

Information sharing

Policy statement

We recognise that parents have a right to know that information they share will be regarded as confidential as well as be informed about the circumstances, and reasons, when we are obliged to share information.

We are obliged to share confidential information without authorisation from the person who provided it or to whom it relates if it is in the public interest. That is when:

- it is to prevent a crime from being committed or intervene where one may have been, or to prevent harm to a child or adult; or
- not sharing it could be worse than the outcome of having shared it.

The decision should never be made as an individual, but with the back-up of management owner. The three critical criteria are:

- Where there is *evidence* that the child is suffering, or is at risk of suffering, significant harm.
- Where there is *reasonable cause to believe* that a child may be suffering, or at risk of suffering, significant harm.
- To *prevent* significant harm arising to children and young people or serious harm to adults, including the prevention, detection and prosecution of serious crime.

Procedures

Our procedure is based on the 7 golden rules for information sharing as set out in *Information Sharing: Guidance for Practitioners and Managers (DCSF 2008)*.

1. Remember that the Data Protection Act is not a barrier to sharing information but provides a framework to ensure that personal information about living persons is shared appropriately.

- Our policy and procedures on information sharing provide guidance to appropriate sharing of information with external agencies.

2. Be open and honest. Explain to families how, when and why information will be shared about them and with whom. Seek consent to share information, unless it puts the child at risk or undermines a criminal investigation.

In our setting we ensure parents:

- receive information about our information sharing policy when starting their child in the setting and they sign a form to say that they *understand* circumstances when

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information may be shared without their consent. This will only be when it is a matter of safeguarding a child or vulnerable adult. This is on our registration form;

- have information about our Safeguarding Children and Child Protection policy; and
- have information about the circumstances when information will be shared with external agencies, for example, with regard to any special needs the child may have or transition to school.

3. Seek advice when there are doubts about possible significant harm to a child or others.

- Managers contact children's social care for advice where they have doubts or are unsure.

4. Share with consent where appropriate. Respect the wishes of children and parents not to consent to share confidential information. However, in the interests of the child, know when it is reasonable to override their wish.

- Guidelines for consent are part of this procedure.

5. Managers are conversant with this and are able to advise staff accordingly. Consider the safety and welfare of the child when making a decision about sharing information – if there are concerns regarding 'significant harm' the child's well being and safety is paramount.

In our setting we:

- record concerns and discuss these with the setting's *designated person* and/or *designated officer* from the management committee for child protection matters. Record decisions made and the reasons why information will be shared and to whom; and

- follow the procedures for reporting concerns and record keeping.

6. Information shared should be accurate and up-to-date, necessary for the purpose it is being shared for, shared only with those who need to know and shared securely.

- Our Child Protection procedure and Record Keeping procedure set out how and where information should be recorded and what information should be shared with another agency when making a referral.

7. Reasons for decisions to share information, or not, are recorded.

- Provision for this is set out in our Record Keeping procedure

Consent

When parents choose our setting for their child, they will share information about themselves and their families. This information is regarded as confidential. Parents have a right to be informed that we will see their consent to share information in most cases, as well as the kinds of circumstances when [we/I] may not seek their consent, or may override their refusal to give consent. We inform them as follows:

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- Our policies and procedures set out our responsibility regarding gaining consent to share information and when it may not be sought or overridden.
- We may cover this verbally when the child starts or include this in our prospectus.
- Parents sign our Registration Form at registration to confirm that they understand this.
- We ask parents to give written consent to share information about any additional needs their child may have, or to pass on child development summaries to the next provider/school.
- We give parents copies of the forms they sign.
- We consider the following questions when we need to share:
 - Is there legitimate purpose to [us/me] sharing the information?
 - Does the information enable the person to be identified?
 - Is the information confidential?
 - If the information is confidential, do we have consent to share?
 - Is there a statutory duty or court order requiring us to share the information?
 - If consent is refused, or there are good reasons for us not to seek consent, is there sufficient public interest for us to share information?
 - If the decision is to share, are we sharing the right information in the right way?
 - Have [we/I] properly recorded our decision?
- Consent must be *informed* - that is the person giving consent needs to understand why information will be shared, what will be shared, who will see information, the purpose of sharing it and the implications for them of sharing that information.
- Consent may be *explicit*, verbally but preferably in writing, or *implicit*, implied if the context is such that sharing information is an intrinsic part of our service or it has been explained and agreed at the outset.
- We explain our Information Sharing Policy to parents

Legal framework

- Data Protection Act 1998
- Human Rights Act 199

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This policy was adopted at a meeting of Little Lambs Pre-School held on 10th February 2017.....

Signed by.....Position.....

Name.....Review date.....