



Guide for Children and Young People

This is to be used with assistance and support of an adult.

Contents

Introduction 4

The Pear Tree Plan 5

Environment 5

You feel more than you realise 5

Values 6

Activities 8

Help with your problems 10

Preparation for independence 10

Clothing 11

Safeguarding 12

Bullying 12

Internet Safety 14

Educational Visits 16

Young people who come to Pear Tree 17

Outcomes 17

Questions & Answers 18

Remember 23

Advocacies 24

Useful Health Information 25





Introduction

This document is for young people who are about to come and live at Pear Tree. It is hoped that by reading this, it will have answered a lot of questions you must have about what life must be like, living in a Pear Tree house.

It is important to remember that there are a lot of children at Pear Tree who have also had a difficult time. In fact, Pear Tree only looks after children who have had difficult and unpleasant times, so you are not alone. Many children who come to Pear Tree still have problems as a result of these difficult times.

The reason why you have come to Pear Tree is because the adults who are responsible for you, along with your social worker, have agreed that Pear Tree is probably the best place to help you with these problems.

Children who have come to Pear Tree will have either come directly from home, another children's home or foster care. But the first thing that you will see is that Pear Tree does not have a big sign up outside the front door and people who live in the area have no idea that it is a special house and therefore when you meet people in the community, you don't need to be worried about whether or not they know you are being looked after away from home.

Children who come to Pear Tree have all come for a long time. We don't have children who stay for short periods of time and therefore, there are not lots of different children at different times. Children come because it has been agreed, as we said earlier, that this probably is the best place for them to be. Usually, the shortest time a child would stay would be at least a year, and often much longer. Sometimes children come to us at a very young age, and then move onto foster homes, if it's decided that it would be the best thing to do. Some children come to us and stay for the rest of their childhood, leaving us when they feel they have grown up enough to live on their own, usually when they are about 17 and a half or 18 years of age.

For all children at Pear Tree, it is hoped that the home you live in will become exactly that "your home", and you will view the people who are caring for you as kind people who have become part of your other family and who you will hopefully have relationships with for a very long time.

It is our hope that when you come to leave Pear Tree, after however long, that you will look back on the time that you have spent with us as a most positive and rewarding part of your childhood. It won't be easy, there will be times where you will find things very difficult, but hopefully by coming to Pear Tree, it's the turning point from where things will now, hopefully, only get better.

The Pear Tree Plan

Make the rest of your life, the best of your life.

Environment

You feel more than you realise

- A nice house, because you deserve the chance to live somewhere good.
- Well decorated, good furniture, that you will be part of looking after.
- It is a good place to be. Good people with skills and experience and lots of things in their life who want to help to look after you.
- As the other children that have been there a long time have done well, you can see how it benefits them and you can share in their success.



Values

When you are here, we want to help you improve, to meet your full potential. This won't be easy and it may take time but we will get there. The first thing you will notice is:

'Rules' that everyone sticks to. They will include things like bedtime, what you can and can't do, and some rules will be based on your problems. Things that you used to do that are bad for you and others.

'Expectations'. We will expect every young person to a) get better, b) be well behaved (if they aren't, there are consequences to their actions), c) to contribute towards their community (their community within their home, the wider Pear Tree community and maybe even the community outside of Pear Tree, independently). This might be as simple as helping to keep your home and garden tidy – it might mean a particular job on the farms, it might mean a part-time job away from Pear Tree or joining a Club like St. John's Ambulance and learning how good it feels to help others.

'Being healthy, clean and tidy'. We make sure all your health needs are met – that you have a regular bath, shower, brush your hair and teeth; that you have smart clothes which you look after, because that can change the way that you feel about yourself. It's called your "self-esteem" and the things that are mentioned above are all about improving your self-esteem. This helps you feel more confident and when you feel confident you can achieve more.

We also make sure you have a healthy diet. This might mean eating things you didn't before you came to us as well as trying new foods, but eating healthy foods helps you stay healthy and again, this makes you feel good.

'Improving your social skills'. Social skills are one of the most important skills to learn – if you have poor social skills, people won't respect you, you will find it hard to get a job and difficult to maintain a relationship with people you might care about. If you have good social skills, the things mentioned above are much easier. Good social skills are things like a) good table manners, so you don't put anyone off their food, but this also means you can go into a good restaurant, because people looking after you will be happy to take you, b) how to greet people correctly and politely, c) how to make others feel relaxed in your company, d) how to hold a polite conversation with either a stranger or a young person or an adult, e) showing that you care about others – this can be in a small way by asking someone else if they would like a drink, offering to do the washing-up, to more specific, significant things. The main thing is that this becomes part of life and 'just the way you are'.

Activities

At Pear Tree we have lots of resources like the caravan, holiday cottages and the farms at Toy Top and The Manor, as well as some experienced people who can teach you new skills, whether it's fell walking or horse riding, mountain biking or swimming. If you can, we would like you to be really good at something and if you show hidden talents, we will support you all the way.

These activities can be divided into three areas,

- a) activities at home,
- b) activities at school and
- c) activities independently.

a) Activities at home. These will be, activities that you undertake in the course of time when you are either at home or in the care of the people that look after you whilst at home. They will include some of the things mentioned above but will also include things like arts and crafts, games, and trips to the recreation centre. Also, things to help you later on in life like cooking, preparing a meal, ironing to keep your clothes tidy, looking after your room, etc. There are also things to do that are for pleasure, like going to the cinema, out for a meal, etc.

b) Activities at school. If you go to Pear Tree School, then many of them will be things mentioned earlier plus 'school work'. To help us reach those hidden gems of potential and so you can use them in the future, you need to have a good basic education. Subjects like Maths and English, etc., need to be done as well as other school subjects. This might help you go to mainstream school or it may help you get into college – it's all about preparing for the future. Some of the things that we do at Pear Tree School are about showing you the wider world as well as things that you might not have known about or experienced. They are also about keeping you active and healthy, once again, all part of feeling good.

c) Activities independently. At some point in time you might like to do something independent of the people looking after you at Pear Tree – this could be going to a different riding school or a drama club or St. John's Ambulance or Cadets, etc. When the time is right for you, we will encourage and support you all the way. This is a good way of making new friends and meeting new people, what your carers call "developing a social network".





Help with your problems

At some point in time you might decide that you want “help” with something that worries you. It might be help to understand past events; it might be help to change part of your behaviour or understand your behaviour. Much of this we will be doing for you all the time whilst you are here and sometimes you won't even realise. Some times, however, it is helpful to talk to other people who don't look after you. When this time comes, we will help you as much as we can, to prepare you for this and support you during your sessions.

Preparation for independence

This area involves help in two parts,

- a) practical skills to help you be able to look after yourself; cook a meal, do your own laundry, pay bills, open bank accounts – all of the practical things that people do as part of looking after themselves, and
- b) emotional support, to help you to be ready to move on, which is all part of growing-up.

The preparation for independence is also about growing-up and making the most of your time, independent of Carers. It's about being what we call 'emotionally ready' for living on your own or with others in a group, without older people there all of the time.

We hope that we start to prepare you for this early on in your time with us, so when you are ready, you will want to move on and make use of your potential to contribute to society and be rewarded for doing so, like getting a good job, and enjoy building your whole new life which we hope, is going to be a whole lot better now because of the time you have spent at Pear Tree.

Clothing

Buying clothes is also another important thing to think about. Each young person has a clothing allowance which is to buy all of their clothes. Bearing in mind that you are going to be doing lots of other activities, things like going to the theatre, cinema, out for meals etc, you are going to need to have some good clothes to keep smart as well as rough clothes for when you're doing other activities. Special items like walking boots are not included in the clothing allowance and therefore bought separately.

You have got to remember that when you go out, say for example for a meal, you reflect not just yourself but the people who are looking after you, so they are going to want to go out with people who are dressed smartly for the occasion. Also, teaching you what type of clothes to wear and when to be properly equipped for different activities, is all part of your new life.

To begin with, you will need to be fully involved in the activities that are going on in the home. For quite some time, there will always be someone with you to make sure you are alright, but as time goes by, we will be looking to try to get you into other activities outside of Pear Tree, where you can begin to build up your own life that has very little to do with us. Young people have been very successful in getting involved in things like art group, drama group, army and navy cadets, horse riding, various sports, cubs, scouts, girl guides etc, but these are things that we need to work towards and don't happen straight away. They only happen when everyone agrees that it is the right time for things to happen.



Safeguarding

What is this?

Pear Tree has a Safeguarding Policy for staff and young people. This 'child friendly' policy is designed for young people and this should be read as a guide to the main policy.

What is it for?

To help you decide what could be a 'problem' and where to get help and support.

Bullying

Bullying can include:-

Physical threats or harm

Name Calling

Intimidation

If you ever feel this could be happening to you, you 'must' tell a member of your care team straight away.

Saying funny things to you.

Has someone said something to you or have you heard something that you do not like or upsets you?

If you ever feel this could be happening to you, you 'must' tell a member of your care team straight away.

Trying to give you tablets, cigarettes, vapes, drugs or alcohol.

Has someone asked you if you want a tablet or to smoke a cigarette, or have a drink of something and you do not know what it is? Do not eat, drink or smoke what they are giving you.

If you ever feel this could be happening to you, you 'must' tell a member of your care team straight away.

Hitting, punching, smacking or touching you.

Has someone hit, punched or smacked you or hurt you in anyway or touched you on a part of your body you do not like?

If you ever feel this could be happening to you, you 'must' tell a member of your care team straight away.

How does Pear Tree protect you?

There are lots of different ways, but one of the main ways is making sure the staff here at Pear Tree know how to keep you safe and also make sure you have someone to talk to if you need to.

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Need to talk to someone?

What are the next steps?

Sometimes a member of the care staff will need to check things with a special member of staff called a 'Designated Safeguarding Officer' and then if they can deal with the issue themselves, they will. There are times though when they may need to contact some other agencies for support.

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Tree is not
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Internet Safety

Be Smart

S - Stay Safe

M - Don't Meet Up

A - Accepting Files

R – Reliable?

T - Tell Someone

S

Keep safe by being careful not to give out personal information online. Personal information includes your email address, phone number and password.

M

Meeting someone you have only been in touch with online can be dangerous.

A

Accepting emails, messages, or opening files, pictures or texts from people you don't know or trust can lead to problems – they may contain viruses or nasty messages!

R

Someone online might lie about who they are and information on the internet may not be true. Always check information with other websites, books or someone who knows.

T

Tell a trusted adult if someone or something makes you feel uncomfortable or worried.

And remember:

Your online presence is an extension of you. Don't be a fraud or a follower.

There are frauds... everywhere.

Not everything that you see is what it seems, and not everyone that you're connect with has

your best interest at heart. Quality over quantity.

Words do hurt.

Think twice. Taste your words before you feed them to someone else.

Pictures tell more than 140 characters.

Be mindful in what you post and intentional about the message that you want to send.

You can influence how someone thinks.

So use it for good as you become great, and be an inspiration for others to realise the same.

Someone is always watching you.

A friend. A hater. A potential employer or opportunity creator.

The internet and everything that you post on it is a time capsule.

When you post, don't just think about the now, deeply consider your future.

You're more valuable than a "like".

Know who you are.

Consider this: some of the most powerful people in the world either don't have a social media account, or don't personally run their accounts.

You can influence how someone thinks.

So use it for good as you become great, and be an inspiration for others to realise the same.

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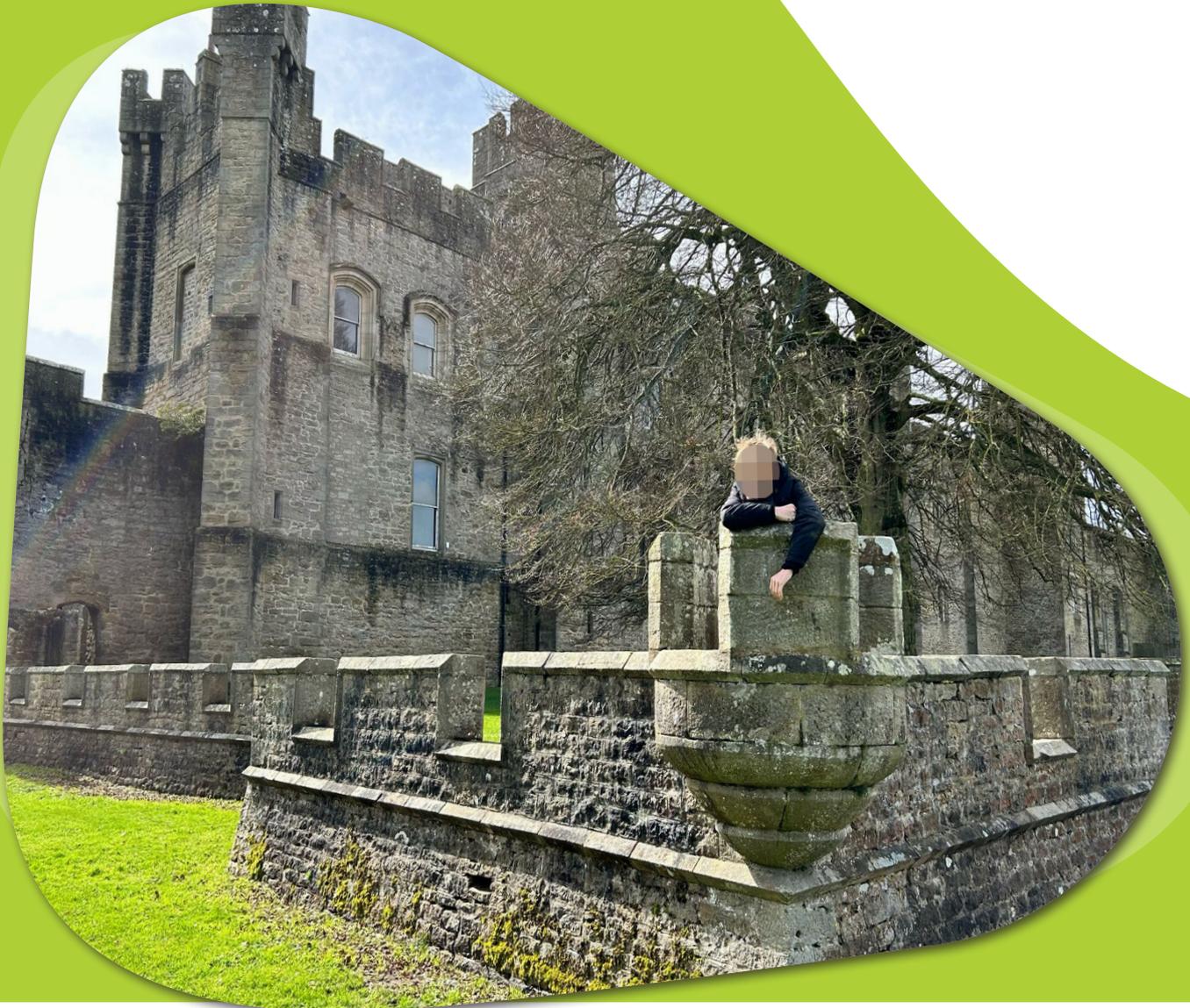
Educational Visits

We would also like to take you to interesting places i.e castles, museums etc.

You name it, if we don't already do it, we will try, if we can. Lots of these things are quite educational and are in fact part of your 'learning programme'.

To begin with, depending on your circumstances, you will be receiving help from our own teachers in our own school. It may be that this is only temporary and eventually you will be going back to a mainstream school, or it may be that because of your needs, these will be your teachers right the way through your school life.

We know that most young people who come to Pear Tree don't like anything to do with school and that is why we try to be as laid back and as relaxed as possible and include all of these other activities that we have been talking about, as part of your school timetable. There are not many people who can go horse riding and mountain climbing whilst they are at school, but at Pear Tree you can, and it's all part of learning and they are all skills that you'll use in later life.



Young people who come to Pear Tree

As we said at the beginning, all of the young people that come to Pear Tree have got very similar problems to your own. We only take young people if we think we can help them and if we think that the young person themselves want to be helped and move forward. The ages of the young people who come to Pear Tree are between 8 to 18.

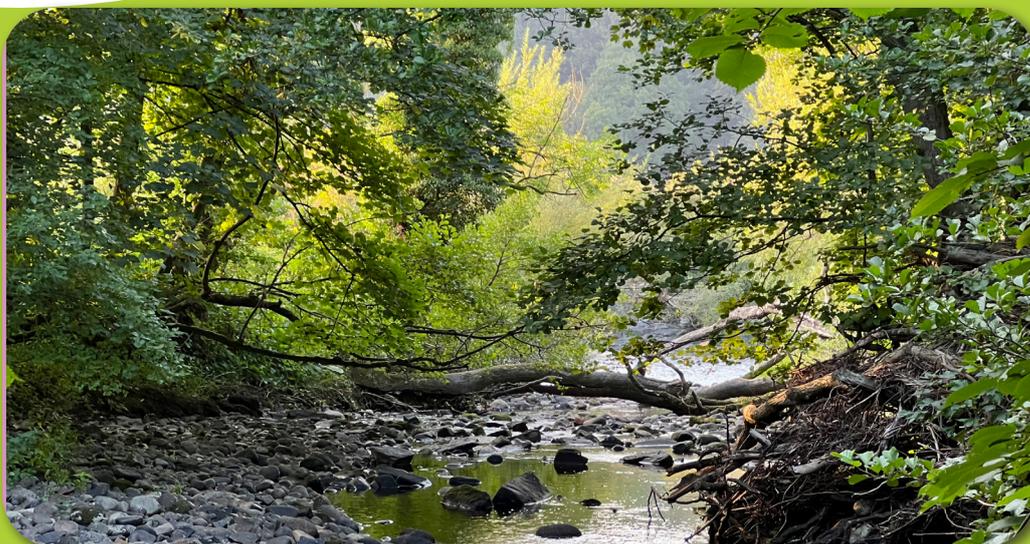
We don't take young people who smoke or vape, unless they agree that they want to give up, and we don't take young people who will always run away, because there is no point in being here if you are not here to receive the help that we want to be able to give you.

Outcomes

It is hoped after a period of time you will begin to become more settled and relaxed and enjoy your new way of life, becoming confident at the new skills you have learned.

It is the hope of all of the grown-ups here at Pear Tree that you will soon be living as normal a life as possible, going to school or college and enjoying time with friends from other places that you may have joined, such as outside clubs etc.

We recognise that you have potential. It is our hope that we will help you reach your potential in every way.



Questions & Answers

What things can I have in my room?

We hope that your room will become yours and you will look on it as your home. Therefore we would hope that you could have anything in your bedroom that any young person would be able to have, such as a TV, computer, etc. The things that you have in your room have got to be reasonable. We don't like young people to have items that can affect other young people outside of the bedroom, like mobile disco's or anything that may affect other people's quality of life, but other than that, it would probably be alright. No, you can't paint it black!

Can I watch any movie I want to?

Yes, providing it is what we call 'age appropriate'. All movies have a guidance system, U, PG, 12, 15 and 18. If you fall into an appropriate category, you can watch a movie. An example of this, is if you wanted to watch a movie that was only suitable for the ages of 15 onwards, but you are only 14 and a half, you don't fall within the age category and so you can't watch that particular movie until you become 15 years old. This is one rule that is not negotiable. The same applies to computer games.

We believe it is important that young people learn to respect advice, particularly when that advice may be important. We also want young people to have the chance to be young and enjoy the age you are at without trying to be older than you are, because by doing so, you miss out on so much of your childhood, so much that is good and fun.

Can I use the telephone whenever I want to?

Yes, again providing it is reasonable and also providing your social worker or a Court ruling hasn't said that your telephone calls need to be monitored or restricted to certain people. Sometimes this happens, and sometimes it can get a bit complicated, but by and large the phone is there and it's there to be used to phone anyone you want to, unless there is a good reason why a grown-up has said that they don't think that it is a good idea.

Can I have a mobile phone?

Yes, when you are 11 years old. Unless there is a reason why you can't, for your safety or the safety of the other young people in the home.

What happens if I run away?

Whenever a young person runs away from Pear Tree, we have what we call a procedure we have to follow. This means that it is our responsibility to let a lot of people know. In every case the police are notified and so is your social worker, no matter what time of the day or night. Young people who run away are always brought back.

Running away never solves any problems, it only makes matters worse. If there are reasons why you want to run away, it is always much better to talk about them than just to go ahead and leave.

Young people run away for lots of different reasons, either they run from something, in which case we will do anything we can to try and make sure it's put right, or they run to something, which is usually always beyond our control and we can't do anything about, without talking to other people. It is often very difficult to change things outside of Pear Tree.

The other thing that is important to think about is, as we have said earlier, we don't take in young people who keep running away. There is no point in you being here if you are not going to stay, and Pear Tree always has a waiting list. Therefore, if you take up a place, there are other children who would like to come, but can't and if you keep running away during these times, then we might as well be getting on looking after other children instead - children who would want to stay.

Can I see my records?

As you know, lots of things that happen at Pear Tree need to be written down to record them. Also, when young people are admitted, it is important that the grown-ups who are going to be looking after you, get to learn as much as they can about the things that have happened in the past, and we keep these in your records.

If you would like to see your records, you can, but what you must remember, is there can be information within your records that could be upsetting and therefore it's important that upon getting your file, a grown up sits with you and helps go over some things, to answer any questions you may have and to give support through what can be a difficult time, re-living past experiences.

It is important that you recognise the fact that this time may need to be arranged in advance and is not something that can often be done straight away. It is also important to remember that you, and you only, can see information that is kept on you. You will not be allowed to see information that is kept on other people.

Can I smoke or vape?

As you will have read earlier, Pear Tree operates a no smoking policy. This is not just for the children, but grown ups too. Nobody is allowed to smoke or vape whilst they are at Pear Tree, not just in the homes, but outside as well. This is how we keep the house as nice as we can. This is mainly because we can't be trying to teach you about looking after your body if we are allowing you to damage it in a way that smoking and vaping does. As you would have heard us say, we don't take young people who smoke or vape unless they are prepared to give up and have demonstrated that they do want to. Often young people smoke or vape because their friends do, but here, none of the other children smoke or vape, so you won't feel different.

What happens if I want to make a complaint?

The people who run Pear Tree always want young people to be as happy as possible. There are times when things go wrong and it can make you feel unhappy. At times such as these, you can always make a complaint and must feel able to do so. We have a separate document which we call our 'complaint's procedure'. You'll be given one of these. You can read through it and learn how it works.

How often will I get to see my family, friends or visit home?

When young people first come to Pear Tree, everyone gets to sit down and talk to each other about what's going to happen. This includes the grown-ups who are currently looking after you, your social worker and the people from Pear Tree. During this time we will sort out what we call 'visiting arrangements'. By this, I mean I am sure that plenty of people will have spoken to you about what they would like you to do, but more importantly, about what you would like to do. Once these arrangements are made, it's important to stick to them, unless of course there is good reason not to. These reasons would need to be discussed with people before any alterations could be made. It is also important to remember that contact arrangements are for you and you alone. If at any point you decide you don't want to see anyone, you don't have to, just simply let us know and we'll make sure you don't have to go.

Will I be expected to attend my review meetings?

It is hoped that you will want to. Young people at Pear Tree are very fortunate to be here in the first place, and it is usually the social worker we need to thank for this. Therefore, reviews give us the opportunity to demonstrate how much work we have done and young people are quite often proud and show off all they have achieved.

What will happen if I do something wrong?

Whilst you are staying with Pear Tree, it is our job to be your substitute parents for the time you are with us. Therefore, when young people do something wrong, it is important that it is addressed and not just left, otherwise how are you to learn that you are not to do that again? Every place has rules, just like schools and colleges.

Pear Tree has to have rules and expectations also. We have tried to talk about some of these overleaf. If you do something deliberately wrong, you will get into trouble. Nobody ever gets smacked or hit because that is simply not allowed, it's not acceptable for anyone, grown-ups or children.

As we said earlier, while you are living here, we are your substitute parents for the time being. Sometimes young people do things wrong, where it places them and other young people in great risk, or it looks as though damage to a property is going to occur. During this time the adult looking after you can get hold of you if they need to stop you from doing this. This is not a punishment, but trying to prevent something very serious from happening which could involve injury to yourself or others.

Can I leave my bedroom whenever I want, when everyone's asleep?

Of course you can, you may need to go to the toilet or seek some help from whoever is looking after you. As we have said many times, young people who come to Pear Tree have all got similar problems.

It is important however, to remember the rule about not going into each other's bedrooms and therefore, on the landing, you may find a sensor that makes a ringing sound when people move about.

The sensor is not to stop people moving about, it's to let the adult know that you have got up. It's there to make you feel safe at night, knowing that no-one can go into your room without an adult knowing and likewise, no-one can accuse you of going into their room without the adult knowing.

What time will my bedtime be?

Underneath we have a bedtime chart, which shows different bedtimes for different ages. It is important to remember that you can often negotiate extra time past your bedtime, providing you have been good and this is what we stop if you haven't.

8 - 9 years: 8.00 for 8.15pm

10 - 11 years: 9.00pm

12 - 13 years: 9.30pm

14 - 15 years: 10.00pm

16+ years: 10.30pm

How much pocket money will I get?

8 -15 years: £7.00

16 years: £9.00

17+ years: £11.00

Can I spend my pocket money on anything I want to?

We would often like you to learn how to spend your pocket money sensibly. It is, after all, your money, and it is hoped that you would want to buy something useful with it. We try to guide young people not to spend all of their money on sweets and to save, as we often go away on special trips and this is when you would wish you had the money to be able to spend. That is just like any good parent would do.

We don't want you spending money on items we think have what we call a 'negative effect' on you. Say for example, you wanted to buy a vape, which is harmful, this would be stopped. These are the kind of things we try to guide you with.

What happens if there is a fire?

Like everywhere else, we have a fire procedure. This will be rehearsed with you many times during the time you are with us. It is important to listen to the adults looking after you and do exactly as they say. It is also important to remember not to try to take anything out of the building with you.

All of the homes are fitted with smoke alarms that will go off and make an alarm noise if there is a fire, and if you hear this, don't be afraid, just do exactly as you have been shown and as the adults instruct you to do.

All of our homes are fitted with fire doors which are designed to stop a fire spreading. It is important not to damage these doors as that can allow the fire to spread. Any damage to the things that keep us safe is taken very seriously and may result in you being asked to leave.

Remember

If you wish to make a complaint, to make this clear to an adult looking after you.

If you are able to, you might be asked to write a report about it, to help us understand what it is all about. This is on a special form.

If you think that this may be too difficult for you to do, one of your carers can help you with it.

If your social worker is not available for you or you do not wish to talk to a Pear Tree carer you can contact:

Ofsted

Piccadilly Gate

Store Street

Manchester

M1 2WD

Tel: 0300 123 1231 (These helplines are available from 8.00am to 6.45pm, Monday to Friday)

Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Advocacies

- David Bartlett. Tel: 07801 595 803
- Gary Ramsbottom, Designated Safeguarding Lead.
gary.ramsbottom@peartreeprojects.co.uk Tel: 01325 511857
- Child Line – Free confidential advice if you need to talk to someone.
Tel: 0800 11 11 www.childline.org.uk
- Become - Become, the charity for children in care and young care leavers – Tel: 020 7251 3117 <http://www.becomecharity.org.uk/>
- Kidscape - free confidential advice for you on lots of problems like bullying and abuse. <https://www.kidscape.org.uk/>
- Coramvoice - free advice for any child in care that needs support or wants to make a complaint. Tel: 0808 8005 792 www.coramvoice.org.uk
- Drink Aware. Tel: 0300 123 1110 www.drinkaware.co.uk
- Frank - Drugs advice. Tel: 0300 123 6600 www.talktofrank.com
- Don't suffer in silence - government web site with advice if you are being bullied. Tel: 0845 22 55 787 or 0800 323 0169 www.national-bullyinghelpline.co.uk
- Sane – help for anyone with mental health problems. Tel: 0300 304 7000 <https://www.sane.org.uk/>
- Care leavers association. Tel: 0161 826 0214 <http://www.careleavers.com/>
- National Careers Service – questions or queries about jobs, careers, learning or training. <https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/>
- Lawstuff- Free legal advice. Tel: 0300 3305480 <http://lawstuff.org.uk>
- Children's Legal Centre www.childrenslegalcentre.com
- National Youth Advocacy Service -<https://www.nyas.net/> Tel: 0808 808 1001
- Think u Know – www.thinkuknow.co.uk Online safety advice.
- Stonewall - LGBT information. www.stonewall.org.uk
- CEOP - Are you worried about online sexual abuse or the way someone has been communicating with you online? - www.ceop.police.uk
- Children's commissioner, Dame Rachel Desouza <https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/> Tel 0800 528 0731

Useful Health Information

Advice and information about sex and sexual health – www.brook.org.uk

Sexual Health advice including Contraception information and advice including details for GUM clinics for County Durham and Darlington – www.cddft.nhs.uk

Healthy eating & eating disorders – www.nhs.uk

Online safety for Children – <https://mysafetynet.org.uk/>

Mental health information – www.youngminds.org.uk

Drug and Alcohol advice – www.talktofrank.com

Oral Health – www.dentalhealth.org

Healthy relationships – <https://www.ceopeducation.co.uk/professionals/guidance/disrespect-nobody/>

Smoking advice – <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/quit-smoking/nhs-stop-smoking-services-help-you-quit/>

Self-Harm – www.mind.org.uk

Mental Health information for young people – www.rethink.org

Pear Tree Projects Ltd
Phone: 01388 776799
E-mail: info@peartreeprojects.co.uk

www.peartreeprojects.co.uk