



## **Stillness Junior School**

### **Private Fostering Policy**

Date of Policy:	February 2024	Approved by:
Renewal Date:	February 2026	Teaching and Learning

## **1. Introduction and Context**

Private fostering is when a child or young person aged under 16 (or under 18 if they are disabled) is cared for and provided with accommodation for 28 days or more by an adult who is not a close relative.

A close relative is an aunt, uncle, step parent, grandparent or sibling, but not a cousin, great aunt/uncle or family friend.

A private fostering arrangement is normally organised between the parent and carer. There are many private fostering situations. These may involve children or young people:

- who are sent to this country for education or health care by their birth parents from overseas
- whose parents work or study long or antisocial hours
- who are living with a friend's family as a result of parental separation, divorce or arguments at home
- who are living with their partner's family.

### **1.1 Our responsibilities**

Stillness Junior School fully recognises its responsibilities for understanding Private Fostering to know how to identify a child or young person who may be in a privately fostering arrangement and to have a duty to report this to the local Authority if it is believed the child or 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:

### **1.2 Our Policy**

Under the Children Act, 1989, the Local Authority has a duty to make sure the arrangement that the child or young person is in will provide for the child's or young person's needs and safeguard his or her welfare.

Stillness Junior 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 or young person may be living in a Private Foster arrangement it is the responsibility of that person to report this to the Safeguarding Designated Lead and this person may need to make further enquiries to try and establish this.

The Safeguarding Designated Lead should seek advice from Children's Social Care as to whether the child or young person is a privately fostered child under the regulations. If so, a referral must be made 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.

Other information that may be essential in a referral about a possible Privately Fostered child or young person:

- Address and daytime phone number of the parent/ parental responsibility holder;
- Address and phone numbers of any other family members;
- Any other helpful information about the parent/parental responsibility to assist an understanding of why this child or young person is not living with them.

Stillness Junior School will work together with the Local Authority to help safeguard and promote the child's or young person's safety and welfare.

## **2 Safeguarding Roles and Responsibilities**

**All staff, volunteers and governors have responsibility for the following:**

- To ask parents /carers questions around their relationship with the child or young person if this is unclear, confusing or concerning.
- To follow up any discussion with a child or young person about their living arrangement which 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 the Local Authority to ensure the child's or young person's needs are been met, to monitor and report to ensure the safety and welfare of that child or young person whilst been privately fostered.
- To assist with advising and supporting the carer to undertake their duties whilst the child or young person is living in such an arrangement.

## **3 Management of the Policy**

The Designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputy will become familiar with this policy and ensure all staff, governors and volunteers are aware and familiar with the legal requirements, and duties.

The DSL/S will endeavour to read and provide information on Private Fostering to school staff on a regular basis.

The Head Teacher will ensure that private fostering forms part of staff safeguarding induction and is used in safeguarding training in the school.

The head teacher will report on issues relating to private Fostering and any impact for the school to the governing body.

The Governing Body will oversee the policy, ensure its implementation and review its content on an annual basis in line with the S175 Safeguarding audit.

Useful links:

Lewisham Guide to Private Fostering for children:

<https://www.lewisham.gov.uk/my services/socialcare/children/fostering/Documents/PrivateFosteringForChildren.pdf>

Private Fostering information for parents

<https://www.lewisham.gov.uk/my services/socialcare/children/fostering/Documents/PrivateFosteringForParents.pdf>

## PRIVATE FOSTERING ARRANGEMENTS

How to identify a private fostering arrangement and what to do next.

A privately fostered child is one who is:

- Under the age of 16 (18 if disabled)
- Living with someone other than a parent or person with parental responsibility or close relative or step parent
- With the intention that it last for 28 days or longer – either as a single episode or cumulatively

This means:

- The local authority is not involved in making the arrangement
- The child is not in care

**There is a duty under the Children Act to notify the local authority of a private fostering arrangement – this duty applies to:**

- Any parent or other person with parental responsibility proposing to place a child in a private fostering arrangement
- Any person proposing to privately foster a child
- Any other person involved in the proposed arrangement
- Education, health and other professionals who become aware of a possible private fostering arrangement where they are not satisfied that the local authority have been, or will be, notified of the arrangement.

Universal children's services – such as primary care, health visiting, school nursing, schools and early years, voluntary sector – are especially well placed to identify children who are not living with a parent who may be privately fostered. Below is a simple question and answer format for checking whether or not this may be the case.

### How to identify a possible private fostering arrangement

Is the child aged under 16 years? (19 if disabled)	<b>YES</b>	If <b>NO</b> , the child cannot be privately fostered
	<b>NO</b>	

Is s/he living with a parent/person with parental Responsibility or a close relative – aunt, uncle, Step-parent, grandparent sibling but not a cousin Or great-aunt/uncle?

**YES** If **YES**, the child **cannot** be  
**NO** privately fostered

Is s/he adopted or in case, subject to special Guardianship or a residence order?

**YES** If **YES**, the child cannot be  
**NO** privately fostered

Has the child been living with person providing Accommodation for 28 days or longer; or  
Is the child **planning to, or is likely to**, be living With the person providing accommodation for 28 Days or longer – either as a single stay or cumulatively

**YES** If **YES**, the child  
**NO** **is/may be** privately fostered