

Do I have to go to school?

If you are under 16 you **must** go to school—this is the law. Your private foster carer **must** make sure that you go to school every day.

When you start living with your private foster carer you may need to go to a new school nearer to your new home, but your parents should agree to this change.

Do I have to do jobs around the home?

Yes— but only small jobs. In most families children and young people help with small jobs around the home like washing up, setting the table for meals, putting clothes in the washing machine or keeping their rooms tidy.

Staying healthy

Your health is very important and everyone should help you to look after yourself well. Before moving to your private foster carers your parents should tell them:

- If you have any health issues
- If you need special medicine or treatment
- If you have any allergies (an allergy is when you react badly to something like a bee sting or particular foods like milk, nuts etc...)

Your private foster carers should make sure you are registered with a doctor and a dentist

If you are finding it hard to read because you cannot see the words properly, you should tell someone so

Racism and bullying

There are people who can help you if you are being called nasty names or being hurt at school. If you feel you are being treated unfairly at home or at school, talk to your social worker or someone else you trust

There are other people who can help you

Don't forget if you need to talk to someone there are organisations who can give you help and advice for **free**:

CHILDLINE 0800 1111

www.childline.org.uk 24 hour helpline for children who are in trouble or at risk of being hurt.

NSPCC 0800 800 5000

www.nspcc.org.uk if you are being bullied at home or at school or just worried or scared about something

CHILDRENS RIGHTS DIRECTOR 0191 233 3502

www.rights4me.org

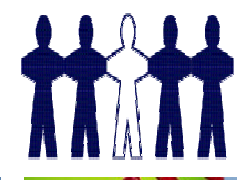
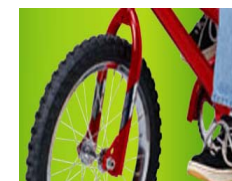
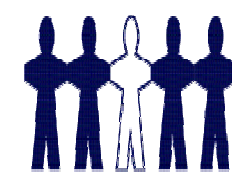
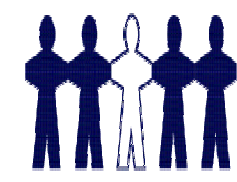
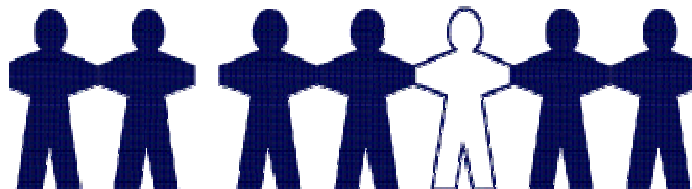
My social workers contact number is.....

If they are out I can also call.....

Children, Young People & Families

www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/privatefostering

Useful information about children's rights and support available while you are living away from home in private foster care



PRIVATE FOSTERING

About Private Fostering

If you are under 18 years old and you live with someone for more than 28 days who is not related to you, you are in **Private Foster Care**.

You are **not** in private foster care if you live with or are looked after by an uncle and aunt, your brother or sister, a half-brother or sister, step-relatives and people who are related to you by marriage.

The law says that your parents and your private foster carer's **must** tell Children's Social Care about your private fostering arrangements. The law also says that once we have been told about you we **must** check on you regularly to make sure you are safe and that your carer's are doing their best to look after you properly.

This leaflet makes you aware of what you can expect and what to do if you are not being treated properly or you are just unhappy with the arrangement you find yourself in.

Why children and young people are privately fostered?

Lots of children and young people live away from home for a variety of reasons.

What should my private foster carer do?

Your private foster carer is responsible for your day to day care. They should:

- Give you regular meals
- Make sure you have a bed to yourself and that you get enough sleep
- Makes sure you are clean (you should have regular baths/ showers) and that you have warm, clean clothes
- Help you to stay healthy, make sure you are happy and attend any medical or dental appointments that you need if you are ill or injured.

- Make sure you go to school or college and get the necessary support with your work
- Make sure you have a chance to make friends and to do sports or hobbies you like

If things are really bad and cannot be improved then it may be necessary for you to move to another family or even return home if that is what you want.

What your social worker should do:

Because you live with private foster carers, the law states that a social worker **must** check on you regularly to make sure you are safe and being looked after well.

As soon as we know that you live with a private foster carer a social worker will arrange to visit you at home (this first visit should happen within a week). Your social worker will talk to you (alone) to ask how you are feeling and if there is anything you don't like or would like to see changed.

If you feel worried or frightened about something you can tell your social worker in private and no one else will listen. This is why they will talk to you alone with no other grown up around.

Your social worker **must** come to see you every 6 weeks for the first year. After this they will come less often, unless you ask them to come.

What if I need to talk to my social worker in between visits?

If you have questions or are worried about something or you just want a chat you can contact your social worker anytime. You don't have to wait for the next visit.

What if I am not happy with my private foster carer?

Most young people living in private foster care are quite happy and looked after well. If you do have problems then they can usually be sorted out easily.

If you are unhappy or your social worker thinks you are not being looked after properly then we will make sure something is done about it.

Can my foster care make changes to my life?

No—not unless your parents give permission. Even though you live away from home, your parents **must** still make all the important decisions about your life.

Can I stay in touch with my family?

Yes—unless there is a very special reason, it is important that you stay in touch with your family. Your parents should phone and visit you, or write to you as often as they can and they **must** also check that you are being well looked after.

The private foster carer **must** help you to stay in touch with your parents—by helping you to write

Can I still follow my religion and family customs?

Yes—your private foster carer **must** respect the things that are important to you and your family and help you follow religious customs like special prayer times or eating special foods. They should also help you learn about your culture and meet people from your community who speak your language.

