Academic Guardians UK

Private Fostering Arrangements Statement

From time to time Academic Guardians UK Ltd (referred to herein as – AGUK) will become UK Educational Guardians to day pupils both under and over the age of 16. This Statement is designed to outline the duties and functions of AGUK when complying with the National Minimum Standards for Private Fostering.

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Policy owner	Updated	Review date
Andrew Kettle	August 2024	August 2025

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE FOR PRIVATE FOSTERING

INTRODUCTION

From time to time Academic Guardians UK Ltd (referred to herein as – AGUK) will become UK Educational Guardians to day pupils both under and over the age of 16. This Statement is designed to outline the duties and functions of AGUK when complying with the National Minimum Standards for Private Fostering.

1.0 THE LEGAL DEFINITION OF A PRIVATELY FOSTERED CHILD

1.1 The Children's Act 1989, The Children's Act 2004 and The Private Fostering Arrangements 2005 define a privately fostered child as:

"A private fostering arrangement is essentially one that is made privately (that is to say without the involvement of a local authority) for the care of a child under the age of 16 (under 18, if disabled) by someone other than a parent or close relative with the intention that it should last for 28 days or more. Private foster carers may be from the extended family, such as a cousin or great aunt. However, a person who is a relative under the Children Act 1989 i.e. parent, a grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt (whether of the full or half blood or by marriage) or step-parent will not be a private foster carer. A private foster carer may be a friend of the family, the parent of a friend of the child, or someone previously unknown to the child's family who is willing to privately foster a child. The period for which the child is cared for and accommodated by the private foster carer should be continuous, but that continuity is not broken by the occasional short break."

Exemptions to this definition are set out in Schedule 8 of the Children Act 1989.

For the purpose of The Children's Act the term 'parent' includes unmarried or putative father.

2.0 Examples of Private Fostering

2.1 Examples of Private Fostering in the context of UK Educational Guardianship may be:

- children who attend language schools;
- children at boarding schools who do not return to their parents during vacations;
- children on holiday exchanges;
- children brought from abroad with a view to adoption; children whose parents work unsocial hours and whose parents have chosen to make Private Fostering Arrangements as a consequence (the Chinese community, in particular, is known to foster privately);
- children with parents overseas;
- children living with host families for a variety of reasons

2.2 An arrangement is deemed as private fostering if it meets the criteria above, whether for reward (monetary or otherwise) or not.

2.3 A child is not privately fostered if the person caring for him (her):

- has done so for a period of less than 28 days, and
- does not intend to do so for any longer period

3.0 Characteristics of a Private Fostering Arrangement

3.1 The period of placement is more than 28 consecutive days. Where it may be one of a series of placements that add up to more than 28 days, as is the case with international boarding students, there is a sufficient break (school attendance, travelling home - abroad) to cause a restart in calculating the period as each homestay is a genuinely fresh arrangement.

3.2 A private fostering arrangement is made by AGUK & parents or a person with parental responsibility, directly with the private foster carers.

4.0 Duties and functions

4.1 In respect of privately fostered children AGUK has a duty to satisfy itself that the welfare of children who are privately fostered is being satisfactorily safeguarded and promoted, and to provide the necessary advice to those caring for them. This includes ensuring that carers fulfil their responsibilities to the child.

4.2 AGUK will identify and recruit the Homestay Host Family to be considered for the private fostering arrangement in line with AGUK's Safer Recruitment Policy. A copy of this policy is available publicly on the AGUK website and intranet site for all internal personnel.

4.3 AGUK has a duty to inform the Local Authority Fostering Service 6 weeks in advance of the fostering arrangement (or as soon as practicable). This will allow them the time to complete all the necessary suitability, wellbeing and safeguarding checks. The duties placed on local authorities are supervisory and regulatory and will be provided to the required legal obligations and according to available resources.

4.4 The arrangements are made between AGUK, the parent or person with parental responsibility and the private foster carer. The assessment of carers and suitability of the household are undertaken by the Social Worker in the Fostering Service. AGUK will notify a liaise with the relevant personnel in the Local Authority Fostering Service.

These local authority duties also include the following:

- Assessing the suitability of private fostering arrangements, private fostering carers and their households;

- Monitoring placements through visits and keeping secure case file records that document the continuing suitability of the placement;
- Supporting private foster carers, parents and children by offering advice and giving information that ensures the child's welfare is safeguarded and promoted;
- Prohibition & disqualification of a person proposing to become, or is acting in the capacity of a private foster carer to safeguarding the needs and welfare of the child;
- Being accountable to the Local Safeguarding Children's Board and the executive side of the local authority as to how the service discharges its duties in relation to private fostering through the provision of annual reports.

4.5 AGUK will liaise with the schools and homestays to co-ordinate regular visits and meetings to ensure that the safety and wellbeing of the student is being maintained.

4.6 AGUK will keep a record of all communications and correspondence in the student care folders as appropriate in relation to the private fostering arrangements.

4.7 AGUK will obtain permission to share such information as is necessary with the student, parent /agents, homestay, partner schools and Local Authority Fostering Service via the relevant agreement forms. The sharing of personal data will be done in accordance with the GDPR 2018 (General Data Protection Regulations) and AGUKs Privacy Policy. A copy of this policy is available publicly on the AGUK website and intranet site for all internal personnel.

4.8 AGUK will raise awareness through periodic training and information sharing for staff, volunteers and homestay host families on private fostering arrangements.

4.9 In the case of day students over the age on 16, AGUK will be mindful of the extended period students will spend with homestays and suitable checks will be conducted to ensures the child's welfare is safeguarded and promoted through regular visits to the homestay and detailed monthly feedback reports and regular telephone updates.

5.0 AGUK Contact Details

5.1 AGUK Contacts

Designated Safeguarding Lead & Prevent Lead – Director Andrew Kettle who can be contacted on 0203 515 8880, 07823 321 993 or andrew@academic-guardians.co.uk

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead – Director Dawn Kettle who can be contacted on 0203 515 8880, 07931 954 106 or dawn@academic-guardians.co.uk

Concerns in relation to the Managing Directors should be addressed to the Director of Safeguarding, Andrew Kettle, Concerns in relation to the Designated Safeguarding Lead should be addressed to Dawn Kettle and vice versa, on a confidential basis without disclosing to the safeguarding officer the matter relates to. As the DDL & DDSL are connected parties, then concerns

about either can also be addressed with the Safeguarding Partners as detailed below. Concerns about all Directors should be directed to Crimestoppers, which will remain confidential.

Safeguarding Partners - Academic Guardians UK registered office is within the borough of Islington whose current safeguarding contact details are as follows:

Website: https://www.islingtonscp.org.uk/are-you-worried-about-a-child

Children's Services Contact Team - +44 20 7527 7400

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) - +44 20 7527 8102

Information about services for children can be found on the Islington Family Directory https://www.islingtonscp.org.uk/

Police Referrals - Child Abuse Investigation Team (CAIT) +44 20 8733 6495 or +44 20 8733 6500

For Emergencies - 999

All Local Safeguarding Partnerships & MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs) contact details are provided to Homestay Host families, attached to the student profile on confirmation of booking.

A link to the list of Local Safeguarding Partnerships can be found here.

6.0 Supporting Reference Documents

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2016-2024

The Children's Act 1989, 2004

The Private Fostering Arrangements 2005 National

Minimum Standards for Private Fostering

7.0 Further Resources

https://childlawadvice.org.uk/information-pages/private-fostering/

https://safeguarding.network/content/safeguarding-resources/children-care-others/private-fostering/