



Private Fostering Handbook

Updated: 20/02/2017

“Private fostering is a private arrangement made between a parent and a host family for 28 days or more. It relates to children sent to the UK for education by parents living overseas. Privately fostered children are safeguarded by the Children Act 1989 and associated regulations. The law says that the Local Authority must be told about all private fostering situations.”

Guidelines to Host Families for Private Fostering

- Support and assist students to live comfortably within their new environment
- Provide students with adequate, healthy meals prepared in a clean homely environment
- Provide laundry once a week at no extra costs
- Ensure that students have their own room and do not place students in a room where they will share with other students, unless specifically requested to do so when the placement is arranged
- Never raise your voice to students or scold them
- Liaise with UK2Learn Guardianship regarding any concerns and difficulties
- Notify UK2Learn Guardianship as soon as there is any change of circumstances in the household such as permanent residents of the house
- Liaise with UK2Learn Guardianship if you have any welfare concerns
- Be familiar with UK2Learn’s safeguarding policy, paying particular attention to the rules about confidentiality
- Be aware of and use the 24/7 emergency number – 07787556963 – as and when needed
- Apply curfews to students according to the Host Family Handbook and also follow the procedures if curfews are not met
- Families are also advised on illness welfare responsibilities for students in their home
- Full guidelines on hosting international students are available in the Host Family Handbook

Host Family Obligations

- Advise their local council of their intention to foster a child at least 6 weeks beforehand or, where a child is received in an emergency, no more than 48 hours afterwards
- Understand that the local authority has a duty to ascertain whether the arrangement is suitable and to keep in touch with the child and themselves throughout the duration of the child’s stay. The host and any member of their household over the age of 16 will agree to enhanced DBS checks.
- Notify their local council within 48 hours when a child leaves their care, giving the name and address of the person into whose care the child has been moved
- Allow the allocated social worker to see the child, inspect the household and make reasonable recommendations every six weeks

Parents’ Obligations

- Retain parental responsibility and participate in all decisions about their child
- It is usual practice for the parents to meet the host family in advance of the arrangement and we would encourage the parents to travel with the student at the beginning of the academic year in order to do so
- Provide UK2Learn and the prospective host family with as much information about the child as possible, including their health, dietary preference, school, hobbies, religion and ethnicity

- Accept responsibility for ensuring that the proposed private fostering placement is suitable for their child

Local Council Obligations

- Check the suitability of private foster carers
- Make regular visits to the child and monitor the overall standard of care provided
- Ensure that advice to carers is made available when needed
- Advise the local council of the private fostering arrangement at least six weeks in advance or, where an arrangement is made in an emergency, no more than 48 hours afterwards
- An officer from the local authority must then visit the host within seven working days of receiving the notification, see the premises and meet with the host and other members of the household. Within 42 working days the local authority must make a decision about the suitability of the arrangement. In the event of the arrangement being deemed unsuitable, UK2Learn would need to make alternative living arrangements for the child in consultation with their parents.
- The local authority private fostering officer is there to support the child and the host family and to ensure that the child's welfare is safeguarded during their stay. It is not their intention to be over-intrusive but they have a duty to ensure that the arrangement continues to meet the needs of the child. The private fostering officer will arrange to visit the host family at least once every six weeks and the child's social worker will also need to see the child on their own. They may be able to offer advice on helping the child cope with homesickness, or ways in which the family can help the child maintain contact with their culture and religion. They are also there for the child to have someone else to talk to about any worries they may have.

Uk2learn Guardianship Obligations

- UK2Learn Guardianship will ensure that the parents are consulted on all important matters, such as health, welfare and school issues and aims to respond fully and promptly
- In the event that UK2Learn Guardianship has information about a child's special needs in relation to their physical or mental health, their emotional or behavioural functioning, or a physical or mental impairment obtained from the Student Profile Form, UK2Learn Guardianship should liaise with the parents and gain their consent to pass this information on to the private fostering officer when notifying them of the proposed accommodation with the host family. The local authority may be able to offer advice and support to the child and the host family.
- UK2Learn Guardianship will send a full profile of the host family to the parents which will include personal information as well as address, contact telephone numbers and email address.
- If there are concerns about the well-being of a child living with a host family, UK2Learn Guardianship and/or the host family should discuss this with the child's social worker or private fostering office who has a continuing responsibility to ensure that the child's needs are being met whilst living with the host family. The child's distress may indicate that they are homesick or feeling lonely, but it may also indicate that they are not receiving appropriate care from their host or that there is an underlying problem that has not been identified
- Before sharing information with the local authority, UK2Learn Guardianship should consult with the parent and host. If they are unwilling for information to be shared, UK2Learn Guardianship should consider its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of the child and whether it is acting responsibly and within the law in line with its Safeguarding Policy. If there is suspicion that a child is being

harmed or is at risk of significant harm and urgent action is required UK2Learn Guardianship should notify the local authority of police immediately

- In order to promote the safeguarding of children living in private fostering arrangements with host families, UK2Learn Guardianship should ensure staff are fully aware of what 'private fostering' means and their role within this. It should encourage staff to attend local authority awareness-raising events and take up opportunities to attend training on private fostering through the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB)
- UK2Learn Guardianship should include information in its publicity materials and on its website to help ensure that parents and host families are aware of the implications of children being accommodated for a period of 28 days or more, and the role of the local authority in safeguarding and supporting these arrangements
- In relation to private fostering arrangements and provision of accommodation with private individuals, colleges would only be involved in arranging private fostering if they arrange placements for under 16s which last more than 28 days. Under the Children Act 2004 a private college may also have a duty to report to children services if it becomes aware that a student seems to be suffering at the hands of an individual providing private accommodation or fostering
- UK2Learn Guardianship provides suitable homestays that are willing to become private foster carers for under 16 year old students for more than 28 days. The company is experienced in processing all the documents required for the procedure, and our staff offer informed guidelines to the student, parents, agent, school/college and host family host of the private fostering process
- UK2Learn Guardianship should ensure that the host family is aware that if they accommodate a child under the age of 16 (or 18 if disabled) for a period of 28 days or more they are entering into a private fostering arrangement. The host family should understand that the local authority has a duty to ascertain whether the arrangement is suitable and to keep in touch with the child and the host family throughout the duration of the child's stay. The host and any member of their household over the age of 16 will be required to have enhanced DBS checks

Suzie Mackie is available at all times in an emergency on 07787556963