

Private fostering



We have attached below guidance leaflets for professionals and parents/carers that your school may find useful:

[Private fostering - guide for professionals \(pdf\)](#)

[Private fostering - guide for parents \(pdf\)](#)

The issue is covered in training courses for safeguarding, and for admissions, leavers and children missing education.

Private fostering is believed to be significantly under-reported, and such children may be vulnerable.

School administrators have an important role as they check documents relating to parents and carers at pre-admission meetings.

Therefore school administrators are well placed to identify these children and refer to the school safeguarding lead.

We ask schools to ensure that your safeguarding and admission leads, and administrators are fully briefed; and also to raise this at staff meetings as a whole school issue.

What is private fostering

Private fostering is when a child under the age of 16 (or 18 if they have a disability) is cared for by someone other than a parent or close relative for more than 28 days without the involvement of their local authority/social care.

Private foster carers could be members of the extended family like an older cousin or a great aunt, or they could be a friend of the family.

Fostering arrangements made without the involvement of the local authority are only considered private fostering when the person acting as a foster carer is not a close relative as stipulated in the Children Act 1989. Close relatives include: grandparents, brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts and step-parents.

In a private fostering arrangement the parents retain full parental responsibility over their children; whilst the private foster carer is responsible for the day-to-day care of the child.

Reasons for private fostering arrangements are varied and include:

- Parental illness
- Children sent abroad to improve educational opportunities
- Children who stay with friends because they have fallen out with their parents
- Children who attend a school away from their parents
- Parental separation or arguments at home
- Parental imprisonment.

Legally the council should be informed about private fostering arrangement at least six weeks before the arrangement is due to begin.

In Ealing ECRIS should be notified on 020 8825 8000.

Was this page useful?

- [Yes](#)
- [Neutral](#)
- [No](#)

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