

A Foster Carers Guide to Sleepovers.

This guide supports foster carers to make informed decisions about sleepovers for children and young people in their care.

A sleepover is an overnight stay at a peer's home under the supervision of that family. While the child or young person is away from your home, you retain parental responsibility for their safety and wellbeing.

When a carer can approve a sleepover

You can approve a sleepover if:

- The child or young person is on an Assessment Order or Care and Protection Order
- They are of school age
- The sleepover is two nights or less (for longer stays, you must discuss this with the Child Safety Officer.)

If the sleepover becomes regular and recurring, then you must discuss this with the Child Safety Officer.

Before the sleepover

Before agreeing, talk with the friend's parent/carer. Share only the information needed to keep the child safe and supported. Consider:

- The purpose of the sleepover
- Sleeping arrangements
- Who will be supervising and who else will be in the home
- Rules around technology and internet use
- Home safety measures (e.g. smoke alarms, pool fencing)

You should also talk with the child or young person:

- Do they want to attend? Do they have any worries?
- Do they know the friend and family well?
- Are they comfortable staying overnight?

Other factors to consider:

- The child or young person's age, abilities, and emotional readiness
- Previous overnight experiences
- Cultural considerations
- Length and timing of the placement
- Any trauma-related behaviours or safety risks
- Whether the host family can meet the child's medical, emotional, or behavioural needs

If you decide the sleepover is not appropriate, explain your decision in an age-appropriate way.

If you approve the sleepover, provide essential information (such as routines, medical needs, cultural considerations, or fears), while respecting the child's privacy. Ensure the host parent/carer has your contact details.

During the sleepover

- Always remain contactable
- Be ready to collect the child or young person if needed
- You may check in with the host parent/carer if appropriate

After the sleepover

- Talk with the child or young person about how it went
- Share feedback with the Child Safety Officer or Care Team, including:
 - Whether the experience was positive
 - Any concerns or incidents
- Report any safety or wellbeing concerns to the Child Safety Officer