

St John Bosco Catholic Primary School



Private Fostering Policy

Last updated: 3 February 2019

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Statement of intent

St John Bosco Catholic Primary School understands its duty to safeguard and protect children – this includes private fostering arrangements. In line with 'Keeping children safe in education' (2018), we will ensure that staff understand their responsibilities to privately fostered children and are aware of who to contact with a concern over a child in private foster care.

This policy outlines the duties that we have in terms of privately fostered children and what the school will do to ensure their safety.

Signed by:

_____	Headteacher	Date: _____
_____	Chair of governors	Date: _____

1. Legal framework

1.1. This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- The Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations 2005
- DfE (2018) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'
- DfE (2018) 'Keeping children safe in education'

1.2. This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- **Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**
- **Admissions Policy**

2. Definition

2.1. **Private fostering** is when a child under the age of 16 (or under 18, if the child is disabled) is provided with care and accommodation by a person who is not a parent, person with parental responsibility or a relative in their own home. A child is **not** privately fostered if the adult caring and accommodating them has done so for less than 28 days and does not intend to do so for longer.

2.2. **Parental responsibility** refers to all the rights, duties, powers, responsibilities and authorities that a parent has by law in relation to a child, as defined by section 3 of The Children Act 1989.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1. The school is responsible for:

- Ensuring staff understand private fostering and how to identify a child who may be privately fostered.
- Ensuring the school's **Admissions Policy** includes steps to verify the relationship of the adults who are registering a child with the school.
- Reporting cases of private fostering arrangements to the LA.

3.2. The **headteacher** is responsible for:

- Implementing this policy.
- Ensuring all staff understand their roles in terms of private fostering.
- Ensuring the school meets its legal duty to provide support to privately fostered children.
- Circulating LA guidance to all members of staff.
- Seeking training opportunities which ensure that staff understand private fostering.

3.3. The **DSL** is responsible for:

- Responding to private fostering concerns that staff may have about a child by referring it to the LA.
- Offering training and advice to staff in regard to private fostering.
- Liaising with the LA, where appropriate.
- Assisting with advising and supporting carers to undertake their duties while a privately fostered child is living with them.
- Ensuring the school's **Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy** is adhered to at all times and that school staff are aware of their responsibilities in relation to it.

3.4. School staff are responsible for:

- Understanding private fostering and their responsibilities in relation to it.
- Attending any private fostering training opportunities that are offered to them.
- Reading all material provided by the LA concerning private fostering.
- Understanding the [signs](#) that a child may be in a private fostering arrangement.
- Asking parents/carers questions about their relationship to a child, if it is unclear or concerning.
- Working with the LA to ensure the needs of any privately fostered children are met.
- Monitoring the safety and welfare of any privately fostered children.
- Raising any concerns with the **DSL**.

4. Procedures

- 4.1. The school will monitor the safety of children, in accordance with the **Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**, and report any concerns to the **DSL**.
- 4.2. In accordance with 'Keeping children safe in education', the school will be alert to the need for early help for children who are privately fostered.
- 4.3. The **Admissions Policy** will ensure that, upon enrolment at the school, registration forms establish the relationship between the child and the adult registering them. This will include the following:
 - Who has parental responsibility for the child
 - Details of any court orders
 - The relationship of the adult to the child, e.g. parent, guardian, aunt
- 4.4. Staff will ensure all safeguarding concerns, including any pertaining to private fostering, are communicated to the **DSL** in line with the **Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**.
- 4.5. Essential information for making a referral to the LA includes the following:
 - The child's full name and date of birth
 - The address and phone number for the carer, including their mobile number

- The child's address and phone number (if applicable)
 - The whereabouts of the child and any siblings
 - The child and family's ethnicity
 - The child and family's main language
 - The actions the school has taken and who has been contacted
 - Details of any SEND the child has, including any language support provided (e.g. sign language interpreter)
 - Details of the family's knowledge of the referral and whether they have consented to the sharing of their confidential information
 - The referrer's details
- 4.6. In addition, the following information may be requested:
- The address and phone number for the adult with parental responsibility, including their mobile number
 - The address and phone numbers of any other relevant family members
 - Any other relevant and helpful information which may assist in understanding why a child is not living with their parents
- 4.7. The school will work with the LA to safeguard and promote the safety and welfare of children.
- 4.8. For parents, children or foster parents who are seeking further advice, the LA can be contacted on 0800 358 0899; alternatively, view their webpage (<https://www.sandwellchildrenstrust.org/fostering/>).
- 4.9. Confidentiality will never stand in the way of protecting a child's welfare.
- 4.10. To identify a child who may be privately fostered, staff will consider whether the child:
- Is new to the school.
 - Mentions their living arrangements.
 - Is accompanied to school by an unfamiliar adult.
 - Goes missing from education for a concerning length of time.
 - Or their carer are vague about the child's living arrangements, education, needs, etc.
 - Has come from overseas and has asked what the purpose of the visit is and if their parents came with them.
 - Is an unaccompanied asylum seeker.
 - Has been trafficked.
- 4.11. Staff will be aware that trafficked children are particularly vulnerable. Staff will be aware of the following signs that may indicate that a child has been trafficked:
- The child has no money but has a mobile phone and/or is expensively dressed
 - The child exhibits self-assurance, maturity and self-confidence beyond their age

- The child has a rehearsed story that seems very similar to previous cases of trafficked children that staff have heard in other incidents, training programmes or read about from materials produced by charities
 - Signs of physical or sexual abuse are present
 - The child's educational record contains missing links or unexplained moves
 - The child appears malnourished or has an eating disorder
 - The child is not registered with a GP
 - The child displays signs of misusing alcohol or drugs
 - The child displays signs of self-harm
 - The child does not appear to have good relationships with the adults they live with
 - The child seems to have limited freedom of movement in society
 - The child appears tired, disengaged, excessively frightened or sexually promiscuous
 - The child dresses inappropriately for their age
 - The child is regularly picked up from school by an adult without parental responsibility, and who is much older than themselves
 - The child is displaying signs that they may have been brought into the country illegally for the purposes of adoption
- 4.12. The school will cooperate with any LA arrangements after a referral has been made.

5. Monitoring and review

- 5.1. This policy is reviewed **annually** by the **DSL** and the **headteacher**.
- 5.2. Any changes made to this policy by the **headteacher** and **DSL** will be communicated to all members of staff.
- 5.3. All members of staff are required to familiarise themselves with all processes and procedures outlined in this policy as part of their induction programme.
- 5.4. The next scheduled review date for this policy is **February 2020**.