

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL
St Catherine's School
Station Road
Bramley
Guildford
Surrey
GU5 0DF
England

RECEIVED
29 JUN 2015

Fostering Team West
Surrey County Council
Quadrant Court
35 Guildford Road
Woking
Surrey GU22 7QQ

24 June 2015

Dear Mrs Alice Phillips

AWARENESS RAISING – PRIVATE FOSTERING ARRANGEMENTS

Have you come across a Private Fostering arrangement before? A child or young person under the age of 16 (or 18 if they have a disability), who are cared for and living with someone who is not his/her parent or a close relative for more than 28 days, may be privately fostered. These arrangements are made between the child or young person's parent and the carer without the involvement of Social Services. The child or young person is not a looked after child in the care of the Local Authority. Find enclosed a **leaflet** with detailed information about Private Fostering, including who is considered to a relative in terms of the Children Act.

Parents usually know and trust the person who will be or is caring for their child. There are however also arrangements where the parent may not have met the person who will be caring for their child, for example when children from other countries to come to stay in the UK as part of their studies or school exchange programmes, or as is often the case when young people themselves arrange to live with a friend's family. I am sure that you will agree with me that these children and young people are vulnerable and could be at risk of harm. Think for instance of Victoria Climbié, who was cared for in a Private Fostering arrangement as she lived with a great aunt.

Legislation introduced after the death of Victoria Climbié requires Local Authorities to be pro-active in investigating possible Private Fostering arrangements to keep children and young people safe and promote good outcomes for these children through ongoing support and advice.

In the light of a Private Fostering arrangement being made without the involvement of Social Services, we are faced with the difficulty of not knowing about children and young people who are cared for in Private Fostering arrangements. The legislation places a responsibility upon the parent and carer to inform the Local Authority when they intend to or have made a Private Fostering arrangement, but many of them do not know about this requirement.

The said legislation also requires professionals who are aware of Private Fostering arrangements to inform the Local Authority. As a professional / community member who has contact with children and families, you are likely to know about children who may be in Private Fostering arrangements. We are therefore calling on you to help us to safeguarding children and young people in Surrey.

Please consider whether any child or young person that you know or have contact with is likely to be privately fostered and notify Surrey County Council's Contact Centre (contact details are in the information leaflet enclosed).

You are most welcome to contact me to discuss and provide further information and advice. I am also available to attend training sessions and present detailed information and examples of Private Fostering arrangements.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lizanda Earle', written in a cursive style.

Lizanda Earle
Assistant Team Manager for Private Fostering