

# Private Fostering Policy

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Related Policies and Guidance Documents	<a href="https://ddscp.org.uk">Private Fostering (ddscp.org.uk)</a>
Related Regulations	
Annexes and Supplementary Info	Appendix A
Responsible Person	
Responsible Person Signature	

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## Private Fostering Policy

### 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 periods of time, special procedures may apply.

If a child or young person is under 16 (or if disabled/SEN under 18) and living with a family member or friend for **longer than 28 days this is then seen as a Private Fostering Arrangement (PFA) (see appendix below)**. 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 a Private Fostering Arrangement.

PFA is an arrangement made by the parent with the carer who has agreed to look after the child/young person (s) on their behalf. In the majority of cases PFA's are lawful and appropriate. However, in some circumstances parents may not have agreed or been aware of the need for the arrangements to be assessed by the Local Authority. In some instances, the circumstances of children/young people's living arrangements raise health, welfare and safety concerns for the child/young person.

### Our Responsibilities

SENAD' schools and children's homes fully recognise its responsibilities regarding PFA's ensuring staff are fully aware how to identify a child/young person living in such circumstances. 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 that has not been previously assessed by the Local Authority.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the information under Appendix A, found at the end of this policy. Further information/guidance can be found by following this link:

[Private Fostering \(ddscp.org.uk\)](https://www.ddscp.org.uk)

Furthermore, SENAD will follow the procedures as set out by the Local Authorities Safeguarding Children Partnership (SCP) that the pupil is normally resident in, as well as the SENAD school's host SCP.

### 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.

We will ensure all staff, proprietors and volunteers in the school are aware of this duty.

If a member of staff, proprietor 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) who will then make further enquiries to try and establish the circumstances.

The DSL should seek advice from the child/young person's Social Worker or the placing authorities safeguarding duty team, as to whether the child/young person is in a Private Fostering Arrangement under the Children Act regulations. If this is confirmed upon taking this advice, a referral will be made by the DSL to Children's' Social Care Team/Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).

Essential information for making a referral includes: -

- Full names and dates of birth for the child/ren
- 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/or those with parental responsibility to assist in understanding of why the child/young person is not living with them.

SENAD's school and children's homes 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, Proprietor and Directors have responsibility for the following:**

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- 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 that was not declared and confirmed before placement with SENAD you must:

- 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.
- Assist with advice and support the carer(s) to undertake their duties in relation to legislation whilst the child/young person is living with them in a Private Fostering Arrangement.

### **Management of the Policy**

The DSL will ensure they are familiar with this policy by regularly updating all staff, directors and volunteers regarding the legal requirements, and duties around PFA. The DSL will endeavour to read and cascade information on PFA's to schools and home staff on a regular basis.

The DSLs will undertake the appropriate safeguarding update training (e-learning module) ensuring a copy of their certificate is held on the School Safeguarding Training Portfolio. The Head Teacher and Registered Manager will ensure that PFA's awareness forms part of staff safeguarding induction and is included in the safeguarding training within the school.

## PRIVATE FOSTERING

### Definition

- The child is not considered 'looked after' (i.e. is not a child in care).
- This is an arrangement to care for a child made between a parent/person with parental responsibility, with another adult.
- Currently the regulations only apply to young people up to 16 years old (18 if disabled).
- There are statutory requirements for Local Authorities (Children Acts 1989, 2004; Private Fostering Arrangements 2005).

### Notifications

A parent should notify the LA in writing;

- 6 weeks before the arrangement is due to start,
- 48 hours after the arrangement has commenced,

***Any professional who becomes aware of a private fostering arrangement should inform Call Derbyshire***

### It constitutes private fostering if:

- The adult is not a close relative (close relative is defined as sibling, aunt, uncle, grandparent and step parent).
- 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 role of the Local Authority:

- The statutory requirements are clearly set out in the private fostering regulations. Once notified of a private fostering arrangement, begin the process. Duties include; a written assessment and a visiting and review pattern in line with those of 'looked after' children. Guidance and process is on MOSAIC including the recording of visits.
- To explore the possibility that the child is being trafficked. Establish that there is a genuine link between the child and the carers.
- To inform the parents if there are concerns about the arrangement proceeding or commencing.