Whittington Green School

Dream Reach Achieve

Private Fostering Policy

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Whittington Green School 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 a longer period of time special procedures may apply.

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

Private fostering arrangements can be a positive response from within the community to difficulties experienced by families. Privately fostered children remain a diverse and potentially vulnerable group.

2 Definition

A privately fostered child is a child under 16 (or 18 if Disabled) who is cared for by an adult who is not a parent, grandparent, aunt, uncle, step parent (including civil partnerships), sister or brother, and may be a family friend, or neighbour and where the child is to be cared for in that person's home for 28 days or more. The definition does not include a step-grandparent or great grandparent.

This arrangement does not have to be continuous; if a child/young person is staying with an extended family member, who is not a parent, grandparent, aunt, uncle, step-parent (including civil partnerships), or a family friend or neighbour for example, that adds up to 28 days or longer in any period of time this may then be seen as Private Fostering.

A child who is Looked After or placed in any residential home, hospital or school (where they are receiving full-time education) is excluded from the definition. In a private fostering arrangement, the parent retains Parental Responsibility.

Children under 16 who spend more than 2 weeks in residence during holiday time in a school, become privately fostered children for the purposes of the legislation during that holiday period.

2.1 Our responsibilities

Whittington Green 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 possible arrangement to the Local Authority** if it is believed the child/young person is possibly living in such an 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 and more local information/guidance can be found on the Derbyshire County Council website.

Furthermore, we will follow the procedures as set out by the Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership, section 1.6.8.

And provide information to any parent/carer where it is believed the child is in a private fostering arrangement.

2.2 Our duties

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.

We 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 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. The Derbyshire professional advice line can be contacted on 01629 535353 if the child's current residence/place of stay in this arrangement is in Derbyshire. If not we will make contact with the relevant Local Authority Childrens Services contact and referral point

If upon taking advice, it is confirmed this may be a private fostering arrangement in Derbyshire, a referral will be made by the Designated Safeguarding Lead into Call Derbyshire (Starting Point) using the recommended online contact/referral form. If there are immediate concerns for the child's welfare and safety, we will treat this as a child protection concern and contact Call Derbyshire (Starting Point) on 01629 533190.
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
- Relationship to the child e.g.- neighbour, friend, extended family member (by definition of a private fostering arrangement)
- 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 or other parental responsibility holder and any known previous addresses
- Address and phone numbers of any other family members linked to the child in this arrangement and particularly if under 16
- Any details of anyone else involved in making this arrangement
- Any known addresses of the child previous to this current arrangement

- Any other helpful information e.g. a chronology to assist an understanding of why this child/young person is not living with the parental responsibility holder.

- Details of any concerns if relevant to making this referral

We understand that the private foster carer becomes responsible for providing the day to day care of the child in a way which will promote and safeguard his welfare. Overarching responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the privately fostered child remains with the parent or other person with parental responsibility.

Local authorities do not formally register private foster carers, but they do have a statutory responsibility to assess whether the arrangement is suitable for the child. It is the duty of local authorities to satisfy themselves that the welfare of children who are, or will be, privately fostered within their area is being, or will be, satisfactorily safeguarded and promoted. It is the Local Authority in whose area the privately fostered child resides which has legal duties in respect of that child.

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

We will assist the Local Authority in their assessments and work as a partner to offer advice and support to the child and carers involved in the arrangement.

We acknowledge that the Local Authority on receipt of a referral has a duty to make further enquiries as to the arrangement. If it is defined to be private fostering the child/ren will require an assessment of their needs and welfare and this will be undertaken by a Social Worker.

The National Private Fostering Guidance encourages written agreements to be used by carers and parents around the care arrangements, medical consent and any financial arrangements to contribute to the care of the child/young person. Some parents are not able to contribute financially or decline to offer payments. This specific guidance, however, cannot be enforced by Local Authorities.

3 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 any pupil if the relationship is unclear, confusing, or concerning.

- To follow up any discussion with any pupil about their living arrangement when it is unclear, confusing, or concerning.

- As a school we will commit to reviewing on a regular basis our emergency contacts and details of who has parental responsibility on our school records. We will pursue any anomalies with that parent or carer and may then ask questions of any pupil about the nature of their relationship to that adult.

- We will have robust consent/trips/outings letters which clearly define the child's relationship to the adult giving consent and identify their status to that pupil including any legal order.

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 whist the child/young person is living with them in a Privately Fostered arrangement.

4 Training

The Designated Safeguarding Lead/s will endeavour to read and cascade information on Private Fostering to school staff on a regular basis and as part of annual training/updates.

Having a knowledge of the National Private Fostering guidance is encouraged in this school and the Designated Lead may refer to this and use it to help raise awareness in this school.

There is a Private Fostering Webinar, 2021/22 and we will encourage all our designated leads and pastoral team, and any other staff with contact to children in the school, to undertake this webinar.

The Private Fostering Guidance webinar can be accessed on the Derbyshire Services for Schools website. To view the content, you'll need to log onto the site. If you don't have a log-on, please request one from the Sign Up page of the S4S website. Please note that anyone in a school or academy can request access to Derbyshire Services for Schools.

Staff will log onto Derbyshire Services for Schools, the webinar can be found under ***Resources > Safeguarding Services > Private Fostering Guidance***

Management of the Policy

The DSL/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 annual Safeguarding Training for teaching and non-teaching staff

The Head Teacher/Principal will report on any private fostering arrangement in their school and any 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 School Safeguarding Audit.

Signed by:	**Signed By:**
Head Teacher/Principal Date:	Chair of Governors

Appendix A: How to identify a Privately Fostered Child

It constitutes private fostering if:

- The adult is not a close relative (close relative is defined as sibling, aunt, uncle, grandparent and stepparent).
- The child has left home and has moved in with someone that the PR holder is happy for them to live with.
- The child is unaccompanied, under 16, seeking asylum and intends to live with someone within their extended family and friend network.
- The arrangement is expected to last continuously for over 28 days.
- The child is from another country and staying with a host family for 28 days or more.

It does not constitute private fostering if:

- The adult is a close relative.
- The arrangement lasts less than 28 days.

The law says:

- Parents must tell the local authority in writing, six weeks before it is due to start and 48 hours after it has begun

School and agency duties e.g. school, and health:

- Refer any possible private fostering arrangement into the local authority.
- Be aware of any possibility of trafficking.
- Clarify whether there is a genuine link to the carer band child.

The local authority must:

- carry out written assessments, visits, and reviews, similar to that of a looked after child.
- Contact and tell the parents if there are concerns about the arrangement before and during.