

## **FordHaven – Hub Rules and Guidelines**

FordHaven provides a **neutral meeting place** where children of separated families can enjoy time with siblings and sometimes other family members, in a **comfortable and safe environment**.

The centre is available to children and family members on the following terms, which are intended to ensure that sessions are a **safe and positive experience**.

In using FordHaven you understand that:

- **Childrens carers and family members** should be **on time** at the beginning and end of each session to avoid upsetting the children and to help them make the most of each session, **complying with any order that may be in place**. If staggered times of arrival/departure are agreed, they must be adhered to.
- If anyone is **unable to attend**, they should contact FordHaven as soon as possible and if appropriate, also inform all other parties e.g. solicitor and/or social worker.
- FordHaven provides **Supported** sessions as distinct from **Supervised**. By distinction, *supported sessions* are suitable where no potential significant risk exists to the children, other users of FordHaven or staff/volunteers. Staff and volunteers are available for assistance, not supervision.
- **No individual or close observation**, monitoring or evaluation of sessions or conversations takes place, other than to ensure that the environment is safe and suitable for the children. If **Supervision of sessions** is required then a request can be made to FordHaven prior to the booking of a session.
- **The welfare of the children is paramount** and as a result there may be times when FordHaven Team Members deems that the session cannot take place if a child is too upset, even if a court order permitting this session exists.
- **FordHaven under no circumstances permits verbal or audio recordings** to be made of staff or service users in line with our use of media policy. If recordings are made, this will result in immediate suspension from the use of FordHaven.
- If you change contact details i.e. address, telephone number, please ensure that we are kept fully informed. This includes informing the centre in a timely fashion **of any changes to family time agreements** following court reviews.
- It is explained to all users that sessions with FordHaven are **confidential** unless issues arise relating to **child protection** or criminal law. In such instances, by law this cannot remain confidential.

- **FordHaven staff and volunteers are not** there to offer any advice regarding legal, financial, child care or counselling matters, but we can **signpost** where appropriate.
- If anyone arrives for a session at the Centre under the influence of alcohol or drugs they will be asked to leave and that session cannot continue. **NO alcohol or drugs** are permitted on the premises.
- Arrangements for bringing the children to and from the centre are the responsibility of the carer they live with. **Under no circumstances will FordHaven accept unaccompanied children at the beginning and end of sessions.**
- While at the centre **the children will be under the supervision and control of FordHaven Team Members at all times** to ensure their safety.
- FordHaven is a **non-smoking environment**.
- **FordHaven does not play a role in the court process.**
  - FordHaven is independent of the Court system. As such, FordHaven is not obliged to accept referrals, whether ordered or not, where such referrals do not meet the regulations of the centre, either by unwillingness of potential users to comply with the rules of the centre, or where users fail to meet our risk assessment threshold for using FordHaven
  - Use of FordHaven for court purposes depends on **successful completion of the referral process and pre session assessment** as well as **compliance with the rules** and operating guidelines of the centre, of which the centre Manager will be the sole judge.
- **FordHaven does not provide written reports** other than to provide details of dates and times of attendance. Nor will the centre provide any emails / texts, or other correspondences for submission to the court or to any other person, except in relation to child protection issues or criminal law matters which arise during sessions. In this instance the parties involved will be fully informed of the centres intention to submit a written report.
- FordHaven can, if requested, report **dates and times** of attendance & who attended for a session. A period of **7 days' notice** is required for a dates and times report.
- If a Children's Guardian is allocated to a family by the court, the CG may at times contact the centre for an update to clarify if there have been any issues of concern. In such cases the Co-ordinator will communicate this update verbally. If issues are present during sessions, a CG or other Court-appointed Social Worker can carry out an observed session in the Centre and report back to the court. On this occasion **the centre will be used as a hosting venue only and will play no part in the CG's or other Social Worker's assessment.**

- **FordHaven operates a zero-tolerance policy** with regards to inappropriate behaviour / language. Persons using the Centre are asked not to cause any disturbance or upset to the children or others using the centre. This includes the use of aggressive / intimidating behaviours or inappropriate language. If centre users behave in a way considered by the Centre Manager to be unacceptable, they may be asked to leave and their use of the Centre will be reviewed. **Use of FordHaven may be suspended or revoked, at the Managers discretion.**

Approved by: Roxana Ford - Director  
Last reviewed: March 2024  
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