

Children's Records

Policy Statement

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 General Data Protection Regulations and the Human Rights Act.

This policy and procedure is taken in conjunction with the *Privacy Notice, Confidentiality and Access to Records policy* and *Information Sharing policy*.

During an outbreak of serious illness of disease (such as Covid-19) there may be the need to keep additional records as part of outbreak management. A record is kept of individual cases of children/families who are self-isolating due to symptoms as per usual record-keeping procedures. In all cases the principles of data protection are maintained. A central record of all confirmed cases of Covid-19 that affect any member of staff or service user is held as required per the relevant guidance. This record does not contain personal details about the individual (unless a member of staff).

Procedures

We keep two kinds of records on children attending our playgroup, Developmental Records and Personal Records.

Developmental Records

- These include observations of children in the playgroup, photographs, video clips and samples of their work and summary developmental reports.
- These are usually kept within the cupboard in the filing cabinet and can be accessed on request, and contributed to, by staff, the child and the child's parents/carers.

Personal Records

- These include Registration and Admission forms, signed consent forms, and all forms of correspondence concerning the child or family, including reports or minutes from any meetings held concerning the child from other agencies, an on-going record of relevant contact with parents/carers, and observations by staff on any confidential matter involving the child, such as developmental concerns, child protection matters, and welfare and safeguarding concerns. They may be paper copies and/or kept electronically.
- Also included are SEND support requirements, and additional focussed intervention provided by the setting e.g. support for behaviour, language or development that needs an Action Plan at setting level.
- These confidential records are stored in a lockable file or cabinet when not in use and are kept secure by the person in charge in an office or other suitably safe place. For paper records, appropriate files will be used.
- Correspondence in relation to a child is read, any actions noted, and filed as soon as possible.
- Parents/carers have access, in accordance with our Privacy Notice and Confidentiality and 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/carers 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 especially in the role of the Key Person.
- We may be required to hand children's personal files to Ofsted as part of an inspection or investigation process; or to local authority staff conducting a S11 audit, as long as authorisation is seen.
- We retain children's records for three years after they have left the playgroup; except records that relate to an accident or child protection matter, which are kept until a child reaches the age of 21 years or 24 years respectively. Records may be shared with the child's school. These are kept in a secure place.
- Staff may use a computer to type reports, or letters.
- If data is stored electronically, it is securely stored for three years after a child has left the playgroup.
- Staff explain to parents/carers that sometimes it is necessary to write things down in their child's file and explain the reasons why.
- When recording general information, staff should ensure that records are dated correctly and the time is included where necessary, and signed.
- Welfare/child protection concerns are recorded on our Safeguarding incident reporting form. Information is clear and unambiguous (fact, not opinion), although it may include the educator's thoughts on the impact on the child.
- Records are non-judgemental and do not reflect any biased or discriminatory attitude.
- Not everything needs to be recorded, but significant events, discussions and telephone conversations must be recorded at the time that they take place.
- Recording should be proportionate and necessary.
- Ethnicity data is only recorded where parents have identified the ethnicity of their child themselves.

- When deciding what is relevant, the things that cause concern are recorded as well as action taken to deal with the concern. The appropriate recording format is filed within the child's file.
- Information shared with other agencies is done in line with these procedures.
- Access to children's personal files is restricted to those authorised to see them and make entries in them, this usually being the Playgroup Leader, Deputy or Designated Person for Child Protection, the child's Key Person, or other staff as authorised by the Playgroup Leader or Chair of the Committee.
- Children's personal files are not handed over to anyone else to look at.
- Where a decision is made to share information (or not), reasons are recorded.
- The setting is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). Staff are expected to follow guidelines issued by the ICO, at <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guidance-index/>

Other Records

- We keep a daily record of all children looked after on the premises, their hours of attendance and their named Key Person.
- Issues to do with the employment of staff, whether paid or unpaid, remain confidential to the committee members directly involved with making personnel decisions.
- Work experience students and summer placement students, who are invited into our playgroup to observe, are advised of our confidentiality policy and are required to respect it.

General Safeguarding Recording Principles

- It is vital that all relevant interactions linked to safeguarding children's and individual's welfare are accurately recorded.
- All recordings should be made as soon as possible after the event.
- Recording should be to a good standard and clear enough to enable someone other than the person who wrote it, to fully understand what is being described.
- Recording can potentially be viewed by a parent/carer or Ofsted inspector, by the successors of the educators who record, and may be used in a Family Court as relevant evidence to decide whether a child should remain with their biological parents, or be removed to live somewhere else. Recording needs to be fair and accurate, non-judgemental in tone, descriptive, relevant, and should clearly show what action has been taken to safeguard a child, and reflect decision-making relating to safeguarding.
- Recording should be complete, it should show what the outcome has been, what happened to referrals, why decisions were made to share or not share information, and it should contain summaries and minutes of relevant multi-agency meetings and multi-agency communication.
- If injuries or other safeguarding concerns are being described the description must be clear and accurate and should give specific details of the injury observed and where it is located.

Legal Framework

- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (DfE 2023)
- Data Protection Act 2018

Further Guidance

- Information Sharing: Advice For Practitioners Providing Safeguarding Services To Children, Young People, Parents And Carers (2018)
- Additional guidance in relation to information sharing about adults is given by the Social Care Institute for Excellence, at www.scie.org.uk/safeguarding/adults/practice/sharing-information
- What to do if you're Worried a Child is Being Abused (HMG 2015)
- Mental Capacity Act 2005 Code of Practice (Office of the Public Guardian 2007)

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Signed:

Name: Kerri Westlake

Position: Chair