Confidentiality Policy

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the Children's Centre Privacy Notice

‘Confidential information and records about staff and children must be held securely and only accessible and available to those who have a right or professional need to see them’ (EYFS 2014 Para 3.69)

‘Providers must ensure that all staff understand the need to protect the privacy of the children in their care as well as the legal requirements that exist to ensure that information relating to the child is handled in a way that ensure confidentiality.’ (EYFS 2014 Para 3.70)

Aim

The Children’s Centre aims to ensure that all parents and carers can share their information in the confidence that all Children’s Centre staff will respect their privacy and act appropriately. It is essential, if legal requirements are to be met and the trust of parents/carers is to be retained, that Children’s Centre staff are seen to provide, a confidential service.

This means ensuring that all information is processed fairly, lawfully and as transparently as possible so that parents/carers:

- Understand the reasons for processing personal information
- Give their consent for the disclosure and use of their personal information
- Gain trust in the way the Children’s Centre handles information and
- Understand their right to access information held about them

Personal Information

Personal information on all families accessing the Children’s Centre is collected on the Children’s Centre registration form. This information is held on a shared database (estart) with all Children’s Centres. This complies with Data Protection legislation and is only accessible by those who need access to this information. This enables the Children’s Centres to monitor the reach and effectiveness of its services. This information can also be used to make the referrals process quicker and easier to other agencies such as Speech and Language therapists.

Parents/carers will be asked for permission to use this information in the manner described above. If we need to refer to another agency, parents/carers will be informed and asked for consent unless it is deemed a possible safeguarding issue.
Safeguarding and information sharing

Information may be shared with other agencies without prior consent in certain situations:

- If there is any possibility of abuse, the Centre’s Safeguarding Procedure will be followed
- If it is felt the child is at risk of significant harm, the Centre’s Safeguarding Procedure will be followed

Seeking permission to track children’s progress

In order to track children’s progress written parental consent is required from the outset. This initial permission must relate only to the information to be collected and tracking undertaken for the period of time that the child and family attend the Centre. The Centre may include an ‘in principle’ permission for information from the child’s early years setting 27-month progress check, assessments and Early Years Foundation Stage profile data to be shared but separate written consent will need to be sought again at each of those stages. The setting holding the data, for example the School, will need to ask the parent for consent to share with the Centre.

Initial letter

It is important to include sufficient information in the initial written permission letter so that parents are well informed and are clear about what will be collected, why and how it will be used.

The following list of generic questions will help Centres prepare a bespoke letter and permission form relevant to the activity and cohort of children the Centre intends to track.

Questions it is helpful to answer in the initial permission letter:

- What are parents giving permission for?
- What information is being collected?
- Why does the Centre want it?
- How will the information be used?
- How will it benefit their child?
- Who will it be shared with?
- What will they do with it?
- How long will the information be kept?
- How will it be stored?
- Can I see the information you are collecting?
- Can I change my mind?
- What will happen to the information collected at the Centre when my child begins at a setting?
- What will happen to the information collected at the Centre when my child starts school?

Further information can be found in ‘Permission to track children’s progress in Surrey Sure Start Children’s Centres 2015.’
See also - Parental Consent for sharing information with other settings and Parental Consent to make and store observations of children’s progress in Crèche and Stay and Play sessions.