



## Private Fostering – information for independent and language schools

Many people look after other people's children for a night or a weekend. But if a child is living with someone who is not their immediate relative for more than 28 days, it may mean that child is being privately fostered.

### Information for Independent Schools

#### What is considered to be private fostering?

- A pupil under the age of 16, who goes to an independent school, and lives at school in holidays for more than two weeks, unless exemptions apply (see below)
- Where a person assumes care for an individual child, where it is not part of their duties in relation to the school in which the child is receiving fulltime education, if the length of the placement is, or will be, 28 days or more
- Arrangements made by parents for their children to be privately cared for, so they can attend school on a daily basis
- If a child at an independent school, who is under the age of 16 – or under the age of 18 if disabled – spends holiday periods with a host family
- Where parents make arrangements for children from abroad to be privately accommodated for holidays.

#### Important to know:

- A person who plans to accommodate a child or children at school, in circumstances in which some or all of them will be treated as private foster children, **must notify the local authority in writing**. They must tell us how many children they plan to privately foster, at least 2 weeks before it begins.
- When the private fostering period ends, the person caring for him or her at the school **must notify their local authority, again in writing**.
- If a privately fostered child dies, the person caring for the child at the school must give written notice, no later than 48 hours after, to each parent and/or person with parental responsibility, and to their local authority.

#### 'Guardianship arrangements

- When parents living abroad appoint 'guardians' for their children at boarding school, these 'guardians' do not have parental responsibility for the child. Any 'guardians' who accommodate a child under the age of 16 for at least 28 days are private foster carers and must tell the local authority

- 'Guardianship' organisations that arrange placements with host families must notify the local authority where the carers live if the placement is to be 28+ days. The local authority will then liaise directly with the private foster carers
- A 'guardian' who looks after 4 or more children of any age for any length of time must apply to their local authority for registration as a children's home.

## Language schools

Children at language schools who are boarding with host families may meet the criteria for private fostering if they are under the age of 16 and staying for 28+ days.

### Private Fostering exemptions

It is also useful to know what doesn't count as private fostering:

- A child is not privately fostered if they are looked after by the local authority
- A child is not privately fostered if being cared for:
  - In a children's home, residential care, nursing or mental nursing home
  - In accommodation provided for or on behalf of a voluntary organisation
  - In any school in which he or she is receiving full time education
  - At a health service hospital
  - At any other home or institution provided by the Secretary of State.
- A child is not privately fostered if they live with their parent, person with parental responsibility, or relative responsible for their care.

### What to do if you still have questions

If you want to know more, or to talk about anything in this information sheet, please phone Customer Services on 0300 123 2224 or email [childrens@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:childrens@somerset.gov.uk)

**Summer 2016**