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Information and Records

Parenting involvement

We believe that children benefit most from early years’ education and care when parents and settings work together in partnership. Our aim is to support parents as their children’s first and most important educators by involving them in their children’s education and in the full life of the setting.

- We have a means to ensure all parents are included- that may mean we have different strategies for involving fathers, or parents who work or live apart from their children.
- We consult with all parents to find out what works best for them.
- We ensure on-going dialogue with parents to improve our knowledge of the needs of their children and to support their families.
- We inform all parents about how the setting is run and its policies, through access to written information and through regular informal communication.
- We inform parents on a regular basis about their children’s progress.
- We involve parents in the shared record keeping about their children- either formally or informally- and ensure parents have access to their children’s written developmental records.
- We inform all parents of the systems for registering queries, complaints or suggestions and we check to ensure that they are understood. All parents have access to our written complaints procedure.
- We provide opportunities for parents to learn about the curriculum offered in the setting and about young children’s learning, in the setting and at home.

Children’s records

We have record keeping systems in place that meet legal requirements; this means that the data we store and share takes place within the framework of the Data Protection Act (1998) and the Human Right Act (1998).

Procedures

We keep two kinds of records on children attending our setting;

1. Developmental records

- These include a learning journey containing photographs, observations and artwork alongside an on-entry assessment and regular reviews through the year.
- These are kept in the child's drawers in their rooms for parents to look through as and when they want.

2. Personal records

- These include registration and admission forms, signed consent forms, correspondence concerning the child or family, reports or minutes from meetings concerning the child from other agencies, an on-going record of relevant contact with parents, and observations by staff on any confidential matter involving the child, such as developmental concerns or child protection matters.
- These confidential records are stored in a lockable file or cabinet and are kept secure by the person in charge in an office or other suitably safe place.
- Parents have access, in accordance with our Client Access to Records Policy to the files and records of their own children, but do not have access to information about any other child.
- Staff will not discuss personal information given by parents with other members of staff, except where it affects planning for the child's needs. Staff induction includes an awareness of the importance of confidentiality in the role of the key person.
- We destroy any personal records within a month of them leaving the setting; however their learning pathways and any records that relate to an accident or child protection matter, which are kept until a child reaches the age of 21 years. These are kept in a secure place.

Other records

- We keep a daily record of the names of the children we are caring for, their hours of attendance and the names of their key person.
- Issues to do with the employment of staff, whether paid or unpaid, remain confidential to the people directly involved with making personnel decisions.

Provider records

We keep records and documentation for the purpose of maintaining our business. These include:

- Records pertaining to our registration.
- Landlord/lease documents and other contractual documentation pertaining to amenities, services and goods.
- Financial records pertaining to income and expenditure.
- Risk assessments.
- Employment records of staff including their name, home address and telephone number.
- Names, address and telephone numbers of anyone else who is regularly in unsupervised contact with the children.

We consider our records as confidential based on the sensitivity of information, such as with employment records. These confidential records are maintained with regard to the framework of the Data Protection Act and Human Rights Act.

- All procedures are the responsibility of the management team who ensure they are kept securely.
- All records are kept in an orderly way in files and filing is kept up to date.
- Financial records are kept up to date for audit purposes.
- Health and safety records are maintained; these include risk assessments, details of checks or inspections and guidance etc.
- Our Ofsted registration certificate is displayed.
- Our Public Liability insurance certificate is displayed.
- All our employment and staff records are kept securely and confidentiality.

We notify Ofsted of any change to the address of the premises, to the premises which may affect the quality of childcare we provide, the name and address of the provider, to the person managing the Nursery, any

significant event which is likely to affect our suitability to look after children or any other event as detailed in the EYFS.

Transfer of records to school

We recognise that sometimes children move to another early years setting before they go on to school. We prepare children for these transitions and involve parents and the receiving setting or school in this process. We prepare records about a child's development and learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage in our setting; in order to enable smooth transitions, we share appropriate information with the receiving setting or school at transfer. Confidential records are shared where there have been child protection concerns according to the process required by our Local Safeguarding Children Board.

Transfer of developmental records for a child moving to another early years setting or school

- Using the Developmental Matters in the EYFS guidance and our assessment of children's development and learning, the key person will prepare a summary of achievements in the seven areas of learning and development.
- The record refers to- any additional language, any additional needs, any special needs or disability.
- The record contains a summary by the key person and a summary of the parent's view of the child.
- The document may be accompanied by other evidence, such as photos or drawings that the child has made.

Transfer of confidential information

- The receiving school or setting will need to have a record of any safeguarding or child protection concerns that were raised in the setting and what was done about them.
- A summary of the concerns will be made to send to the receiving setting or school, along with the date of the last professional meeting.
- The name and contact details of the lead professional will be passed on to the receiving setting or school.
- If applicable, the child's social worker will be passed on to the receiving setting or school.
- This is marked as confidential.

Confidentiality and client access to records

In our setting, 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 setting. 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.

Confidentiality procedures

- We always check whether parents regard the information they share with us to be confidential or not.
- Some parents may share information about themselves with other parents as well as staff; the setting 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, 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.

Information sharing

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 best interest of the child. That is when:

- It is to prevent a crime being committed or to 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. The three 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 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

- 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.
- We are open and honest 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.
- We seek advice, if in any doubt, without disclosing the identity of the person.
- We share with consent where appropriate.
- We consider the safety and well-being of the person and others who may be affected by their action.
- We ensure all information shared is necessary, proportionate, relevant, accurate, timely and secure.
- We keep a record of our decision and the reason, including whether we have deemed it better to share information or not. If we do share then we need to record what we have shared, with whom and for what purpose.

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 may be overridden. We do this 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 or include this in our starter pack.
- Parents sign our 'All about Me' form at registration to say they understand this.
- Parents are asked 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 consider the following questions when we need to share:
 - Is there legitimate purpose to 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 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?

All the undertakings above are subject to the paramount commitment of the setting, which is to the safety and well-being of the child.

Working in partnership with other agencies

We work in partnership with local and national agencies to promote the well-being of all children.

Procedures

- We work in partnership or in tandem with local and national agencies to promote the well-being of children.
- Procedures are in place for the sharing of information about children and families with other agencies.
- Information shared by other agencies with us is regarded as third party information. This is also kept in confidence and not shared without consent from that agency.
- When working in partnership with staff from other agencies, we make those individuals welcome in the setting and their professional roles are respected.
- We follow the protocols for working with agencies, for example on child protection.
- Staff from other agencies do not have unsupervised access to the child they are visiting in the setting and do not have access to any other child(ren) during their visit.
- Our staff do not casually share information or seek informal advice about any named child/family.
- When necessary, we consult with local and national agencies who offer a wealth of advice and information that help us to develop our understanding of the issues facing us and who can provide support and information for parents.

Making a complaint

Our setting believes that children and parents are entitled to expect courtesy and prompt, careful attention to their needs and wishes. We welcome suggestions on how to improve our setting and will give prompt and serious attention to any concerns about the running of the setting. We anticipate that most concerns will be resolved quickly, by an informal approach to the appropriate member of staff. If this does not achieve the desired result, we have a set of procedures for dealing with concerns. We aim to bring all concerns about the running of our setting to a satisfactory conclusion for all of the parties involved.

Procedures

We keep a written record of any complaints that reach stage two and above, and their outcome. This is to be made available to parents, as well as to Ofsted inspectors on request.

Making a complaint

Stage 1:

- Any parent who has a concern about an aspect of the setting's provision talks over, first of all, his/her concerns with the setting leader.
- Most complaints should be resolved amicably and informally at this stage.

Stage 2

- If this doesn't have a satisfactory outcome, or if the problem reoccurs, the parent moves to this stage of the procedure by putting the concerns or complain in writing to the management team.
- For parents who are not comfortable with making written complaints, there is a form for recording complaints; the form may be completed with the person in charge and signed by the parent.
- The setting stores written complaints from parents in the child's persona file. However, if the complaint involves a detailed investigation, the setting leader may wish to store all information relating to the investigation in a separate file designated for this complaint.
- When the investigation into the complaint is completed, the setting leader or manager meets with the parent to discuss the outcome.
- Parents must be informed of the outcome of the investigation within 28 days of making the complaint.
- When the complaint is resolved at this stage, the summative points are logged.

Stage 3

- If the parent is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, he or she requests a meeting with the setting manager and director/owner. The parent may have a friend or partner present if they prefer and the leader should have the support of the management team.

- An agreed written record of the discussions is made, as well as any decision or action to take as a result. All of the parties present at the meeting sign the record and receive a copy of it.
- This signed record signifies that the procedure has concluded. When the complaint is resolved at this stage, the summative points are logged.

Stage 4

- If at the stage three meeting the parents and setting cannot reach agreement, an external mediator is invited to help settle the complaint. This person should be acceptable to both parties, listen to both sides and offer advice. A mediator has no legal powers, but can help to define the problem, review the action so far and suggest further ways in which it might be resolved.
- The mediator keeps all discussions confidential. S/he keeps an agreed written record of any meetings that are held and of any advice s/he gives.

Stage 5

- When the mediator has concluded her/his investigations, a final meeting between the parent, the setting manager and director/owner is held. The purpose of this meeting is to reach a decision on the action to be taken to deal with the complaint. The mediator's advice is used to reach this conclusion. The mediator is present at the meeting if all parties think this will help a decision to be reached.
- A record of this meeting, including the decision on the action to be taken, is made. Everyone present at the meeting signs the record and receives a copy of it. This signed record signifies that the procedure has concluded.

Parents may contact Ofsted at any point of the complaints procedure. This number is **0300 123 1231**.

A record of complaints in relation to our setting, or the children or the adults working in our setting, is kept, including the date, the circumstances of the complaint and how the complaint was managed. The outcome of all complaints is recorded, and this is available for parents and Ofsted inspectors on request.