nurture
FOSTERING LTD

Information Guide

for Children and Young People Aged 16-18

Nurture Fostering
340 High Street Lewisham
London
SE13 6LE
Tel: 020 8690 9012
Website: www.nurturefostering.co.uk
Email: info@nurturefostering.co.uk

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Introduction to Nurture Fostering:

We would like to welcome you to Nurture Fostering, we are an independent fostering agency working with the Local Authorities to support and welcome young people like you into fostering.

Whilst the company is relatively new and will most definitely be new to you, the team here at Nurture have been involved in the Fostering community for many years. Some of our social workers are foster carers themselves and can help and support you to adjust to your new lifestyle with your foster families.

Nurture aims to provide your foster family with the support and care they need, so in turn they can provide that to you and help you to come to terms with the changes and challenges that you will be experiencing.

Some children and young people find this time in their lives very confusing and it is ok to feel, sad, happy, angry and confused, but it's easier if you let us know, just so that we can help you to understand why you are feeling this way and then we in turn can try and help you to come to terms with your feelings.

We are responsible for ensuring that your foster carers:

- Keep you safe
- Feed you good nutritional foods that you enjoy
- Support you in school or college
- Help you to stay in touch with your family
- Be healthy

We achieve this by regularly visiting your foster home and ensuring that you have everything you need and report this back to your social worker, so that everyone stays in touch and knows exactly what is going on with your care.

Who Are Foster Carers?

Many children and young people are unable to remain living at home with their families, this is due to a variety of reasons, sometimes adults have to make decisions on your behalf that you may find upsetting which is why it is always good to talk to social workers and foster carers. It is not your fault that you cannot stay with your family, but nevertheless this can be a very confusing and upsetting time for you.
Foster Carers are people who want to share their home and support a young person who can no longer live with their families. To become a foster carer they have to go through a long process prior to being able to become a foster carer.

You may have been provided some information by your social worker on what the foster family may look like, including the home you are due to live in and what is around the surrounding area.

We are sure that you may have many questions for your social worker and the foster family, please feel free to use the space below to make a list of questions you may like to ask. We have provided you with some starter questions to use so that you can try and adjust to your new surroundings:

Your local authority and your social worker who are involved in looking after you, have to write down what they will do to help you. How they will support your health, education, hobbies and they will help you maintain

contact with family and friends. This is called care plan.

At regular intervals your care place will be reviewed this may be referred to as a statutory review. The care plan and the review are about you and it is important that you put your point of view across and ask whatever questions you need to.

Contact:

What is Contact?

You will hear social workers use the word contact, it means keeping in touch with members of your family. It can be good to see people who know you well and are important to you.

Contact can include significant people from outside of your family e.g. a teacher or school friends. It is important for you to maintain these types of links within your community.

Your social worker is the one who plans contact, talk to your social worker and to your foster carer about special people that you want to see and speak to, also tell them if there are some people you don't want to see, and say why.

Types of Contact

Different types of contact include:

- Face to face visits
- Overnight stays
- Outings or events
- Telephone calls
- Exchanging of photos, videos, emails or letters
- Text messaging

Sometimes circumstances make it difficult to have contact with members of your family, for example if you are an unaccompanied minor, again speak to your social worker as they may be working with agencies such as the Red Cross who will try to trace family members.

Consultation & Participation

The content of the children's guide is based on the results of national consultations and consultations with children and young people looked after in Nuture Fostering placements. You will be asked to complete 'have your say' brief questionnaire at the time of your foster carer's annual review.

Please use all opportunities to give us your feedback:

- Statutory meetings
- Meetings with the supervising social worker
- Forums and events for children and young people

Let's hear it from you, join us at the Kids Zone to have your say!

www.nurture-fostering.co.uk/kids-zone

Nurture Fostering would love to hear from you about your own dreams and aspirations! You may be a very good swimmer and dream of representing your Country in national competitions. You may be a talented musician with a desire to perform. Tell us the best way for us to help you achieve your aspirations and goals.

Let us know - email your dreams and aspirations to **info@nurture-fostering.co.uk**

Activities and Holidays

Nurture Fostering's foster carers will fully encourage and support you to take up general leisure activities within and outside of the home. If you have any interests or hobbies e.g., football, swimming, dancing, photography, going out with friends or going to the cinema; these will all be actively encouraged. If you want to be given the opportunity to try out new activities, make sure you tell your foster carer and they will do their best to support you.

You may go on holidays, weekends or day trips, maybe with your family, friends or carers. This will be discussed between you, your family, your carers and your social worker.

Overnight Stays

Children and young people of all ages get invited to 'sleep over's' at friends houses. An overnight stay consists of being away from placement for 24 hours or more. Children's services have a responsibility to make sure that you will be safe. If you want to stay at a friend's house:

Tell your foster carer, they will want some information about the friend and will probably need to speak with friend's parents, and these are usual measures.
Your social worker will have to know where you are staying and check that the friend's family are safe.

Remember the decision on an overnight stay must be made by your social worker, who will want to consult with you and your foster carer.

If you know that sleepovers are likely, raise the subject at your placement agreement meeting, so that any arrangements can be made.

Bedrooms and Personal Belongings

Whilst living in your foster carer's house, you will be given your own bedroom if possible. This is a place where you'll be able to spend some quiet time where you can relax or do some work. It is your own space where you can keep all of your personal belongings. If you have anything of value (eg, jewellery, savings book) you need to let your foster carer know, so it can be kept safe.

Your foster carers may need to go into your room from time to time but they will always knock first. Remember that you should never go in someone else's room without permission.

Rules

Are there any house rules/expectations of living with the foster carers?

Your foster carer will tell you what the house rules are, its good to remember that rules or expectations are there to keep you safe and to teach you daily living skills and life skills.
Your foster carer has a responsibility to keep you safe and secure, look after you, your well being is paramount to the foster carers and social workers who are there to support you and guide you. Some of the house rules will include:

- What time you go to bed and get up
- When friends would be welcomed
- How you keep your room
- Whether you can decorate your room with pictures or posters
- Where you keep your personal belongings including toiletries
- Whether you can leave the property and if so, what time you need to be home.
- There may be a bathroom rota if it's a busy household
- Where to eat and drink in the home
- Any rules around shoes, keys etc
- When to do homework

Whatever happens your foster carers are there to ensure you are treated equally with dignity and respect.

Allowances

Whilst living in foster care you are entitled to weekly pocket money. The amount will be agreed at your placement agreement meeting between you, your foster carer and social worker.

You are also entitled to a clothing allowance. You can discuss this with your foster carer and agree on a reasonable amount.

Education

Nurture Fostering greatly values education and believes that children and young people in foster placements should be fully supported and given every opportunity to reach their full educational potential.

You have a responsibility to make sure that you go to school every day, if there are reasons why you do not want to go to school, speak with your foster carer and social worker, they will help where they can, but all children and young people between the age of 5 and 16 must be in education.

Personal Education Plans

These include educational targets, what you enjoy, what you are good at and areas that you would like to improve; you should have a personal education plan. If you have special needs you will have a statement which also makes plans for your educational future.

Your foster carers will support you in your education, they will ensure that you have what you need and a quiet place to study, they will attend meetings at school and speak with your teacher. Many schools have a home-school agreement and carers and parents will have a copy of this and help when it is appropriate.

Further Education

You may wish to stay on at school (year 12 and 13, or six form colleges), you may be interested in applying for a place at university or college, your foster carer, social worker and school can help you consider the options and make the appropriate applications. It is important that you get a good education and the opportunity for a career you will enjoy.

Health

It is important that you know how to look after your health. For example eating good food, and taking part in physical activities and other things that you enjoy. Your foster carer will make sure that you are registered with a doctor, and a dentist. At the stage of your placement agreement meeting a health record will be completed, this is to help ensure that your health needs are met. Your foster carers will encourage you to take any medication or treatment you need; this will include wearing glasses or contact lenses, if you need them.

To stay physically, mentally and sexually healthy it helps if you get advice, where appropriate, about matters such as drugs, alcohol, smoking and sex.

Bullying

Children sometimes bully others because:

- They don't know it's wrong.
- They are copying older siblings or

other people in the family whom they admire.

- They haven't learnt other ways of mixing with their school friends/peers.
- Their friends encourage them to bully
- They are going through a difficult time and are acting out aggressive feelings.
- They may be jealous.

Bullying includes:

- People calling you names.
- Making things up to get you in trouble
- Hitting, pinching, biting, pushing and shoving.
- Taking your things.
- Damaging your property.
- Threats and intimidation.

You should:

- Tell someone: teacher, lecturer, foster carer or social worker.
- Contact an agency for advice and information (see the 'Useful Contacts' section).

Cyber Bullying

Cyber bullying is bullying and harassment through email, instant messaging, text messages, blogs, websites and mobile phones. It is also called electronic bullying, SMS bullying, mobile bullying, online bullying and internet bullying. Cyber bullying causes distress and is wrong! We have listed some ways to protect yourself.

If you receive a nasty email it is best not to reply. If they do not stop tell your foster carer, they may be able to contact the service provider. If a situation repeats itself or is serious and is worrying you, save and print off the emails. They will provide evidence in case your foster carer needs to take action.

Do not give out personal information in chatrooms or through any instant messenger. Do not respond to abusive messages - ignore them or log off. Always think about what you write and how you write it.

Do not reply to any text or video messages that are rude or nasty. The mobile service provider (e.g., O2, EE) will have a number that you can call to report abusive messaging. Take a look on their website. Be careful who you give your number to and don't leave your mobile lying around.
Using the internet for chat rooms, forums and peer-to-peer networks can be great fun, a place to meet new and interesting people and share ideas and information. But you need to be very careful about who you chat to and what information they give out.

Remember, if you've never met the person, he or she is

still a stranger, regardless of how often you've "chatted". If a stranger walked up to you on the street and asked you for personal details such as your address and telephone number you wouldn't give it to them. The same rules apply on the internet.

Sending text messages, emails and pictures either by mobile or on your computer can be a great way to keep in touch with friends. But remember, once that message, picture or email has been sent, you no longer have control over where it goes or who sees it. Images can be copied and manipulated or even posted on the internet without your permission and that confidential text message you sent could easily be forwarded to the wrong person. Only give your mobile number to people you know and trust. Never respond to a text message from someone you don't know. Remember to always ask permission if you want to post a picture of someone else on the internet.

When registering for things on websites you may be asked to give personal information. Always check that the site is reliable and reputable before giving out any information and make sure they will not pass on or sell your information (well-known sites such as the BBC are reliable). Reliable sites will always have a privacy policy which will tell you how your information will be used. This should help you decide if you want to give out your information. Most sites also have a check box at the bottom of the page asking for permission to pass on or use your personal information.

If you have any doubts at all speak to your carer who will be able to help you decide whether the site is reputable.

Child Protection and Safeguarding

Sometimes adults or other young people hurt children and harm them in a physical/emotional way and this is not right. Child abuse is wrong and child protection is about preventing and stopping child abuse.

What is Child Abuse?

Physical Injury. This is where a child is beaten/punched/kicked hurt in a physical way.

Emotional Abuse. This is when a parent or carer behaves in a way that is likely to seriously affect their child's emotional development. It can range from constant rejection and denial of affection, through to continual severe criticism. Witnessing domestic violence can be considered a form of emotional abuse.

Neglect. This is when a child or young person is pressurised, forced or tricked into taking part in any kind of sexual activity with an adult or young person. This can include kissing touching the young person's genitals or breasts, intercourse or oral sex. Encouraging a child to look at pornographic magazines, videos or sexual acts is also sexual abuse.

What is Child Protection Enquiry?

Someone may tell someone at school, or a health visitor or the Social Services that they are worried about a child. A child may then become the subject or a child protection enquiry this may lead to an investigation.

Child Protection Conference

It is a social workers job to protect children from harm and if they feel there is concern a meeting called a child protection conference will be held to help decide what can be done to help a child this will become known as a child protection plan. Parents, teachers, social workers and all those who play a part in a child's care may contribute to the plan. You may be able to go to the meeting and should discuss this with your Social Worker.

A key aim of children's services, including local authority and foster providers is to keep children and young people safe from harm. The law states that abusing children is wrong.

Independence

Becoming independent can be an exciting but challenging time. It is important that you get the advice and support that you need from your foster carer and social worker. You may need to make important decisions about staying on at school, or applying for jobs, or training courses. There is a service called Connexions which provides advice and guidance for all 13 to 19 year olds in England.

Your foster carer will work with you to help develop skills in:

- Managing your money, setting up bank accounts and paying bills
- Healthy eating, shopping for food and cooking
- Personal health, first aid, avoiding illnesses, food preparation
- Housing options, DIY, planning preparation
- Education, training, work

Talk through any needs you feel you may have. If you have any questions ask your foster carer or your social worker.

Please use this space to note down:

My foster carers are called: .....

There phone numbers are: .....

My social workers name is: .....

There telephone number is:.....

There e mail address is:.....

My foster carers social worker is called: .....

There telephone number is:.....

What do I do if I am not happy or want to complain?

It will depend who or what you would like to complain about, but the first thing to say is nothing bad will happen to you for speaking out. Problems at school we would suggest you talk to your foster carer first so that they can speak to the school on your behalf and try and resolve the issue.

If you do not feel that this is not being dealt with well then talk to your social worker or you can always speak to both people at the same time. If there is a problem in your foster family then you need to tell your social worker or the Nurture Social Worker so that they can try and resolve the issues and ensure that we make it better. Whatever is worrying you we can always try and sort it out, it is always best to speak to an adult who will be able to look at the best way of dealing with things and support you through this.

You can telephone us on 0208 690 9012

Text: 07939 836277

Send us an e mail to the kids zone on our website: www.nurture-fostering.co.uk/kids-zone/

You can speak to us, when we come and see you in the home.

Stage 1:

This is the first stage where you speak to your foster carer or social worker about what is bothering you. If you don't feel comfortable speaking to them, you can speak to us. You can have support from your foster carer, friend, advocate or someone that you trust to do this. We will acknowledge your problem within 48 hours and try and resolve it at this stage.

Stage 2:

If you still think that there is a problem, The Registered Manager at Nurture will look into it for you. This is a formal investigation and you should be told within 20 working days about what will happen. A report will also be written up and senior a manager will go through this with you.

Stage 3:

If you are still not happy then the Registered Manager will refer this to a company Director, who will look into this for you. The Director or Responsible Individual will try to sort the problem within 20 working days and will let you know the result.

There are some other contact details to the rear of this booklet that may be able to help you.

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Useful information & Staying Safe:

- Listen to your foster carers, they are trying to keep you safe
- Don't take other people's possessions without asking them first
- Stay safe when using the internet
- Always ask your foster carers if you can go somewhere
- Treat people how you would like to be treated yourself

Organisation	Telephone	Website
Nurture Fostering	020 8690 9012	www.nurturefostering.co.uk
The Children Commissioner for England	0207 7838330	Info.request@childrenscomissioner.gsi.gov.uk www.childrencomissioner.gov.uk
The Children's Rights Director for England	0800 528 0731	www.rights4me.org
Ofsted (Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills)	0300 123 1231	enquires@ofsted.gov.uk www.ofsted.gov.uk
ChildLine 24 hours helpline	08001111	www.childline.org.uk
The Who Cares	207 7251 3117	mailbox@thewhocarestrust.org.uk www.thewhocarestrust.org.uk
Voice	0808 800 5792	minfo@ voiceyp.org www.voiceyp.org
Rights 4 Me	0800 5280731	www.rights4me.org
NSPCC – National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children	0800 1111 – child helpline	www.nspcc.org.uk