



Private Fostering Policy

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THE ACORN FEDERATION PRIVATE FOSTERING POLICY

1 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.

1.1 Our responsibilities

The Acorn Federation 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, more information/guidance can be found by following this link: [Derbyshire County Council - Private Fostering](#)

Furthermore, we will follow the procedures as set out by the Derbyshire Safeguarding Children’s Board, section 1.6.10:

http://derbyshirescbs.proceduresonline.com/p_ch_living_away.html#priv_fostering

1.2 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.

The Acorn Federation will ensure all Staff, Governors and Volunteers in the school are aware of this duty.

If a member of Staff, Governor or Volunteer 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 Safeguarding Designated Lead (SDL) who will then make further enquiries to try and establish the circumstances.

The Safeguarding Designated 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 SDL 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.

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

2 Safeguarding Roles and Responsibilities

All Staff (anyone who has contact with a child or young person) including, Volunteers 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.

3 Training

The Designated Safeguarding Lead/s will endeavour to read and cascade information on Private Fostering to school staff on a regular basis.

https://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/social_health/children_and_families/adoption_and_fostering/fostering/become_foster_carer/types_fostering/private_fostering/help/default.asp

All Designated Safeguarding Leads will undertake the DSCB Private Fostering e-learning module ensuring a copy of their certificate is held on the School Safeguarding Training Portfolio.

<http://www.derbyshirescb.org.uk/training-and-resources/elearning/default.asp>

This school will display a useful poster/leaflet for staff and parents and we will include information on the school website, Appendix A &

<https://schoolsnet.derbyshire.gov.uk/site-elements/documents/keeping-children-safe-in-education/safeguarding-policies-guidance-and-protocols/private-fostering-poster.pdf>

4 Management of the Policy

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

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 S175 Safeguarding Audit.

Signed by:

Head Teacher

Date:

Signed By:

Chair of Governors

APPENDIX A – Taken from DCC – ‘Information on Private Fostering’

For the complete leaflet please follow this link - <https://schoolsnet.derbyshire.gov.uk/site-elements/documents/keeping-children-safe-in-education/safeguarding-policies-guidance-and-protocols/private-fostering-guidance.pdf>

Most children spend some time staying with friends and relatives at some time during their childhood. However, for some children these arrangements can be longer term. If a child aged under 16 years (or under 18 years if they are disabled) goes to stay with people who are not related to them for 28 days or more, this is known as a **Private Fostering Arrangement** and special rules apply.

Private Fostering is the term used to describe an arrangement made privately (that is without the involvement of the local authority) between the child’s parents and a carer of their choice. A child is considered to be in private foster care if he or she is in the full time care of someone who is not directly related, nor is a legal guardian, for a total of **28 days** or longer.

The period of 28 days does not have to be continuous. If, for example, a child regularly stays with a school friend’s family and, whilst this arrangement adds up to 28 days or longer, after which he or she returns home to the full-time care of his or her parents, then this **would not be** a private fostering arrangement. On the other hand, if a child is effectively cared for by a non-relative or legal guardian but returns to the parent at weekends, then this **would be** a private fostering arrangement.

Private Fostering and Childminding

Private fostering differs from child minding in that the child in foster care lives with the carer. Childminders can only offer daily care and occasional overnight stays. Private fostering arrangements are used by some parents to meet the needs of their children. Such agreements are acceptable providing specific guidelines are followed for the protection of the child, the parents and the carers. Some teenagers may choose to live with another family who is agreeable to care for them. The same rules apply

What are your responsibilities as a parent?

What is best for the child is always the first consideration even if the arrangement is not intended to be long term. **If...**

- you are looking after a child and think you could be a private foster carer; or,
- you are the parent of a child who is cared for by someone who is not a relative

Contact us for advice - you may be involved in a private fostering arrangement.

How can we help parents?

Under the Children Act 1989, the local authority has a duty to make sure that the proposed arrangement will provide for the child’s needs and safeguard his or her welfare.

These duties include:

- exploring with the parents the need for the arrangement and any other ways in which that need might be met;
- clarifying the proposed duration of the arrangement;
- ensuring all parties involved are aware of the implications of the arrangements and what it involves – this includes taking account of the views of the child;

- assessing the prospective private foster carers' suitability for the role, and that of other members of their household;
- ensuring that all the necessary requirements are met;

The local authority has the powers to prohibit a person from privately fostering if they, or their household, are judged to be unsuitable. They also have the power to impose restrictions upon the way a person may operate as a private foster care – for example, the number of children they can care for or the length of time an arrangement should last. (Private foster carers have the right to appeal to a court against any such decisions)

How can we help a Private Foster carer?

If you are thinking about caring for someone else's child, we will explain all that this entails and provide advice on;

- how to work with the child's parents
- how to help the child you are caring for adapt to his new home and circumstances.
- your rights and responsibilities

How can we help the child?

It is the first duty of the local authority to ensure that the welfare of children who are privately fostered is safeguarded and promoted, whilst respecting the parent's right to make such private arrangements. To ensure this happens:

- arrangements will be made for the child to be visited at regular intervals throughout the arrangement
- all parties, including privately fostered children, can ask us for advice or information