



Cledford Primary School

Staying Safe Guide

Private Fostering

Private fostering is where a parent arranges for a child aged under 16 (or 18 where the child has disabilities) to be cared for by someone other than a close relative for **28 days or more**. It does not apply where the child is placed by the Council, voluntary organisations, or as a result of certain court orders. A close relative is classed as a grandparent, brother, sister, uncle, aunt (whether of full blood or half blood or by marriage) or step parent.

Caring for someone else's child is not private fostering when the arrangement is made by the Local Authority (Children's Social Care), or when the person looking after a child is an approved foster carer.

Private foster carers can be from a child's extended family such as a cousin or great aunt. They may also be a friend of the family, the parent of a friend of the child, or someone previously unknown to the child's family who is willing to privately foster the child.

Examples of PF arrangements

- A child whose parent (s) cannot look after them because of illness, work or study;
- A child from abroad sent to stay with another family;
- An asylum seeking or refugee child;
- A teenager who, having broken ties with their family, is staying with friends or other non-relatives usually on a short term basis;
- A language student living with a host family; or
- A young person staying with a family while attending a school away from home.

What is the role of the local authority?

The local authority has a number of duties and responsibilities. A Social Worker will want to help keep the child safe and well by:

- Offering support and advice on how to meet the child's physical, emotional, educational and cultural needs;
- Assisting private foster carers in working together with the child's parents for Ensuring that the private fostering arrangement is suitable to care for the child;
- the benefit of the child; and
- Taking action if the care provided is unsatisfactory.

How can other agencies help?

Because Children's Social Care (which has a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are privately fostered), is not always aware of an arrangement, it is important that professionals working with children and families inform Children's Social Care about any private fostering arrangements. Teachers, health workers, police etc may become aware of private fostering arrangements due to their contact with children and families. The local authority needs agencies who are working with children, young people and their families to identify these arrangements.

If you identify a private fostering arrangement you should speak to your Designated Safeguarding Lead and encourage parents to contact Social Care. If you feel Social Care are not aware, then contact them through ChECS on 0300 123 5012 (Option 2)

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For further information, either look in 'Parent Zone' on the GPNS website or visit the Cheshire East website which has a handbook for professionals at:

http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/education_and_learning/family_information_service/private_fostering.aspx