

10.5 Information sharing

Policy statement

We recognise that parents have a right to know that the information they share with us will be regarded as confidential, as well as to be informed about the circumstances when, and the reasons why, 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 to intervene where one may have been, or to prevent harm to a child or adult**
- **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 the management team. 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 is at risk of suffering, significant harm.**
- **To prevent significant harm arising to children and young people or adults, including the prevention, detection and prosecution of serious crime.**

Procedures

Our procedure is based on the seven 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.*
2. *Be open and honest with the person (and/or their family where appropriate) from the outset about why, what, how and with whom information will, or could be shared, and seek their agreement, unless it is unsafe or inappropriate to do so.*
3. *Seek advice if you are in any doubt, without disclosing the identity of the person where possible.*
4. *Share with consent where appropriate and, where possible, respect the wishes of those who do not consent to share confidential information. You may still share information without consent if, in your judgement, that lack of consent can be overridden in the public interest. You will need to base your judgement on the facts of the case.*
5. *Consider safety and well-being: Base your information sharing decisions on considerations of the safety and well-being of the person and others who may be affected by their actions.*
6. *Necessary, proportionate, relevant, accurate, timely and secure: Ensure that the information you share is necessary for the purpose for which you are sharing it, is shared only with those people who need to have it, is accurate and up-to-date, is shared in a timely fashion, and is shared securely.*
7. *Keep a record of your decision and the reasons for it – whether it is to share information or not. If you decide to share, then record what you have shared, with whom and for what purpose.*

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 seek their consent to share information in most cases, as

well as the kinds of circumstances when we may not seek their consent, or may override their refusal to give consent. We inform them as follows:

- 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.
- Parents sign an acceptance form for our Policies and Procedures, when their child starts at Pre-school.
- Parents sign our Application 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, and to pass on child development summaries to the next provider/school.
- We consider the following questions when we need to share:
 - Is there legitimate purpose to us 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 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.

Separated parents

- Consent to share need only be sought from one parent. Where parents are separated, this would normally be the parent with whom the child resides. Where there is a dispute, we will consider this carefully.

All the undertakings above are subject to our paramount commitment, which is to the safety and well-being of the child. Please also see our Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy.