

Category	Residential Care		
Document Name	Residential Care Standards Policy		
Accountable Body	RADIUS Trust		
Reference	RC.P1	Date Ratified	13 August 2015
Version	1.1	Last Update	July 2015

Related Documents

Document	Reference
Assurance Profile - NMS Residential Care Standards	RC.P1.01
Independent Visitor Standard 20 Protocol	RC.P1.03

Reference Material

Guidance
DfE National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools (April 2015)

Policy Statement

The DfE National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools promotes the welfare for children for whom residential accommodation is provided.

RADIUS Trust expects each school to recognise the importance of this statutory guidance as a minimum requirement with an expectation that standards will be exceeded.

Each school senior management via the Headteacher / Principal is required to have procedures in place to comply with the standards by:

- Implementing and recording a self-evaluation of the school's provision and compliance with the minimum standards and subject to a peer review and lead governor oversight.
- Providing the Independent Visitor appointed by the Trust, with access to pupils, records and complaints to fulfil the requirements of Standard 20 and acting upon any recommendations and comments by the Independent Visitor.
- Having formal procedures in place to supervise residential care staff.
- Establishing a home from home supportive and highly safe living environment for all resident pupils.

Summary of Standards

The following standards are set out in the guidance.

- STANDARD 1 - Statement of Principles and Practice
- STANDARD 2 - Induction, Transition and Individual Support
- STANDARD 3 - Health and Wellbeing
- STANDARD 4 - Contact with Parents/Carers
- STANDARD 5 - Residential Accommodation
- STANDARD 6 - Safety of Children
- STANDARD 7 - Fire Precautions and Drills
- STANDARD 8 - Provision and Preparation of Food and Drinks
- STANDARD 9 - Personal Possessions
- STANDARD 10 - Activities and Free Time
- STANDARD 11 - Child Protection
- STANDARD 12 - Promoting Positive Behaviour and Relationships
- STANDARD 13 - Leadership and Management
- STANDARD 14 - Staff Recruitment and Checks on Other Adults
- STANDARD 15 - Staff Deployment and Supervision of Children
- STANDARD 16 - Equal Opportunities
- STANDARD 17 - Securing Children's Views
- STANDARD 18 - Complaints
- STANDARD 19 - Staff Supervision, Training and Support
- STANDARD 20 - Monitoring by Independent Visitors
- STANDARD 21 - Placement Planning and Review
- STANDARD 22 – Records

Self-Evaluation & Peer Review

Each school is expected to implement a self-evaluation of its residential care standards against the NMS for Residential Special Schools (DfE, April 2015). The senior management in each school via the Headteacher/Principal in each school is required to:

- identify a member of staff such as the Head of Care or equivalent to produce a termly record (or less frequently if subject to a recorded decision of the School Governing Body) of the school's self-evaluation against the 22 standards contained in the NMS Residential Special Schools publication.
- organise a peer review, at least twice a year.
- actively consider the self-evaluation and peer review commentary with the Lead Governor and if necessary with the Headteacher/Principal to agree an action plan for any standards not fully met and areas requiring improvement.

This self-evaluation process is an ongoing requirement. The Trust Board expects the School Governing Body to be regularly apprised of compliance with the minimum standards.

Lead Governor Role

The Trust requires the Lead Governor in each school to be apprised of the self-evaluation process and to be apprised of action by management to address any deficits or areas for development. The Lead Governor does not have an executive or management accountability role.

STANDARD 20 - Monitoring by Independent Visitors

Standard 20 of the National Minimum Standards for Residential Schools published by the Department of Education in April 2015, states the requirement to appoint an Independent Visitor. The Trust and its schools fulfil this requirement as set out below.

20.1 The governing body, trustees, partnership, or organisation responsible for carrying on the school arrange for one of their number, or a representative who is independent of the management of the school, to visit the school six times, spread evenly, over the course of a school year and complete a written report on the conduct of the school. Where the school has an individual proprietor, that person may carry out such visits personally if they are not also the Headteacher/Principal.

RADIUS Trust fulfils this responsibility by appointing an Independent Visitor for each school.

20.2 Most monitoring visits are carried out unannounced and include:

- checks on the school's records of attendance, complaints, sanctions, use of reasonable force, risk assessments, and where they exist, individual care plans for children;
- evaluation of the effectiveness of the care provided to children and whether they are safeguarded;
- assessment of the physical condition of the building, furniture and equipment of the school; and
- opportunities for any child or member of staff who wishes to meet the visitor (in private if they wish).

Each School fulfils this responsibility by providing the Independent Visitor with access to pupils, records and complaints. The Independent Visitor will arrange unannounced visits and reviews and have the ability to hold by arrangement "listening" sessions with pupils and staff.

20.3 Written reports of all monitoring visits are provided to the Head of Care (or equivalent post). Reports are also provided to each member of that body (or the appropriate committee of that body), within two weeks and as written by the visitor without amendment or summary. Monitoring reports should be retained by the school and made available during an inspection.

A Trust proforma is used by the Independent Visitor to fulfil this requirement and the Head of Care or equivalent at each school is required to maintain a file of completed reviews for audit and reference.

20.4 The Headteacher/Principal, governing body, trustees, partnership, or organisation responsible for carrying on the school carries out, and records in writing, once each year:

- A review of the operation and resourcing of the school's welfare provision for boarding pupils, in relation to:
 - its Statement of Purpose;
 - its staffing policy;
 - the placement plans for individual children;and
- An internal assessment of its compliance with these Standards.

Where appropriate such a report may be incorporated within a review of the whole school.

Each School fulfils this requirement in an Annual Report and the Independent Visitor validates it

Independent Visitors are expected to take an active interest in the quality of life, hopes and concerns of pupils at the school by providing a listening and independent voice for their views and experiences.

The maximum duration of term for an independent visitor will be 4 years.

Confidentiality and Agreement

The Trust requires each school to provide unfettered access to information relating to pupils, their family and others, which is of a highly sensitive nature. It is therefore essential that confidentiality is fully respected. To this end the following key elements for the work have been produced and this forms an agreement between the Independent Visitor (IV) and the Trust.

1. The Head of Care (or equivalent) will be the IV's primary link with the school. It is his/her responsibility to provide the IV with free and unencumbered accesses to pupils, records and complaints.
2. The Head of Care (or equivalent) will provide professional advice on any matters relating to school and Trust policies regarding pupil welfare.
3. Any concerns about advice provided or incidents encountered should be raised directly with the Headteacher/Principal of the school. Lack of satisfaction with the referral to the Headteacher/Principal should be followed up with the Chief Executive of the Trust. Subsequent lack of satisfaction should be referred directly to the Chair of the Trust Board.
4. It is a requirement that information and knowledge about pupils and the operation of the school is confidential and should not be divulged to any person outside the school without exhausting the process set out in 3. Above.

Where the Independent Visitor has exhausted the processes above a referral to an outside agency may be made including a "whistleblowing" concern as follows:

- Ofsted Whistleblower hotline 0300 123 3155
 - West Sussex Social Services 01243 642555; Surrey Social Services: 0300 2001006
 - Sussex Police 01273 470 101; Surrey Police: 01483 571212
5. The guide criteria for exercising the action judged necessary at 4. Above will generally relate to:
 - Where the IV believes that the school has failed in its duty of care to a pupil or pupils.
 - Where the IV believes that the actions of a member of staff would constitute a criminal offence.
 - The basis for the IV's belief should be that of a "reasonable prudent parent judged not in the context of the IV's own home but in that of a school". In reaching this belief the IV should consider the individual child rather than the fictional ordinary or reasonable child. (Lyes v Middlesex County Council 1962)

Records

Each Independent Visitor visit/review will be recorded and shall be conducted at least half termly. All visits will be recorded on an agreed proforma and shall be submitted without alteration to the following:

- The Headteacher/Principal
- All school governors (via Head of Care or equivalent)
- Clerk to the Governing Body (Trust CEO)

Additionally, each review/visit shall be subject to a check for completeness and compliance by the Lead Governor for Residential Standards/Safeguarding.

The Head of Care (or equivalent) will maintain a record file of all visits.

Supervision for Residential Care Staff

Formal supervision is a process which allows staff to reflect on their practice, receive and welcome praise, constructive criticism and to support and develop professional practice. Formal supervision is also a process that allows the member of staff conducting the supervision and those being supervised to challenge practice and ideas. Issues raised in supervision may be used to inform the annual staff performance management.

The Trust requires each school to have procedures in place and identify roles to implement the following:

- All residential care staff (and staff allocated to support resident pupils) will receive supervision every half term.
- Supervision will normally be with their line manager and will be of a well planned and structured experience for each employee with records maintained up to date.