



EARL STERNDALE CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Private Fostering Policy – March 2026

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 under 18) and living with a family member or friend for longer than 28 days this is then seen as Private Fostering. 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 Private Fostering.

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

Our Responsibilities

Earl Sterndale CE Primary School fully recognises its responsibilities regarding Private Fostering ensuring staff are fully aware on how to identify a child/young person and the circumstances around Private Fostering. 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.

This policy should be read in conjunction with “How to Identify a Privately Fostered Child” Appendix A, found at the end of this policy, more information/guidance can be found by following this link: [Derbyshire County Council - Private Fostering](#)

Furthermore, Earl Sterndale School will follow the procedures as set out by the Derbyshire Safeguarding Children’s Board:

<http://derbyshirescbs.proceduresonline.com/index.htm>

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.

Earl Sterndale CE Primary 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/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 Safeguarding Designated Lead (SDL) who will then make further enquiries to try and establish the circumstances.

The Safeguarding Designated Lead should seek advice from Children's Social Care as to whether the child/young person is in a Privately Fostered arrangement under the regulations. If this is confirmed upon taking this advice a referral will be made by the SDL to Children's Social Care.

Essential information for making a referral includes:-

1. Full names and dates of birth for the child;
2. Address and daytime phone numbers for the current carer including mobiles;
3. The child's address and phone number;
4. Whereabouts of the child (and siblings);
5. Child and family's ethnic origin;
6. Child and family's main language;
7. Actions taken and people contacted;
8. Special needs of the child, including need for an accredited interpreter, accredited sign language interpreter or other language support;
9. A clear indication of the family's knowledge of the referral and whether they have consented to the sharing of confidential information;
10. 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/parental responsibility to assist an understanding of why this child/young person is not living with them.

Earl Sterndale School 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, volunteers and Governors have responsibility for the following:

- 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:

- To 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;
- To assist with advising and supporting the carer(s) to undertake their duties whilst the child/young person is living with them in a Privately Fostered arrangement.

Management of the Policy

The SDL/s will ensure they are familiar with this policy regularly updating all staff, Governors and volunteers regarding the legal requirements, and duties.

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

The SDL/s will endeavour to undertake the DSCB Private Fostering e-learning module ensuring a copy of their certificate is held on the School Safeguarding Training Portfolio.

The head teacher will ensure that Private Fostering awareness forms part of Staff Safeguarding Induction and is included in the Safeguarding Training within the school.

The head teacher will report on issues or impact on the school in relation to Private Fostering to the Governing Body.

The Governing Body will oversee the policy; ensuring its implementation and reviewing its content on an annual basis in line with the S175 Safeguarding Audit.

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? (18 if disabled)	YES NO	If NO , the child cannot be privately fostered
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 NO	If YES , the child cannot be privately fostered
Is s/he adopted or in care, subject to special guardianship or a residence order ?	YES NO	If YES , the child cannot be 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 - <i>either as a single stay or cumulatively</i>	YES NO	If YES , the child is/may be privately fostered