



# Guidance for Virtual Primary School Visits

with Holly Marlow, Author of Foster Care, Kinship Care and Adoption Stories



## Preparing for the Visit

- Holly will provide a flyer that advertises the event. Please distribute this to parents and carers at least a week before the event, so that parents and carers of care-experienced children have the opportunity to pre-warn their children that these topics will be discussed in class. While these talks are suitable for all primary school age groups and every care will be taken to discuss sensitive topics in a non-triggering way, some children will benefit from the advanced notice. It is also advisable to notify the school safeguarding lead, who is welcome to contact Holly ([holly@hollymarlow.com](mailto:holly@hollymarlow.com)) with any questions or concerns ahead of the visit. Parents/carers may also contact Holly if they have any questions.
- Holly will read the book on the screen during the virtual visit. Holly's books are available from Amazon if you wish to purchase copies for the school library. Contact Holly directly to discuss preferential pricing if ordering more than 25 books.

## Visit

- Virtual author visits are £50. This fee can be waived if the school places a minimum order of 20 books. Up to 8 classes from the school may join the virtual meeting at no additional cost.
- Virtual visits are approximately 30-45 minutes long, and follow this structure:
  1. Overview of how and why Holly became an award-winning, bestselling author, including discussion of overcoming physical disability.
  2. Reading of *Room in the Nest*, highlighting and discussing various family structures, including foster care, kinship care, adoption, single parent families and families with same-sex parents.
  3. Holly will invite the children to vote for her to read either *Adopting a Little Brother or Sister* or *Cousins by Adoption*, both of which offer opportunities for audience participation.
  4. After reading the book the children voted for, Holly will answer questions from the audience. There are usually quite a lot of questions!

## Technical Requirements for a Virtual Author Visit with Holly

Software	The classroom computer must have video call software installed, such as Zoom, Skype or Microsoft Teams (preferred).
Webcam	The webcam should be positioned as close as possible to the screen the students will be looking at, so that Holly can see the students' faces looking towards them.
Microphone	Some webcams or smart screens will include a microphone, so this is not applicable. If you're using a separate microphone, position it such that Holly will be able to hear the students clearly. A cordless roaming microphone that can be passed from student to student is not essential, but is helpful to ensure that students can be heard clearly.
Screen	Ideally the computer should be connected to a large TV screen or white board projector.
Speakers	Your computer's built-in speakers may not be loud enough for Holly's voice to carry to the back of the room, so you might need to use some louder, plug-in speakers, or the TV's speakers if you're using a TV screen.



If you are new to virtual visits, please ensure that you have the necessary software and hardware and have familiarised yourself with how to use it by making some video calls before the virtual visit. Holly cannot offer technical support, but a test video call with Holly can be conducted in the couple of days leading up to the visit if required.

Virtual visits should not be recorded. Photographs or a few screenshots may be taken by the teacher during the visit. Holly will not take any photos or screenshots during the visit, but would appreciate copies of any “back of head” shots of pupils enjoying the visit, that she can share on social media or her website.

If multiple classes will be participating from different classrooms, please use class names or teacher names to join the meeting. This allows Holly to communicate more effectively, e.g. “I see a hand up in the Acorns class – what’s your question please?”

Please contact Holly if you have any questions: [holly@hollymarlow.com](mailto:holly@hollymarlow.com)