our services for quality
- Plan events
- Issue their stamp of approval on leaflets and policies that have met their readability / plain English standards
- Review policies and procedures
- Attend external events, such as the Associate Parliamentary Group for Looked-After Children and Care Leavers

Young people can give feedback which is used to make changes and develop the home via, equally, regular house meetings are held where young people are encouraged to take an active role in planning and shaping day to day care within the home. Young people can give feedback individually via keywork sessions, through discussion with staff, or through the formal complaints procedure which is explained to each child when they move in.

Keywork & Support

Young people are allocated a designated key worker when they arrive at S------. The key worker is a member of the team who is responsible for co-ordinating the care programme of that young person, both within the home and through liaison with their social workers, parents and other professionals.

Young people meet regularly with their key workers to work towards achieving the goals set out in their care plan. The work may include sessions to address social skills, relationships or school work. Key workers also prepare monthly summary reports detailing significant events that have occurred over the previous month.

Young people at S----- are expected and actively encouraged to attend their meetings and reviews and to take part in planning their own futures. Young people who are looked after have a number of statutory reviews and plans and their keyworker will support them to understand the purpose of these meetings and to prepare for them, so that they are able to contribute their views.

There are regular and frequent opportunities for young people and staff to meet for face to face discussions about a wide range of issues and these offer additional opportunities for ensuring that young people's views are taken into account in all aspects of the home's operation. Regular house meetings are held between staff and the young person living at S----- to keep everyone informed about what is going on and to give everyone the chance to raise concerns or say what they would like to happen in the home.

Equality of Opportunity & Anti-Discriminatory Practice

We believe that every individual has the right to be treated with respect and therefore expect everyone at S----- to behave in a way that does not discriminate against others because of their race, gender, disability, religion, culture or sexuality. We aim to meet the needs of young people of all races, cultures and religious beliefs. We try to employ a staff team that is diverse in terms of race and gender.

We ensure that any young person in our care has the opportunity to follow their religion and culture. We have a strong commitment to ensure that an atmosphere prevails where a young person is able to openly practise their religion and be proud of their culture. Young people are supported to attend their place of worship. Where young people present with discriminatory attitudes, language or actions, the team understand these may have been learned from within their family and take an approach which combines challenging such attitudes with seeking to support and educate young people to develop a positive stance towards diversity.

All instances of discrimination are unacceptable and will be challenged seriously and consistently by the manager and the staff as they arise. All staff receives diversity training to enable them to describe and understand how discrimination can negatively impact on all concerned and how to deal with it effectively. This is a process supported and monitored by regular supervision.

Children's Rights

S----- actively supports children in understanding and exercising their rights under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The staff team aim to demonstrate a social pedagogic approach to supporting children's rights in their practice, which is not limited to procedural or legislative requirements,

but which empowers children as active agents in all aspects of their care. For example, this means supporting young people to access advocates if they wish, to express their views and wishes and where necessary challenge their care plans and decision-making about their futures.

Each young person will have a permanent, confidential and secure record of their history and progress compatible with Schedule 3 of the Children's Home Regulations (36) 2015. We encourage young people's access to the information on their files with support from their keyworker.

The home actively supports children in understanding and exercising their rights under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, with particular reference to Articles 2, 3, 6 and 12.

Article 2 (Non-Discrimination): The Convention applies to all children, whatever their race, religion or abilities; whatever they think or say, whatever type of family they come from.

Article 3 (Best interests of the child): The best interests of children must be the primary concern in making decisions that may affect them.

Article 6 (Survival and development): Children have the right to live.

Article 12 (Respect for the views of the child): When adults are making decisions that affect children, children have the right to say what they think should happen and have their opinions taken into account.

EDUCATION

Education & Preparation for Work

The team recognises that it is vital that all children with Special Educational Needs receive the educational provision which meets their needs and advocates and supports the young person to ensure that their needs are quickly and efficiently assessed and provided for. The identified educational needs of the young person are considered before a decision is made for them to move to S-----, to ensure that the move would not adversely affect an existing successful education placement.

The team work closely with the school, virtual school and Colleges and ensures that the designated teacher is aware that the young person is looked after and has an up-to-date copy of their Personal Education Plan on admission and after each statutory review of their Care Plan.

St Christopher's believe in the importance of education. Young people are supported to develop their skills and interests to their full potential. Young people who are of school age are required and supported to attend school. Staff support and contribute to the young person's Personal Education Plan.

It is recognised that continuity within a young person's education is important and wherever possible young people are supported to attend their existing school or college. If for some reason a young person of school-age cannot attend, or is not on the school roll, staff will liaise with the young person's social worker and the Education Department to secure a place at school or other education provision. Great emphasis is placed on finding the young person a school place as quickly as possible. If the young person does not have a school place, the home will work alongside the young person's Local Authority's education officers to ensure that an educational support package is available either in the home or elsewhere until a place can be found.

The young person has access to the recreational rooms and computer area with possible internet access, as well as space within their own rooms to do homework. Encouragement and support are given to young people to pursue academic and social activities that enhance their development.

Parents are encouraged, where appropriate, to remain involved in their child's education and are kept informed of parents' evenings and other school events. Staff maintain contact with the young person's school, and seek regular information about their progress.

Staff have high expectations for young people's potential and support them to consider their plans after compulsory schooling. Staff use external expertise to advise young people on all the options available to them.

All young people would have access to pocket money dependent on their participation in education, behaviour within the home and age. Young people are encouraged to save and open personal bank accounts and are supported in undertaking Saturday jobs or full time employment.

Full details of entitlements are explained in the young persons guide.

ENJOYMENT & ACHIEVEMENT

Cultural recreational & sporting activities

Young people are supported to continue to pursue their existing interests and hobbies, as well as to try new things. The staff team regularly organises activities and during holiday periods there are opportunities for young people to go away on holidays or take part in outings. Young people are actively encouraged to participate in planning which activities they wish to take part in with the staff team to reflect their interests and enthusiasms.

Stewartby has good transport links mean that all of Bedford's & Milton Keynes amenities are easily accessible; including parks, theatres, cinemas and museums and any other activity the young person wishes to participate in.

HEALTH

Good healthcare is a priority at S------. We do everything possible to make sure that young people are safe and healthy. A detailed and up-to-date Health Care Plan forms an important part of each young person's Individual Care Plan. Whilst respecting young people's rights, privacy and increasing independence, young people are supported to address any health issues that they experience.

Appropriate medical information is requested at the referral stage and during the admission procedure health care needs, including dietary requirements, are identified. On admission young people are encouraged to have a medical assessment and seek help and advice from their GP. It is expected that medical checks continue throughout a young person's stay at the home.

It is usually best for young people to continue seeing their existing GP and other medical practitioners. Where this is not possible, or is not preferable, young people are supported to register with a local GP surgery. Young people are encouraged to visit the dentist and optician regularly.

If a young person is prescribed medication it is kept in a locked medical cabinet and administered by staff in accordance with the doctor's instructions, unless self-medication is advised.

The staff team actively promote the health of the young person in a broader sense. Staff, with the assistance of the young person where possible, plans, prepares and cooks healthy and well-balanced meals, catering for any specific dietary requirements the young person may have. The young person is encouraged to have a healthy relationship with food and to be involved in meal planning and preparation. The young person and staff eat meals together and mealtimes are an important part of the positive culture and homely environment.

Diet, hygiene, sexual health, relationships and the impact of drug and alcohol abuse and smoking are regularly discussed with the young person. It is recognised that some young people who come to live in the home may have witnessed the consequences of drug and alcohol abuse and staff offer them information, advice and support on these issues.

Smoking is discouraged for all young people and the benefits of giving up smoking are actively promoted. The home promotes a no smoking policy for all staff and for young people under 18. No smoking is permitted anywhere inside the home; this includes the young person's bedroom.

POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Contact with family & friends

Family and friends are an important part of all of our lives. Where it is safe and appropriate, we support and encourage young people to keep in contact with their family and friends. Arrangements for this are discussed with the young person, his or her family and social worker and confirmed in the young person's in-house placement plan. Friends and family are then welcome to visit the home and if young people want to meet their family in private, a separate room is arranged. Staff ensure that young people can make and receive private phone calls.

It can sometimes be difficult to balance the need for young people to have privacy and the need for them to feel comfortable about having friends and family to visit. For this reason visitors do not have access to the young people's bedroom area. In making this decision we have taken account of the concerns that some young people have expressed about non-residents having access to all areas of the home.

There may be occasions where particular visitors are not allowed in the home because of the way they have behaved, because they present a risk to others or because there are legal restrictions in place. Restrictions on visitors are decided in consultation with the young person's parents and social worker and are reviewed frequently.

Full details on the arrangements for visitors to the home can be found in the Young People's Guide.

PROTECTION OF CHILDREN

Approach to behavioural support (Our approach to Children's upbringing)

Staff members aim to establish safe relationships with the young people that will enable young people to speak freely about their feelings without condemnation or disapproval and which recognises their emotional and cultural experiences. We believe such an environment empowers the young people in their development and growth.

In partnership with Kingston University, St Christopher's has developed the Q-Pack, an evidence-based assessment and outcomes measurement tool. The Q-Pack measures vulnerability of attachment style, emotional and behavioural disorder and significant life events for each child. Staff complete the Q-Pack with young people shortly after admission and at regular intervals during their placement. Reports are produced based on analysis of the results which are used to inform care planning and evidence outcomes for young people. The Q-Pack enables the team to provide individualised care for each young

person based on robust assessment of their needs and progress during their placement.

At S----- we talk about our approach to bringing up children, rather than managing their behaviour, because we believe that a holistic approach centred on children's overall happiness and well-being is the most effective way to promote positive behaviour. We know that children learn how to treat others from the way in which they are treated, therefore role modelling, respect, consideration and compassion in our relationships with them is fundamental to our practice. Our philosophy is rooted in a social pedagogic perspective which focuses on making conscious use of relationships and shared daily living to enhance children's overall learning and development. Many of the children we look after will display behaviour which challenges us as a consequence of their previous experiences. Our response to challenging behaviour is based on 3 principles:

- All behaviour is an act of communication within the context of relationships
- All behaviour results in consequences, whether positive or negative, aimed at enabling children to learn from their actions
- We are committed to engaging children's participation in understanding, responding to and changing their behaviour

Our approach is to enable children to learn that there are consequences to their actions and empower them to change behaviours that harm their own well-being or that of others. For children to feel empowered it is important that they experience their actions as having an effect in the world. We ensure that there are always consequences to children's behaviour so that they can learn through experience that they have the ability to affect outcomes and make changes themselves. In daily practice this means rewarding positive behaviour such as school attendance and achievement through activities, privileges such as having a DVD player to watch in their bedroom, praise from staff, certificates and individual treats. In relation to challenging behaviour this means consequences that focus on enabling the child to learn acceptable boundaries, make reparation and to develop more positive responses. For example, by clearing up after breaking something, making an apology, writing a letter or card to another person, withdrawal of privileges or missing out on a group activity.

Sometimes children's repeated behaviour puts them or others at significant risk, this may result in consequences which change the way that we look after them to help keep them safe. They may not be ready or able to take responsibility for themselves or their behaviour, in which case it is our role to take responsibility for caring for them safely while enabling them to learn to take responsibility for themselves and their impact on others. For example, if a child is violent to other children, despite reparation and prevention work, our risk assessment may change so that staff constantly supervise them when with other children, that they are only able to go out on activities with one or two other children to manage risks, that they are not allowed out with other children unsupervised etc.

Although these consequences are not sanctions, they are clearly explained to children as being a result of their actions and in order to change them they will need to change their behaviour.

We understand all behaviour as being an act of communication, within the context of relationships. This means that as well as ensuring there are consequences to children's behaviour we always seek to understand what that behaviour is communicating and consider how we respond to that communication. For example, a child who repeatedly causes damage to the home may be expressing rage, helplessness and frustration in relation to their placement. As well as immediate consequences to teach acceptable boundaries, we seek to explore the meaning of the behaviour with the child through keywork sessions, activities and dialogue. We respond to the child's communication by helping them find other ways of expressing themselves and effecting change e.g. by making a poster or video to take to their review meeting to represent their wishes and feelings, by arranging for independent advocacy, by supporting them in discussing their care plan with their social worker.

We encourage children's participation in responding to their behaviour by discussing it with them, individually and in group meetings. We encourage them to reflect on and understand the causes and impact of their behaviour and to make suggestions about suitable consequences. We take a preventative approach from the beginning of every placement by clearly discussing our expectations and boundaries with children and what the consequences to unacceptable behaviour may be. We encourage them to talk to us about behaviours that concern them and how we can help them to address these.

At S----- our aim is not merely to "control" children's behaviour in the short term. Through conscious use of warm and respectful relationships with children and an environment with consistent consequences, we seek to foster children's development of positive behaviour and values. Our approach to upbringing aims at empowering children to become fulfilled adults, with a clear moral compass and positive relationships with other people and the world around them.

Safeguarding

S----- staff work in accordance with the Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Policies and Procedures and St Christopher's own safeguarding policies and procedures (see St Christopher's Child Care Guidance Manual). All staff are given training and familiarise themselves with these policies and procedures via induction and training. The systems in place in the home are designed to ensure that young people are protected from abuse. Where staff have concerns or suspicions that a child may be at risk of harm or abuse they are clear about their responsibilities to inform managers, social workers, child protection officers as well as practical steps to be taken in order to protect young people.

The home works in close partnership with local agencies including the police, social workers, YOT and education in order to identify and address any safeguarding issues. The home also works closely with commissioners to address any wider safeguarding issues in the local community or in relation to local services.

The home reports any safeguarding concerns to social work teams and local authority LADOs where necessary. Training is provided to ensure that all staff understand the principles and practice involved in the protection of children and take appropriate action if they have concerns about the possibility of abuse. This includes staff accessing training provided by the local safeguarding children board. A central element of safeguarding is supporting children to develop the skills and resilience to keep themselves safe and to share any concerns with staff depending on their age and individual needs. Individual risk assessments and placement plans seek to develop children's ability to actively keep themselves safe as well as to ensure that adults appropriately protect them.

Bullying

All forms of bullying are taken seriously at S------. The home has a clear approach and specific policy and procedure to dealing with bullying and staff work to create a culture of open communication where young people are easily able to confide if they are being bullied. Staff are trained in identifying and addressing signs of bullying as well as working proactively to prevent it. They are skilled at facilitating meetings for young people to discuss issues of bullying and dynamics within group living at the home. Both children who bully others and those who are bullied are supported by staff to reduce and prevent future incidents and increase their resilience and social skills.

Going Missing

Going missing from the home, especially when a young person is first admitted, may be part of a range of behaviours that need addressing.

We are concerned for the safety of any young person who goes missing and every effort will be made to ensure that the quality of relationships with staff helps young people to feel secure and reduces the likelihood of running away. Individual risk assessments provide detailed guidance for staff about the appropriate action to take in the event of a child going missing and individual placement plans include strategies to prevent and reduce instances of children going missing.

If a young person does run away then the police, the placing authority's duty worker and parents or guardians are informed promptly, or within a very short time depending on the vulnerability of that child and our knowledge of them. The staff team work within the policy and procedures of the Bedfordshire local safeguarding children board in responding to all instances of children going missing. All efforts are made to contact, locate and bring children home safely if they go missing.

A young person returning after running away is always welcomed back and the reasons for the absence carefully explored with the young person by his / her key worker or another staff member on duty. They will try to understand what the young person was feeling at that time, help them make sense of the situation and avoid future risk taking by finding different ways to cope with it. The young person will also be offered the opportunity to speak with an independent person such as a social worker or an advocate.

Sanctions

Positive relationships between young people and staff are the basis on which to build a secure and caring environment for the young people. It is recognised that young people need clear boundaries, consistent and fair treatment.

Where sanctions are considered necessary, we try to make them relevant and to link behaviour to consequences.

Sanctions are not applied automatically, instead they take into account the age, understanding and emotional state of the young person.

Permissible sanctions are: -

- A withdrawal of a special privilege or treat e.g. a trip to the cinema or water sports.
- A written apology for upsetting another young person or adult.
- Prohibition for a limited period of the use of some facility e.g. computer or TV, where the child has misused these.
- A deduction of allowances as a contribution towards repair or replacement of articles wilfully damaged. Financial sanctions will not be used for any other reason. A young person will never be expected to pay more than half his/her pocket money in any one week.

All sanctions must be authorised by a senior member of staff on duty and recorded in the record of sanctions book. This record is signed and dated by the person applying the sanctions and countersigned by the senior member of staff. The young person also has the opportunity and will be encouraged to comment on the sanction and sign the sanction sheet.

Any form of corporal punishment is against the law and will **NEVER** be used. Young people will not be deprived of food, drink or sleep. They will not be asked to wear inappropriate clothing (for example, pyjamas during the daytime). They will not be locked in their rooms or prevented from communicating with their family, friends, and social worker.

Physical Restraint

Physical restraint of young people is not a sanction or punishment. S----- is a single occupancy provision and staff lone work therefore physical intervention is not to be used. All employees are to be trained in CALM and de escalation techniques will be used if the young person is showing signs of aggression and distress. All staff are to carry the house phone or the house mobile to ensure communication with the Bunyan Toad or Clophill is accessible.

Deprivation of Liberty

By the very nature of our work in providing a service to young people who have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties we may on occasion adopt practice that could constitute a deprivation of liberty (The Law Society) such as the physical restraint of children and increased monitoring and supervision that would be normal and good practice in a range of circumstances. Failure to monitor and supervise children and young people dependent on their age, understanding and vulnerability would be negligent.

The best interests of children and young people are best protected by open, transparent and honest practise therefore individual practice with children and young people will be undertaken in consultation with placing authorities and where appropriate with children and young people and their families.

All interventions with children and young people including any practice that may constitute deprivation of liberty will be subject to regular review and consultation.

LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT

Contact details

The Manager of the Home is:

Daniel Thompson
S-----
Tel: 01234 766734

The Registered Provider is:

Ron Giddens
St Christopher's Fellowship
1 Putney High Street
London
SW15 1SZ
Tel: 0208 780 7800

Ron is Chief Executive of St Christopher's Fellowship. With over 40 years experience as a social worker, Ron has worked in a number of Local Authorities both as a practising social worker and a senior manager responsible for a wide range of fieldwork, residential, fostering and adoption, disability and family support services. At St Christopher's Ron has been responsible for introducing a range of innovative attachment approaches when working with children-in-care which have been developed in close collaboration with the Centre for Abuse and Trauma Studies, currently based at Middlesex University. More recently, Ron has been responsible for introducing Social Pedagogy throughout the organisation as the underpinning basis for working with children and young people, alongside the work on attachment, and the development of new services to meet the needs of vulnerable young people at high risk of abuse and exploitation.

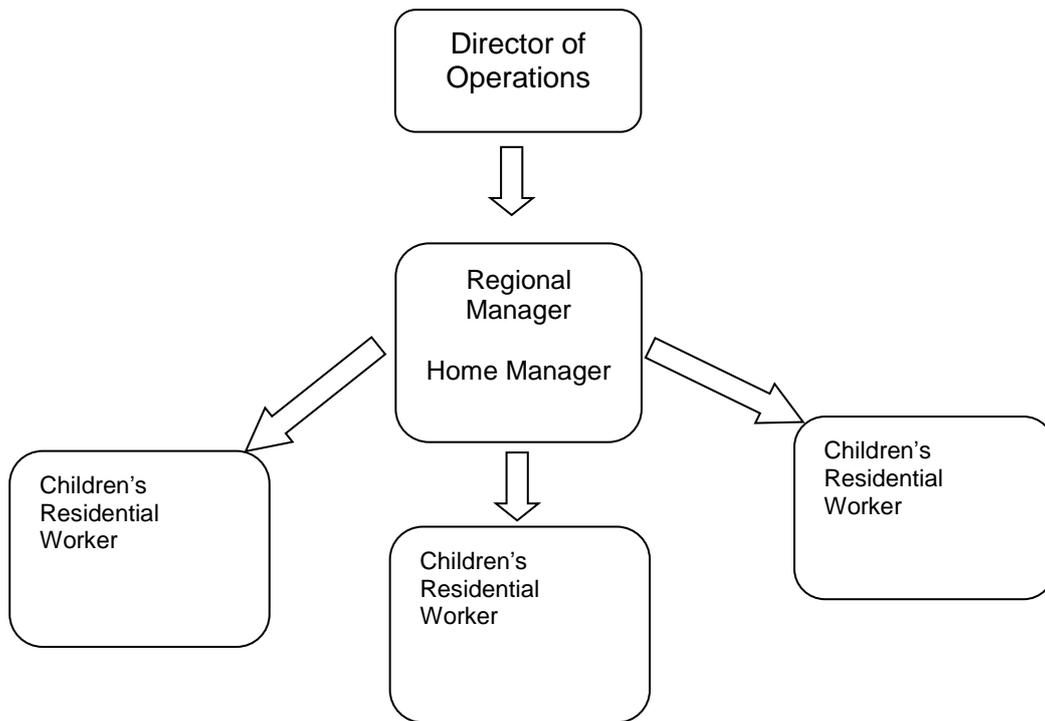
The Staff team

The staff team at S----- aim to provide the highest standard of care. St Christopher's recognises that the home can only provide excellent care if it has the right staff working there and if they are supported and enabled to achieve their best. The team requires a special mix of personal qualities, experience, skills and knowledge. Each member of the team is recruited with care using clear, thorough selection and vetting procedures, designed to protect children and ensure that the team has appropriate competencies and balances. Young people are involved in the recruitment of all front line staff.

The home benefits from having a team that includes men and women and people from different cultures and backgrounds.

Staffing structure

The staff team comprises a manager and three RCW'S. The Manager reports to the regional manager (Bill Roberts) and he reports to Director of Operations (Phil Townsend).



The team provides 24 hour cover and there is always one staff member on duty when any children are present in the home.

St Christopher's is committed to providing high quality support, supervision and training to staff and aims to ensure that staff know that they are valued for the essential role that they fulfil. Staff, including managers, receive monthly supervision. Supervision is used as an opportunity for reflection on practice, to enhance knowledge and skills, feedback on job performance and develop greater individual awareness. Supervision includes reviewing decisions and judgements, considering alternative options and learning from experiences. Supervision and annual appraisals incorporate review and analysis of training requirements and considers on-going development needs.

Further support is provided by St Christopher's Practice and Development Manager, who works with the team to explore team dynamics and support effective reflective practice, to enable the team to function at its best and to most effectively support the young people living in S-----.

CARE PLANNING

Admission Criteria

1. Each young person must be aged 12 to 16 on admission.
2. Young people should have an allocated social worker.
3. Young people may be accommodated by voluntary arrangement or be accommodated subject to Court Order.
4. The home provides care for looked after children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties who may have experienced adversity as a result of abuse, neglect, family dysfunction, loss or other trauma. S----- does not, however, provide accommodation for children and young people with severe physical disabilities, severe learning disabilities or with sensory impairment.
5. Referrals are usually identified through the Allocation Panels of Central Bedfordshire and Bedford Borough Councils. In emergencies they may be made by the Commissioning Services of Central Bedfordshire and Bedford Borough Councils' Children's Services Departments.
6. Decisions about admitting a young person will take into account whether the home can meet the young persons needs and the possible impact on the young people already living in the home.
7. The identified purpose of the placement must be consistent with the stated purpose of the home.
8. A planning meeting must be held with the social worker and in line with the requirements of the Placement Plan will agree the following:
 - Objectives and duration of the placement
 - Strategies to meet the young persons social, educational, emotional, behavioural, health and personal needs
 - Task allocation
 - Risk assessment
 - Review dates
 - Frequency of social worker contact
 - Rules and sanctions within the home
 - Access to files
9. Reviews dates will be agreed by all relevant parties and take place in accordance to current legislation.
10. Young people will be offered independence education during their day to day care. This will allow staff to evaluate and support young people with their independent lifelong skills.

The Statement of Purpose and Function is made freely available to:

- Any person who works at the children's home;
- Any child accommodated in the children's home;
(A summary of this document is available in the "Young People's Guide")
- The parent of any child accommodated in the children's home;
- The placing authority of any child accommodated in the home;
- Any child being considered for accommodation in the home;
- Any other organisation or person involved in the placing of a young person in the home.

Daniel Thompson
Home Manager