



What is Private Fostering?

Private fostering is when a child under the age of 16 (under 18 if they are disabled) is cared for by someone who is not their parent or a 'close relative'.

This is a private arrangement made between a parent and a carer for 28 days or more.

Close relatives are defined as step-parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters, uncles or aunts (whether of full blood, half blood or marriage).

To help us keep children safe and support families, all parents and private foster carers must notify their Local Council. If not, they miss out on essential welfare checks for the children, plus other support services.

These include:

- Advice on claiming benefits and possible funding for some essential items
- Parenting support and advice

- Help in bringing families in crisis back together

If you know of a child being privately fostered please don't ignore it. Speak to the child's carer or contact:

If living in Dorset, contact the Children's Advice & Duty Service on 01305 228558

If living in Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole contact the Private Fostering Team on 01202 454932, or by sending an email to private.fostering@bcpcouncil.gov.uk.

The law states that carers and parents must notify the Local Council's Children's Services of any private fostering before the arrangement begins.

If the arrangement has already begun, then you must notify them immediately. You will then be contacted by a social worker who will visit and discuss the

arrangements with you. Children's services must make sure the child is safe, healthy and happy, and offer support and advice to private foster carers and parents where needed.

Teachers, health and other professionals have a responsibility to notify their Local Council's Children's Services of any private fostering arrangement that comes to their attention.

Typical examples of private fostering arrangements

- Children sent to this country, for education or health care, by parents who live overseas
- A teenager living with a friend's family because they don't get on with their own family or due to other family circumstances
- Children living with a friend's family because their parents' study or work involves unsociable hours, which make it difficult to use

ordinary day care or after-school care

- Children staying with another family because of a family crisis such as parents' ill health or parent's separation
- A child from overseas staying with a host family while attending a language school
- Students at boarding school who stay with a host family during holidays
- Forces families where children stay with another family while their parents are deployed

Are you caring for someone else's child?

If you are caring for a child on a full time basis and you are not the child's parent or close relative you may be viewed as a private foster carer.

Is your child living with someone else?

If your child is living with someone else on a full time basis and is not living with a relative or someone who has parental responsibility, he or she may be considered to be privately fostered.



If you have any questions or concerns about a child at this school, or elsewhere a member of Wyvern Academy's safeguarding team will be happy to discuss it with you.