



Woodham Mortimer Pre-School
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 Registered Charity Number: 1060526 DFES / OFSTED Number 650168
 PSLA Membership Number: 20167

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

General Welfare Requirement: Safeguarding and Promoting Children’s Welfare
 The Pre-School must take necessary steps to safeguard and promote the welfare of children

1.4 - CONFIDENTIALITY AND CLIENT ACCESS TO RECORDS POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT

Definition: ‘Confidential information is information of some sensitivity, which is not already lawfully in the public domain or readily available from another public source, and which has been shared in a relationship where the person giving the information understood it would not be shared with others.’ (Information Sharing: Practitioners’ Guide)

In our Pre-School, staff and managers can be said to have a ‘confidential relationship’ with families. It is our intention to respect the privacy of children and their parents and carers, while ensuring that they access high quality early years care and education in our Pre-School. We aim to ensure that all parents and carers can share their information in the confidence that it will only be used to enhance the welfare of their children. There are record keeping systems in place that meet legal requirements; means of storing and sharing that information take place within the framework of the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Human Rights Act 1998.

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE KEY THEMES AND COMMITMENTS

A Unique Child	Positive Relationships	Enabling Environments	Learning and Development
1.3 Keeping Safe	2.1 Respecting each other 2.2 Parents as Partners	3.4 The wider context	N/A

PROCEDURES

Confidentiality

- We always check whether parents regard the information they share with us to be regarded as confidential or not
- Some parents sometimes share information about themselves with other parents as well as staff; the Pre-School cannot be held responsible if information is shared beyond those parents whom the person has ‘confided’ in

- Information shared between parents in a discussion or training group is usually bound by a shared agreement that the information is confidential to the group and not discussed outside of it
- We inform parents when we need to record confidential information beyond the general personal information we keep (see our record keeping procedures), for example with regard to any injuries, concerns or changes in relation to the child or the family, any discussions with parents on sensitive matters, any records we are obliged to keep regarding action taken in respect of child protection and any contact and correspondence with external agencies in relation to their child
- We keep all records securely (see our record keeping procedures)

Client Access to Records

Parents may request access to any confidential records held on their child and family following the procedure below:

- Any request to see the child's personal file by a parent or person with parental responsibility must be made in writing to the Pre-School Practice Manager
- The Pre-School Practice Manager informs the Pre-School Committee Chairperson and sends a written acknowledgement
- The Pre-School commits to providing access within 14 days, although this may be extended
- The Pre-School's Practice Manager and Committee Chairperson prepare the file for viewing
- All third parties are written to, stating that a request for disclosure has been received and asking for their permission to disclose to the person requesting it. Copies of these letters are retained on file
- 'Third parties' include all family members who may be referred to in the records
- It also includes workers from any other agency, including social services, the health authority, etc. It is usual for agencies to refuse consent to disclose, preferring the individual to go directly to them
- When all the consents / refusals to disclose have been received, these are attached to the copy of the request letter
- A photocopy of the complete file is taken
- The Pre-School Practice Manager and Committee Chairperson go through the file and remove any information which a third party has refused consent to disclose. This is best done with a thick black marker, to score through every reference to the third party and information they have added to the file
- What remains is the information recorded by the Pre-School, detailing the work initiated and followed by them in relation to confidential matters. This is called the 'clean copy'
- The 'clean copy' is photocopied for the parents who are then invited in to discuss the contents. The file should never be given straight over, but should be gone through by the Pre-School Practice Manager, so that it can be explained
- Legal advice may be sought before sharing a file, especially where the parent has possible grounds for litigation against the Pre-School or another (third party) agency

All the undertakings above are subject to the paramount commitment of the Pre-School, which is to the safety and well-being of the child. Please see also our Policy on child protection.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

- Data Protection Act 1998
- Human Rights Act 1998

FURTHER GUIDANCE

- Information Sharing: Practitioners' Guide (HMG 2006)
- www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/_files/ACB1BA35C20D4C42A1FE6F9133A7C614.pdf

This Policy was adopted at a meeting of the Woodham Mortimer Pre-School Committee

Date of Meeting

Next Review Date January 2011

**Signed on Behalf of Woodham
Mortimer Pre-School**

Name of Signatory Kayte Terrett

Role of Signatory Chairperson – Woodham Mortimer Pre-School Committee