

Welcome



to

Merrywood

Where is Merrywood?

Merrywood is a BIG house in a *little* Norfolk village and it's surrounded by trees, fields and woodland walks. It's pretty quiet here but also not far away from the busy city of Norwich and lots of beautiful sandy beaches.



Merrywood House is home
to 8 boys and girls



We are here!

Why come to Merrywood?

SOMETIMES when young people have been through sad and difficult times, they need a place to stay where they can be helped to make sense of what has happened.

All the young people living at Merrywood have experienced some kind of troubles in their lives and by sharing feelings and experiences, we can all learn from each other.

It may take a little time to feel at home but most of our young people settle in really quickly! And however long you stay with us, we will care for you and keep you safe.

The Adults

MERRYWOOD adults are really good at helping young people!

They will work together to support you and they have lots of training so that they can do this well. The way we care for you here is quite different to other children homes or foster placements. We call Merrywood a therapeutic community. It's a special place and you will be a really important part of it!

One of the adults will be your **Key Worker**. This will be somebody who will be GREAT at guiding you through your time at Merrywood.

Your key worker will really get to know you so that they can help you make your life at Merrywood the best it can be. They'll learn about where you come from, what makes you happy, what worries you, what you're good at and what you need extra help with, what you like to eat and what you can't stand!

They will speak for you when you don't want to, be a link to your family (if that's OK) and, most importantly ... they will listen to you.

The things you can do

Inside and outside, there is loads for you to do at Merrywood. Sometimes you might choose to be alone, sometimes with other young people, and the adults will enjoy spending time with you too.



STUFF YOU CAN DO INSIDE



- Playing computer games
- Watching TV - we have 2 big televisions - or DVD's
- Playing board games
- Cooking and baking
- Drawing, colouring, painting
- Sewing, knitting, crafting
- Reading
- Listening to music ...
- ... playing music - we have a piano!

STUFF YOU CAN DO OUTSIDE



- Football
- Trampoline
- Swings
- Biking

WE have created a special corner of the garden where, with help from an adult, you can plant seeds and bulbs in your own plot and watch them grow into fruit and vegetables!



The things you can do

IT'S important for everyone to have fresh air and exercise. At Merrywood we like to plan lots of fun activities; like kayaking and camping or hill-walking and beach trips in the summer. Sometimes these are day trips and sometimes we'll spend a night or more away from Merrywood.

HOLIDAYS

Every year, we take all our young people away for a week on holiday together, somewhere in the UK. We put lots of thought into the kinds of holiday activities we know you will enjoy. The adults join in too and we have loads of fun, making lasting memories for all. Some of these happy times are captured in framed photos around the house—you'll see them when you come to visit Merrywood.



TRIPS OUT

You'll have lots of opportunities to go out and about. Some of the young people enjoy walks and bike rides, others like to go shopping, bowling or to the cinema.

You might go out with an adult or join up with some of the other young people for a group trip to the swimming pool or to the seaside ... and the arcades!

SPORTS & HOBBIES

If you're sporty, artistic, creative or musical, you might want to join a club: we'll help you to find the right one.

Football?
Basketball?
Swimming?
Gymnastics?
Rock-climbing?
Horse riding?



Health and Well-being

YOUR health and happiness will be a top priority for us while you are at Merrywood! We'll make sure you have regular appointments with the dentist and optician and one of the adults will always go with you.

Also, you'll have a general health check every year with one of the nurses from the Looked After Children team. This is how they make sure that we are helping you to stay healthy!

If ever you feel unwell and need to see a doctor, we will arrange this as quickly as we can. There are male doctors and female doctors at our local practice.

If you should ever want to talk to someone outside Merrywood about your worries and struggles, we can find the right person for you. Some of our young people see other health professionals or therapists.

As part of keeping healthy, we'll encourage you to enjoy regular exercise; walking, cycling, trampolining and kayaking are some of our favourite activities but we are happy to look into new things too!

If you want an adult to help you prepare for your bath or shower, that's fine. Sometimes, as young people get older, they like to do this for themselves, and that's fine too!



You'll have a bath or shower at least once a day. A good morning routine can help set you up for your day and it's really important to be smelling fresh if you're going to school!

You'll have your own wash things; soap, shower gel, shampoo, towels and toothpaste.

Health & Well-being

HEALTHY eating is important but we should all be able to enjoy our meals too, so we'll ask you what foods you like and don't like. That way, there'll always be something on the menu that you enjoy.

We include plenty of fresh fruit, vegetables and salad in our meals, even when the main dish is pizza!



for the main meal of the day we all sit and eat together.

Often, at the weekend, we have a takeaway! There are also theme evenings when we can taste foods from other countries.



If you go to school, you can choose to have a hot lunch there or take a pack-up which the adults will prepare for you. If you're at Merrywood during the day, lunch could be a sandwich, a wrap, some salad, a jacket potato or homemade soup, for example. And sometimes, in the summer, we have barbecues or head to the coast for fish and chips!

Respecting each other

We recognise that everyone at Merrywood is an individual. We come from many different places and different backgrounds, with different interests, feelings and beliefs.

Respecting each other's differences is essential for creating a safe environment where all our young people can be supported and can flourish. This diversity also gives us a great opportunity to build a vibrant community where we can all, adults and children, begin to understand each other and learn more about the big, wide world.



Everyone should feel safe and comfortable where they live and at school. Adults are always around when you are with other young people at Merrywood but if you ever feel you are being bullied or treated unkindly by anyone, here or at school, the adults will listen and try to help you.



Diversity is so important to us at Merrywood that we have dedicated two walls of our lounge to a colourful celebration of our young people's individuality!

Every young person arriving at Merrywood is encouraged to say what they would like added to this painting—something that they think represents them—and we have found a brilliant local artist who cleverly brings their designs to life.



MERRYWOOD adults help the young people to be accepting of each other's differences. They will encourage you to explore your beliefs, views, values and attitudes. You will have opportunities to share your feelings, and the adults will also support you if sometimes your views are not shared by others.

We will welcome your individuality and if you have any specific cultural or religious needs that we cannot meet ourselves, we will make sure that we find the right help for you.

Talking things through

Talking and thinking about things together is important to us at Merrywood. We have lots of different rooms and spaces where this can happen.

We always try to understand each other's feelings. Adults might do this by having a chat with a young person while playing a game. At other times, they might have a quiet conversation in the garden, or in the outdoor cabin that we call 'The Hut'.

There's a meeting for adults and children most days and on a Monday we

have our **Community Meeting** when **all** the adults and **all** the young people get together in the lounge to share news, thoughts and feelings



about how things are going for everyone. Everyone has the chance to talk about how they are and to discuss things that have happened that week, good or not so good. If you're worried about saying something in the meeting, you can ask an adult to speak for you. Everyone has the right to be listened to.

Managing difficult feelings

WE understand that feelings can sometimes be difficult to manage. If the adults are ever worried that you will hurt yourself or someone else, or if they think you are going to cause serious damage to something, they will hold (or 'restrain') you.

They will only hold you until you are calm and until it is safe to let you go. They will always do this in a caring way and if you are ever held, you will have the chance to talk about this afterwards.

The
Hut



PUTTING THINGS RIGHT

If you break or damage something on purpose you may be asked to put some of your pocket money towards replacing or repairing the item. You will also be asked to help mend broken items and clear up any mess.

Sometimes, you might miss out on a trip, but if this happens, the adults will still care for you. What's important is that you think about and understand how your actions have affected others so that you can do something differently next time.

Your own space

Your bedroom is your personal space. It's a place where you can keep your things and somewhere you can go when you need quiet time. We'll help you choose how you would like it to be decorated - pick a colour/theme, display pictures or photos ... and make it yours!



GETTING A GOOD SLEEP



THE time you go to bed will depend on your age and also on how much sleep you need. Sometimes you might stay up late; like if you've been out somewhere or if it's a special occasion. Sometimes you may want to go to bed earlier than usual; like when you feel unwell or you are just tired.

We understand that bedtime can be difficult. If you would like an adult to spend time chatting with you in your room, that's fine. We call this "settling". Usually, settling lasts about 15 minutes. If you would prefer to be alone, listening quietly to your music or reading, that's OK too! There'll be staff on duty overnight in case you need anything.

PRIVACY & FEELING SAFE

NOBODY will come into your room without your permission; the adults will always knock and ask you first, unless they are worried about your safety. They will need to be in your room to clean and tidy it but you'll know when this is going to happen. Young people do not enter each other's rooms without permission and an adult will always be present.

Your wishes and feelings

WE care about your wishes and feelings. All the decisions we make at Merrywood are in the best interests of the young people.

If you would like to change something at Merrywood, you can speak to any of the adults about this. Then, all the adults will discuss your idea or request and make a decision that they will explain to you. If you don't agree with the decision, or if you're unhappy with any other aspect of your life at Merrywood, there are other ways you can make your feelings known. You will be listened to.

HAVING YOUR VOICE HEARD



you can speak to a Team Leader, to an Assistant Director, to Ryan (Deputy Director) or Rachel (Director)



you can make a private phone call to your social worker or to another adult you trust.



you can have an 'Advocate' - that's an adult who is *not* your social worker, *not* part of your family and *not* connected with Merrywood. An advocate could help you to talk about the things that are important to you or they could talk *for* you. Each young person has the right to an advocate and we will arrange this for you if you ask us to.



Or, if you don't feel like talking, you can let us know how you feel by writing a note. We keep paper and envelopes in a drawer in the dining room. You can write down your thoughts and give your note to one of the adults.

Things to know ...



DEVICES & INTERNET USE

WE understand that young people like to use their devices or mobile phones to play games, listen to music or chat with friends. Our main concern is that you can do this safely. We also need to see that using your devices doesn't cause problems for you, for others or disrupt your daily routines. It's important that we find the right balance between screen time and other activities.

Some young people can manage their devices without supervision and we might agree a 'contract' with them. Others need a bit more support. Some like to do an internet safety course that is specifically for young people. We'll work out what's right for you together and keep this under review.

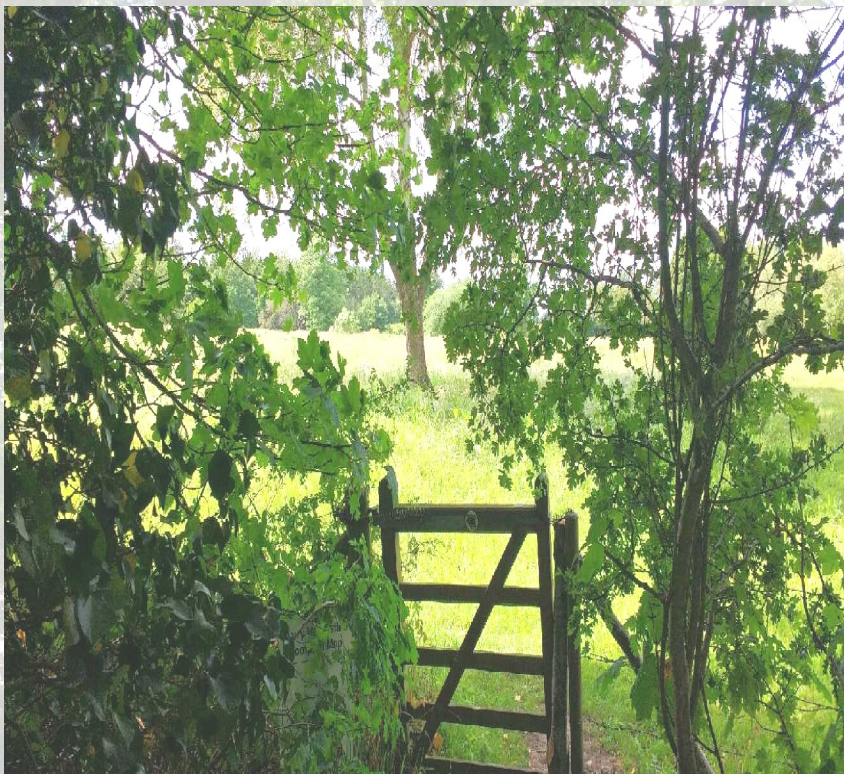
POCKET MONEY

YOU'LL get pocket money once a week. How much you get depends on your age.

Age	Amount
10	£3.00
11	£3.50
12	£4.00
13	£4.50
14	£5.00
15	£5.50
16	£6.00
17	£6.50

When you reach 16 years old, you might be able to have a personal 'allowance' depending on whether you are working or studying.

You can earn chore money too by helping with tasks around the house or outside.



MERRYWOOD

Berrys Lane, Honingham, Norfolk
NR9 5AX