CHECKLIST ‘Communication and conflicts’

This checklist is designed to help you communicate clearly and courteously with your tenants. It will also help you to resolve any conflicts that may nevertheless arise in a fair and respectful manner.

1. Everyday communication	
☐	Set up a chat group (e.g. WhatsApp) or a notice board in the kitchen for information and minor matters (e.g. visitors, late showers, extended absences, etc.)
☐	Perhaps arrange a brief weekly or fortnightly chat (10–15 minutes) about everyday life and any issues that need discussing
☐	Check in regularly to see if there are any requests or problems, rather than only speaking up when there’s a problem
☐	Address any issues openly and promptly – don’t put them off or ‘bottle them up’. Choose a quiet time for discussions, not ‘in passing’. Be mindful of tenants’ exam periods
☐	Recognise cultural or generational differences in expectations as normal; do not judge them
☐	Review and amend the house rules together once a year (or as and when necessary)
2. When conflicts arise	
☐	Stay calm and don’t react in anger – take a moment to breathe before trying to talk things through
☐	Seek a conversation promptly, but at a suitable time (not late at night)
☐	Observe the guidelines for discussions: - Use ‘I’ messages - Do not voice criticism in front of third parties - Don’t resolve conflicts via text message if you can talk in person - Address specific behaviour, rather than making general judgements about the person - Avoid sweeping accusations (“You young people – or you old people – are all…”)
☐	Give the other person the opportunity to explain their point of view. Listen without immediately contradicting them or trying to justify yourself
☐	Work together to find a solution that is acceptable to both sides. If this is not possible, allow some time to pass and agree to try again later, when things have calmed down
☐	If no solution can be found, decide whether to involve a third party or a counselling service
☐	If (even then) no solution is found, decide whether the tenancy should be terminated or continued