

# PRIVATE FOSTERING POLICY

Implemented: Spring 2018

Reviewed by: Linda Matthews, Headteacher

Reviewed: March 2025

Next Review: March 2027



**WATERGATE SCHOOL**

'I Can, You Can, Together We Will'

## Context

Most children and young people spend some time away from their home and stay with relatives and friends. Some of these children and young people may stay for longer and therefore special measures may apply.

Private Fostering is defined as:

'one that is made privately (without the involvement of a local authority) for the care of a child under the age of 16 years (under 18, if disabled) by someone other than a parent or close relative, in their own home, with the intention that it should last for 28 days or more. (Close family relative is defined as a 'grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt' and includes half-siblings and step-parents; it does not include great-aunts or uncles, great grandparents or cousins.)'

Private Fostering is an arrangement made by the parent with the carer who has agreed to look after the child or young person on their behalf. In some circumstances they may not have agreed or the circumstances of their living arrangements raises concerns.

Most frequently, young people are in private foster care for the following reasons:

- children from other countries sent to live in the UK with extended family
- host families for language schools
- parental ill-health
- where parents who have moved away, but the child stays behind (eg. to stay at the same school to finish exams)
- teenagers estranged from their families

Ofsted also includes the following categories :

- 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

## **Our responsibilities**

Watergate School fully recognises its responsibility for knowing what Private Fostering is, to know how to identify a child who may be in a private 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. We acknowledge that not to do so is a criminal offence.

## **Rights Respecting Schools**

### **This policy links to Article 3 of the UNCRC (best interests of the child)**

The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children.

### **This policy links to Article 5 of the UNCRC (parental guidance and the child's evolving capabilities)**

Governments must respect the rights and responsibilities of parents and carers to provide guidance and direction to their child as they grow up, so that they fully enjoy their rights. This must be done in a way that recognises the child's increasing capacity to make their own choices.

### **This policy links to Article 19 of the UNCRC (protection from violence, abuse and neglect)**

Governments must do all they can to ensure that children are protected from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and bad treatment by their parents or anyone else who looks after them

## Our Policy

Under the Children Act, 2004, the Local Authority has a duty to make sure the arrangement that the child is in will provide for the child's or young person's needs and safeguard his or her welfare. Watergate 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 will 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.

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

## **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

## **Management of the Policy**

- The SDL/s will become familiar with this policy and ensure all staff, governors and volunteers are aware and familiar with the legal requirements, and duties.
- The SDL/S will endeavour to read and provide information on Private Fostering to school staff on a regular basis.
- The SDL/s will undertake the e-learning module made available on Private Fostering and print the certificate for the school safeguarding training portfolio.
- 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.

**Date: January 2024**