



## **Safeguarding Children**

### **Information Sharing**

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 the senior management team. 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. 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. Inform families from the outset about why, how and with whom information will, or could be shared, and seek their agreement, unless it is unsafe or inappropriate to do so.
  - We ensure parents receive information about our information sharing policy when starting their child at Pre-School and they sign a form to say they understand circumstances when information may be shared.
  - We ensure parents have information about our Safeguarding Children and Child Protection policy.
  - We ensure parents 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 if you are in any doubt, without disclosing the identity of the person where possible.

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

4. Share with consent where appropriate and, where possible respect the wishes of those who do not consent to share confidential information, however, in the interests of the child, we are able to judge when it is reasonable to override their wish.

- Guidelines for consent are part of this procedure.
- Managers are conversant with this and are able to advise staff accordingly.

5. 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.

- We record concerns and discuss these with the setting's *designated person* for child protection matters. Record decisions made and the reasons why information will be shared and to whom.
- We 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 and shared only with those who need to know and shared securely.

- Our Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Procedure and record keeping procedures 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.

- Where information is shared, the reasons for doing so are recorded in the child's file; where it is decided that information is not to be shared that is recorded too.

## **Consent**

Parents have a right to be informed that their consent to share information will be sought in most cases, as well as the kinds of circumstances when their consent may not be sought, or their refusal to give consent overridden.

- Our policies and procedures set out our responsibility regarding gaining consent to share information and when it may not be sought or overridden.

We cover this verbally during Inductions. Written consent is obtained on Induction forms and referral forms from other professionals.

**Review Date: September 2018**