

Private Fostering Policy



'We can and we will'
GLEBE PRIMARY SCHOOL

PRIVATE FOSTERING POLICY

Mission Statement

At Glebe Primary School, we believe in an ethos that values the whole child. We strive to enable all children to achieve their full potential academically, socially and emotionally.

Introduction and Context

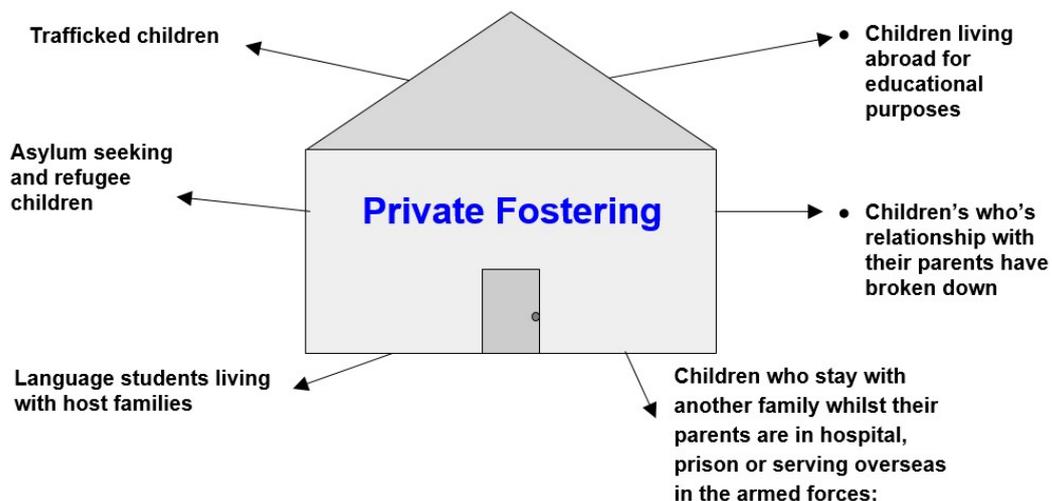
Most children and young people spend some time away from their home staying with relatives and friends. In cases where children/young people may stay for longer period of time special procedures may apply.

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 situations, the circumstances of their living arrangements raises health, welfare and safety concerns for the child/young person.

The definition given by OFSTED is;

"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. "

This could be:



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The Ofsted report into Private Fostering also refers to these reasons:

- children brought from outside the UK with a view to adoption
- children at independent boarding schools, who do not return home for holidays and are placed with host families
- trafficked children

"Current arrangements for the regulation of private fostering originate from concern following the death of Victoria Climbié in 2000. Victoria was privately fostered by her great aunt. Arrangements were codified in the Children Act 2004

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/31/part/5/crossheading/private-fostering> . Following this, the Children (Private Arrangement for Fostering) Regulations 2005

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2005/1533/contents/made> set out the duties of Local Authorities in their arrangements for private fostering, and national minimum standards for Local Authorities were published in 2005."

(<http://www.safeguardingschools.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Private-fostering-better-information-better-understanding.pdf> 09/02/2021)

In January 2014, Ofsted published a report called 'Private fostering: better information, better understanding' (see the web link above) . 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 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.

On Hillingdon's Safeguarding Partnership's website

<https://hillingdonsafeguardingpartnership.org.uk/professionals/useful-guidance/private-fostering/> it states;

"The Victoria Climbié Enquiry recommended that the Government take further steps to strengthen Private Fostering arrangements and it clearly made a case that private fostering is a safeguarding issue.

Although Local Authorities are charged with several duties, all partner agencies, parents and private foster parents have duties to ensure that privately fostered children are protected and that they are compliant with legislation.

It is a legal requirement for people who make arrangements for a child to be privately fostered to notify the local authority of their intentions at least 6 weeks in advance, or in emergency cases, immediately after the child becomes privately fostered. The parents and the private foster carers are responsible for notifying the local authority. Private foster carers should also notify the local authority of any changes in their own circumstances, whilst they are caring for the child or young person.

Private foster carers also need to let the Local Authority know when a child or young person leaves their care, giving the name and address of the person who will be providing for the care of the child going forward.

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This policy should be read in conjunction with "Private Fostering Process" in Appendix 1, found at the end of this policy.

More information/guidance on Privately Fostering within Hillingdon can be found by following this link: <https://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/privatefostering>

and more general information about being a private foster parent can be found at: <https://corambaaf.org.uk/fostering-adoption/fostering/private-fostering/information-private-foster-carers>

Our Responsibilities

Glebe Primary School fully recognises its responsibilities regarding private fostering by 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. Policy dictates that we need to inform the Local Authority even if the school has been informed of the arrangement. However, in this situation we would of course notify the parents informing them, that this would be a procedure we would need follow.

Glebe Primary School 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 Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): the Head teacher, or a member of the safeguarding team in her absence, who will then make further enquiries to try and establish the circumstances.

The DSL 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.

The referrer should include:

- Address and daytime phone number of the parent/parental responsibility holder;
- Address and phone numbers of any other family members;

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- Any other helpful information regarding the parent/parental responsibility to assist an understanding of why this child/young person is not living with them.

Glebe Primary 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, 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'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.

The DSL will endeavour to read and cascade information on private fostering to school staff on a regular basis.

The Headteacher 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.

Written: February 2023

To be Reviewed: February 2025

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Appendix 1

