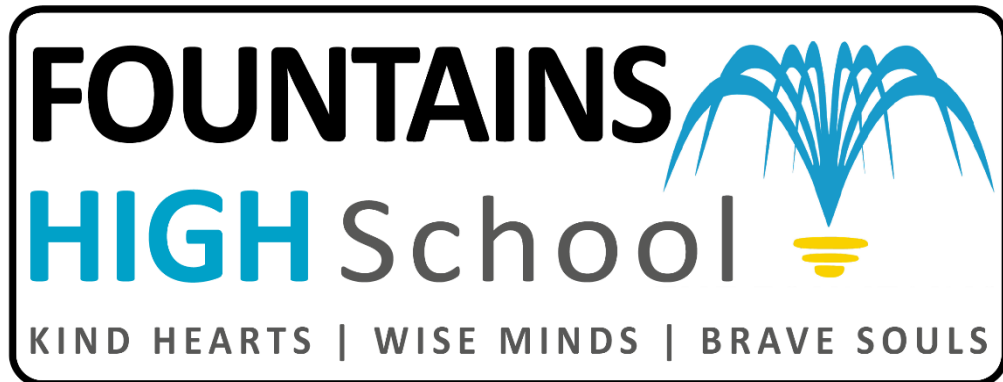




Private Fostering Statement

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Purpose

Fountains High School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all students. This statement outlines the school's responsibilities in relation to private fostering arrangements and the actions staff will take where such arrangements are identified.

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What is Private Fostering?

A private fostering arrangement is one that is made privately (without the involvement of a local authority) for the care of a child under the age of 16 (under 18 if the child has a disability) by someone other than a parent or close relative. If the arrangement is to last, or has lasted, for 28 days or more, it is categorised as private fostering.

Close relatives are defined as a grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt (whether of full blood or half blood, by marriage or civil partnership) or a stepparent. People become involved in private fostering for all kinds of reasons.

Examples of private fostering include:

- Children who need alternative care because of parental illness.
- Children whose parents cannot care for them because their work or study involves long or antisocial hours.
- Children sent from abroad to stay with another family, usually to improve their educational opportunities.
- Unaccompanied asylum seeking and refugee children.
- Teenagers who stay with friends (or other non-relatives) because they have fallen out with their parents.
- Children staying with families while attending a school away from their home area.

Our Responsibilities

Fountains High School is committed to safeguarding all students and promoting their welfare.

We recognise that private fostering is a safeguarding matter. The school will maintain a culture of professional curiosity where a student's living arrangements are unclear, have changed or give rise to concern.

There is a mandatory duty to notify the relevant local authority where the school becomes aware of a private fostering arrangement.

All staff are expected to be aware of indicators of private fostering and will:

- Report any concerns or disclosures to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) using MyConcern.
- Work in partnership with students, parents/carers and other professionals where appropriate.
- Remain professionally curious about any changes in a student's living arrangements.
- Support the DSL in obtaining relevant information where concerns arise.

Where a private fostering arrangement is identified, the DSL/DDSL will notify the relevant local authority Children's Social Care Team in accordance with local safeguarding procedures.

Why This Matters

Children and young people in private fostering arrangements may be more vulnerable to risks such as neglect, abuse, exploitation or isolation. It is important that these arrangements are assessed to ensure that children are safe and appropriately cared for.

Professionals are not breaching confidentiality by sharing information about a private fostering arrangement with Children's Social Care. Doing so helps ensure that appropriate safeguarding assessments and support can be provided.

Reporting Concerns

Any member of staff who becomes aware of, or suspects, a private fostering arrangement must report the matter to the DSL or DDSL without delay.

Monitoring and Review

This statement will be reviewed annually by the Designated Safeguarding Lead.