



Forever Angels Baby Home **Policy on: Leaving Children**

The purpose of this policy is to set in place guidelines to govern procedure for when a child leaves Forever Angels Baby Home.

We envisage there to be 4 reasons why a child should leave our Baby Home permanently:

- 1) Death
- 2) Returning to their biological family
- 3) Being fostered or adopted by a non-related family
- 4) Being transferred to another orphanage or institution

There are different procedures to follow for each of these situations, but the Department of Social Welfare will be involved in each case.

- 1) Death

If a child unfortunately dies, we have a separate policy to explain our guidelines. Please see 'When a Child Dies' Policy.

- 2) Returning to their biological family

If a child is being returned to their biological family, Social Welfare would have instigated this and will be heavily involved. It is our ideal that the family visits their child at the Baby Home a number of times before they take their child back home in order to form a bond and relationship – although in practice this can not be forced. We would like to think that the family will stay in contact with us and inform us of their child's progress, although, again, this may not happen.

No child can be returned to their biological family unless we have received notification from the Department of Social Welfare. Some of these children have been removed from their families because they are in danger – and we can not simply return them to pleading family members without consent. Mrs. Misana is usually the Social Worker involved and will always send the family with a letter to the Baby Home to say they can take their child back home with them.

It is important that the family receive all of the child's personal belongings (i.e. toys or clothes sent from their individual sponsor) and it is also important for them to be

given some photographs of the time their child spent at Forever Angels (usually in the child's Life Book.)

The family should also be informed of any medical issues the child has encountered or any current medication they are on.

Copies of the child's important documents (birth certificate and medical card) should be scanned and a copy kept at the Baby Home, and the originals given to the family.

3) Being fostered or adopted by a non-related family

If a child is being fostered or adopted into a new family – previous communication should have taken place and all staff should be aware of this happening. In ideal situations, the new family will be in contact with Forever Angels and will receive information and photographs of their new child. We would also prefer for them to visit their new baby a number of times before they actually take the child home with them. This enables a bond to be formed and eases the distress to all concerned; although it is the responsibility of Social Welfare to initiate any adoptions and we can not enforce this.

The new family should be given any of the child's personal toys or clothes (received from the personal sponsor) and any photographs, drawings or memorabilia, including their Life Book.

It is essential that the family is informed of:

- The child's current routine – sleep patterns etc
- The child's current development – walking, talking etc
- The child's diet and any likes or dislikes. Particularly if the child is still being bottle fed – the type of formula and amount given each feed.
- Any illnesses the child has had, medication they are taking, allergies and all immunizations and dates.
- It is also important for the family to be told stories of their new baby and be given anything which will give them some background information about their new child.

Copies of the child's important documents (birth certificate and medical card) should be scanned and a copy kept at the Baby Home, and the originals given to the family.

Adoptive families often like to have more information about their child – such as Social Welfare letters, hospital discharge forms, weights and medicine given. If they request this – you can copy all documents for the family – but copies **MUST** be kept at the Baby Home.

4) Being transferred to another orphanage or institution

If a child is being transferred to another orphanage or care home - it is hoped that they will be given the opportunity to visit prior to the transfer in order to ease any worries or anxieties.

Their new home must be informed of:

- * The child's current development – walking, talking etc
- * The child's diet and any likes or dislikes. Particularly if the child is still being bottle fed – the type of formula and amount given each feed.
- * Any illnesses the child has had, any medication they are on, any allergies and all immunizations and dates.
- * Copies of the child's important documents (birth certificate and medical card) should be scanned and a copy kept at the Baby Home, and the originals given to the new home.

It is hoped that the Staff of Forever Angels will continue to keep in contact with any children who are transferred to other orphanages and who go home, and if possible, visit the child at their new home.

Moving from one home to another is a tremendous upheaval for any child and although most seem to adapt very well – it must not be forgotten that the child is the innocent party in all events and their happiness and welfare is always paramount.

No child can be removed from Forever Angels Baby Home without the knowledge of the On Site Managers and without Official Permission (in the form of a letter) from the Department of Social Welfare.

Whether we agree to the transfer or not, our opinions are not relevant (although any serious misgivings will be acknowledged) and we must ensure that the child and the new family / home are as prepared, happy and well informed as they can be and that we are very positive and excited with the child about their move.

Forever Angels Baby Home NGO September 2011 – To be reviewed in 2015