



Marriott Primary

Achieving Together

PRIVATE FOSTERING POLICY

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| Adopted | 17th November 2020 |
| Signed (Chair of Governors) | <i>Steve Wilson</i> |
| Reviewed (Due November 2023) | |
| Signed (Chair of Governors) | |

Introduction

Policy Definition of a private fostering arrangement

A private fostering arrangement is essentially one that is made privately (that is to say without the involvement of a local authority) for the care of a child under the age of 16 (under 18 if disabled) by someone other than a parent or close relative with the intention that it should last for 28 days or more.

A close relative is defined by the Children Act 1989 as:

- Grandparent
- Sister
- Brother
- Aunt or Uncle (whether of the full or half blood or by marriage)
- Step Parent (NB none of the above can be private foster carers)

A private foster carer may be:

- a friend of the family
- the parent of a friend of the child
- Someone previously unknown to the child's family who is willing to privately foster the child.
- extended family members, such as a cousin or great aunt

A child in a private fostering arrangement is not Looked After by the Local Authority. Parents retain full parental responsibility for the child. The private foster carer is responsible for providing the day-to-day care of the child in a way that promotes and safeguards his/her welfare. Overall responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the child's welfare remains with the parent or other person with parental responsibility. This includes ensuring there is appropriate financial provision to meet the child's needs.

Reasons for private fostering

The reasons for children being in private fostering arrangements are varied and include:

- Local children and young people under the age of 16 (18 if disabled) living apart from their families
- Children studying at language schools
- Children at sports colleges
- Minority ethnic children whose parents are working or studying in the UK
- Children living with host families for a variety of reasons
- Children with parents overseas
- Children on holiday exchanges

Local authority duties and responsibilities

Local authorities must ensure that the welfare of children who are, or will be, privately fostered in their area is being, or will be, satisfactorily safeguarded and promoted.

It is the local authority in whose area the privately fostered child resides that has legal duties in respect of the child.

In Leicester all children who are privately fostered will have an allocated social worker who is responsible for ensuring their welfare is satisfactorily safeguarded and promoted. There is a statutory requirement for the social worker to visit and see the child at least every six weeks during the first year of the arrangement and at least every 12 weeks following that.

All private fostering arrangements in Leicester are reviewed by the Independent Reviewing Officer (Private Fostering).

Notifications

There is a legal requirement for parents and private foster carers to notify the local authority about a proposed private fostering arrangement six weeks before the arrangement is made.

If notification is not given in advance, there is a requirement for parents and private foster to notify the local authority of an existing private fostering arrangement.

Procedure for professionals at Marriott Primary School to notify the local authority

Many professionals, especially those who work with children in schools, will come across private fostering arrangements. They have a shared responsibility to work together to ensure that all privately fostered children are well cared for and are safeguarded from harm.

All are required to ensure the local authority knows about private fostering arrangements.

If you know that a child is being privately fostered find out from the carer and/or parent whether they have notified the Local Authority and if they have not, advise them that they are legally required to notify.

Let the carer and parent know of your responsibility to notify the Local Authority of a private fostering arrangement.

Whether or not the carer and parent advise you they have notified the Local Authority you have a responsibility to refer to Children's Social Care. Refer to Children's Social Care by contacting the Duty and Advice line for social care on 0116 454 1004.

More information about private fostering can be found at:

<http://www.privatefostering.org.uk/>