



Code of Conduct for approved Foster Carers

From the *Minimum standards and outcome objectives for home-based care services in Victoria* ('the standards').

1. The home

An approved foster carer must ensure the home in which the child or young person will reside in home-based care is kept safe, clean and in good repair and is properly ventilated, lit, heated and smoke-free. The approved foster carer will agree to participate in an annual review of the home and environment, as required by DHS.

2. Furniture, furnishings and equipment

The home must have:

- (a) adequate furniture, furnishings and equipment for use by the children or young people who reside at the home, having regard to their ages and physical and intellectual development
- (b) adequate facilities for the preparation, refrigeration and hygienic storage of meals and refreshments
- (c) adequate facilities for the storage of equipment and bedding and for the safe keeping of the children or young people's outdoor clothes and other personal belongings
- (d) sufficient equipment suitable for the indoor and outdoor recreational needs of the children or young people, having regard to their ages and physical and intellectual development
- (e) access to a telephone.

3. Swimming pools/spas/waterways

Fencing for swimming pools (including spas) must comply with relevant legislation, the standards and any additional Baptcare policies that apply, and must not prove a hazard for children and young people. Access to other waterways, dams, creeks, rivers, ponds and water features must not prove a hazard for children and young people.

4. Care of foster children

The approved foster carer must, in relation to each child or young person in home-based care, ensure:

- (a) the health, welfare and progress of the child or young person are promoted
- (b) the child or young person is encouraged to participate, as far as is reasonable and practicable, in the ordinary life of the community
- (c) the observance by the child or young person of his or her religion (if any) and the preservation of the child or young person's cultural identity are encouraged
- (d) the same standards of care and discipline are applied to all children and young people residing in the home
- (e) the foster carer will participate in Looking After Children processes and be involved in the care and placement planning process for children or young people they are caring for
- (f) the foster carer will undertake to securely store all personal information concerning children or young people and their families. Access will only be provided to appropriately

approved persons (standard 2.8.3).

5. Bedrooms

The approved foster carer:

- (a) must provide adequate sleeping accommodation for each child or young person who resides in home-based care
- (b) must ensure that sleeping accommodation provided for a child or young person in home-based care is appropriate for the age of the child or young person and takes into account the child or young person's requirement for privacy and sense of belonging
- (c) must ensure that:
 - each such child or young person is provided with a separate bed or cot which complies with Australian safety standards, equipped with a clean and comfortable mattress and bed clothing that is appropriate to the climate
 - linen on each such child or young person's bed or cot is changed weekly (or more frequently if necessary)
 - adequate facilities are provided for the storage of each such child or young person's clothing and personal belongings
 - the top bunk bed should not be used by children under eight years of age (standard 3.6.2H).

6. Study

The approved foster carer must ensure that each child or young person who is in home-based care and who is attending school or undertaking studies is provided with facilities for quiet study that are adequate, having regard to the age of the child or young person.

7. Health and medical attention

- (a) The approved carer must ensure that each child or young person in home-based care is supplied with such medical and dental treatment as is necessary, and in line with the standards.
- (b) When a child or young person is injured requiring medical attention or admitted to hospital, an approved foster carer will ensure that they contact Bapcare immediately. If a medical practitioner recommends to the approved foster carer that the care or treatment of a child or young person in home-based care should be varied for reasons of health, the foster carer must use his or her best endeavours to give effect to the medical practitioner's recommendation.
- (c) If there has been a recommendation by a specialist or doctor regarding the child or young person's health care needs, the approved foster carer must inform Bapcare and follow the medical recommendations.
- (d) The approved carer will only administer medications to the child or young person in accordance with a doctor's prescription or pharmacist's recommendation, and will keep a record of every medication administered.

8. Children and young people not to perform unreasonable duties

The approved foster carer must not require a child or young person in home-based care to perform duties that are unreasonable, having regard to a child or young person's age and physical and intellectual development.

9. Discipline of children and young people

The approved foster carer must comply with Bapcare's policies in relation to responding to

children's behaviour , and the CSO standards.

10. Supervision and management of a child or young person's behaviour

The approved foster carer must provide children and young people with appropriate support and supervision at all times (standard 2.4.1).

11. Pets or animals

The approved foster carer must ensure that pets or animals kept by the household do not prove a risk to children and young people in a placement (standard 3.6.2Q).

12. Placement change and ending

Any placement change or end of placement for children or young people must be facilitated by Baptistcare in consultation with the Department of Human Services. Under no circumstances is a child or young person allowed to leave a placement without consultation by the approved foster carer with Baptistcare.

13. Police checks and Working with Children Checks

The approved foster carer must maintain a current Working with Children Check (renewable every five years) and work with Baptistcare to renew a Police Check every three years. The foster carer must make Baptistcare aware immediately in the event that any charge or conviction arises that may affect approvals to hold these checks.

The approved foster carer must notify Baptistcare if anyone aged 18 years or over joins the household. A police check must be completed for all members of the household aged 18 years and over. Baptistcare may also require a Working with Children Check for household members aged 18 years and over.

14. Change of family circumstances

The approved foster carer must notify Baptistcare in the event of any changes to their family circumstances, such as relationship changes and health or medical issues.

15. Attendance at training

The approved foster carer, and other household members as determined by Baptistcare, will be required to attend training on a range of issues relevant to children and young people in their care (standard 3.5.5).

16. Relationships with birth family

The approved foster carer and other household members will ensure that all contact with the child's birth family is oriented to the wellbeing, safety, stability and development of the child. All occasions of contact between the foster carer and the birth family will be duly reported by the foster carer to Baptistcare.

17. Foster carer undertaking of privacy and confidentiality

As an approved foster carer for Baptistcare, I/we recognise that privacy and confidentiality of client information is an important principle of good practice and ethical behaviour and an expectation of all foster carers. This includes the secure storage of all personal information concerning children and young people in the placement and their families.

In addition, I/we understand that Baptistcare has contractual obligations to the Department of Human Services regarding privacy and the confidentiality of client information.

I/we undertake that I/we will not communicate, release or disclose to any person, any client information with the exception of the following:

1. Information that is necessary and required in the normal course of caring for the child or young person in the placement
2. Information necessary to be exchanged with Baptistcare and Department of Human Services workers, in relation to the child or young person in the placement
3. Information where informed written consent of the client has been obtained by Baptistcare or the Department of Human Services enabling that information to be exchanged
4. Information as required by law; for example, in court proceedings.

At the conclusion of a placement, I/we will return copies of relevant client records to Baptistcare.

I/we also undertake to maintain this confidentiality after I/we cease to be an approved foster carer with Baptistcare.

Agreement

As an approved foster carer for Baptistcare I/we agree to abide by this code of conduct, including the foster carer undertaking of privacy and confidentiality, in respect of any child or young person placed in my/our care.

Name of applicant(s) _____

Signature of applicant (1) _____ Date _____

Signature of witness _____ Date _____

Signature of applicant (2) _____ Date _____

Signature of witness _____ Date _____