



**Greenvale School
Private Fostering Policy**

Reviewed October 2023
Next Review date: October 2024

Private Fostering Policy

Introduction and Context

Most children and young people spend some time away from their home staying with relatives and friends. In cases where children/young people may stay for longer period of time special procedures may apply.

If a child or young person is under 16 (or if disabled under 18) and living with a family member or friend for longer than 28 days, this is then seen as Private Fostering. This does not have to be continuous; if a child/young person is staying with family members or friends that add up to 28 days or longer in any period of time, this may then be seen as Private Fostering.

Private Fostering is an arrangement made by the parent with the carer who has agreed to look after the child/young person on their behalf. In some circumstances they may not have agreed, or the circumstances of their living arrangements raises health, welfare and safety concerns for the child/young person.

What counts as private fostering?

The fostering arrangement is made privately between the parent and the person looking after the child, who is not the parent, does not have parental responsibility or is not a close relative.

Close relatives include:

- aunts and uncles
- step-parents
- grandparents
- siblings.

Family friends, cousins, great aunts and uncles do not count as close relatives.

Lots of different situations count as private fostering, including children or young people:

- who are sent from overseas to the UK for education or health care by their birth parents
- whose parents work or study long or antisocial hours
- who are living with a friend's family because of parental separation, divorce or arguments at home
- who are living with their partner's family.

A large range of children can be covered by these arrangements, including:

- Children (sometimes very young) where a parent is unable to care for them because of chronic ill health or where there are alcohol, drug or mental health issues. Sometimes the parent may be in prison;
- Adolescents temporarily estranged from their parents;
- Living with family friend due to family crisis.

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- Refugee and homeless children.
- Children in service families where parents are posted overseas;
- Children from overseas where parents are not resident in this country;
- Children from abroad who attend a language school or mainstream school in England, staying with host families.

Our responsibilities

Greenvale School fully recognises its responsibilities regarding Private Fostering ensuring staff are fully aware on how to identify a child/young person and the circumstances around Private Fostering. This includes a duty to report any instances to the Local Authority if it is believed the child/young person is possibly living in a Private Fostering arrangement.

This policy should be read in conjunction with “How to Identify a Privately Fostered Child” Appendix A, found at the end of this policy.

Our Policy

Under the Children Act, 1989, the Local Authority has a duty to make sure a Private Fostering arrangement that the child/young person is in provides for their needs and safeguards his/her welfare. In January 2014, Ofsted published a report called 'Private fostering: better information, better understanding'. From a safeguarding perspective, the report's findings gave much cause for concern. Many private fostering arrangements are 'hidden' and, it appears, are rarely brought to the attention of local authorities, even though there it is an offence not to inform them. The penalty for non-reporting is a maximum £5,000 fine, but it seems that convictions are extremely rare. The legislation governing private fostering is the 'Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations 2005' Greenvale School will ensure all Staff and Governors in the school are aware of this duty.

If a member of Staff or Governor becomes aware that a child/young person may be living in a Private Foster arrangement, it is the responsibility of that person to report the details to the School's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL, who will then make further enquiries to try and establish the circumstances.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead should seek advice from Children's Social Care as to whether the child/young person is in a Privately Fostered arrangement under the regulations. If this is confirmed upon taking this advice a referral will be made by the DSL to Children's' Social Care.

Essential information for making a referral includes: -

- Full names and dates of birth for the child
- Address and daytime phone numbers for the current carer including mobiles
- The child's address and phone number;
- Whereabouts of the child (and siblings);
- Child and family's ethnic origin;
- Child and family's main language;
- Actions taken and people contacted;
- Special needs of the child, including need for an accredited interpreter, accredited sign language interpreter or other language support;
- A clear indication of the family's knowledge of the referral and whether they have consented to the sharing of confidential information;
- The details of the person making the referral.

Additionally, the referrer should include:

- Address and daytime phone number of the parent/parental responsibility holder
- Address and phone numbers of any other family members
- Any other helpful information regarding the parent/parental responsibility to assist an understanding of why this child/young person is not living with them.

Greenvale School will work together with the Local Authority to help safeguard and promote the child/young person's safety and welfare.

Safeguarding Roles and Responsibilities

All Staff and Governors have responsibility for the following:

- To ask parents/carers questions about their relationship with the child/young person if this is unclear, confusing or concerning.
- To follow up any discussion with a child/young person about their living arrangement when it is unclear, confusing or concerning.
- To have robust consent/trips/outings letters which clearly define the child's relationship to the adult giving consent.

If a child or young person is living in a Private Fostering arrangement:

- To work with, monitor & report to the Local Authority ensuring the child/young person's needs, safety & welfare are being met whilst in a Private Fostering arrangement.
- To assist with advising and supporting the carer(s) to undertake their duties whilst the child/young person is living with them in a Privately Fostered arrangement.

Management of the Policy

The DSL/DDSLs will ensure they are familiar with this policy regularly updating all Staff and Governors regarding the legal requirements, and duties.

The DSL/DDSLs will endeavour to read and cascade information on Private Fostering to school staff on a regular basis.

The Head Teacher will ensure that Private Fostering awareness forms part of Staff Safeguarding Induction and is included in the Safeguarding Training within the school.

The Head Teacher will report on issues or impact on the school in relation to Private Fostering to the Governing body.

The Governing Body will oversee the policy; ensuring its implementation and reviewing its content on an annual basis in line with the LA Safeguarding Audit.

Signed by:

Head Teacher

Date:

Signed By:

Chair of Governors

Date:

Appendix A

PRIVATE FOSTERING ARRANGEMENTS

How to identify a private fostering arrangement and what to do next

A privately fostered child is one who is:

- Under the age of 16 (18 if disabled)
- Living with someone other than a parent or person with parental responsibility or close relative or step parent
- With the intention that it last for 28 days or longer – either as a single episode or cumulatively

This means:

- The local authority is **not** involved in making the arrangement
- The child is **not** in care

There is a duty under the Children Act to notify the local authority of a private fostering arrangement – this duty applies to:

- Any parent or other person with parental responsibility proposing to place a child in a private fostering arrangement
- Any person proposing to privately foster a child
- Any other person involved in the proposed arrangement
- Education, health and other professionals who become aware of a possible private fostering arrangement where they are not satisfied that the local authority have been, or will be, notified of the arrangement

Universal children's services – such as primary care, health visiting, school nursing, schools and early years, voluntary sector - are especially well placed to identify children who are not living with a parent who **may** be privately fostered. Below is a simple question and answer format for checking whether or not this may be the case.

How to identify a possible private fostering arrangement

Is the child aged under 16 years? (18 if disabled)	YES	If NO , the child cannot be privately fostered
	NO	
Is s/he living with a parent/person with parental responsibility or a close relative - aunt, uncle, step-parent, grandparent sibling but not a cousin or great-aunt/uncle?	YES	If YES , the child cannot be privately fostered
	NO	
Is s/he adopted or in care, subject to special guardianship or a residence order ?	YES	If YES , the child cannot be privately fostered
	NO	
Has the child been living with person providing accommodation for 28 days or longer; or Is the child planning to, or is likely to , be living with the person providing accommodation for 28 days or longer - <i>either as a single stay or cumulatively</i>	YES	If YES , the child is/may be privately fostered
	NO	