



Working in Partnership with other Agencies & Information Sharing Policy

1. Working in Partnership with other agencies

Policy Statement

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

Procedures

- 1.1 We work in partnership, or in tandem with, local and national agencies to promote the well-being of children
- 1.2 Procedures are in place for the sharing of information about children and families with other agencies. These are set out in the Information Sharing Policy, Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy and the Supporting Children with Special Educational Needs Policy.
- 1.3 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.
- 1.4 When working in partnership with staff from other agencies, we make those individuals welcome in the setting and their professional roles are respected.
- 1.5 We follow the protocols for working with agencies, for example on child Protection.
- 1.6 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.
- 1.7 Our staff do not casually share information or seek informal advice about any names child / family.
- 1.8 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. For example, ethnic / cultural organisations, drug / alcohol agencies, welfare rights advisors or organisations promoting childcare and education, or adult education.

2. Information Sharing

'Sharing Information is an intrinsic part of any frontline practitioner's job when working with children and young people. The decisions about how much information to share, with whom and when, can have a profound impact on individual's lives. It could ensure that an individual receives the right services at the right time and prevent a need from becoming more acute and difficult to meet'

Information Sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carer (DFE-00128-2015)

Policy Statement

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 related, if it is in the public interest. That is when:

- It is to prevent a crime from 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, but with the back-up of the management team. The three critical criteria are:

1. Where there is evidence that the child is suffering, or is at risk of suffering, significant harm.
2. Where there is reasonable cause to believe that a child may be suffering, or is at risk of suffering significant harm.
3. To prevent significant harm arising to children and young people or adults, including the prevention, detection and prosecution of serious crime.

Procedures

Our procedure is based on the seven golden rules for information sharing as set out in; Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carer (DFE-00128-2015)

- 2.1 Remember that the Data Protection Act 1998 and human rights law are not barriers to justified information sharing, but provide a framework to ensure that personal information about living individuals is shared appropriately..

- Our policy and procedures on Information Sharing provide guidance to appropriate sharing of information with external agencies.

2.2 Be open and honest with the individual (and / or their family where appropriate) 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. In our setting we ensure parents:

- Receive information about our Information Sharing Policy when starting their child in the preschool and that they sign our Registration Form to say that they understand the circumstances in which information may be shared without their consent. This will only be when it is a matter of safeguarding a child or vulnerable adult;
- Have information about our Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy; and
- Have information about the other 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.

2.3 Seek advice from other practitioners if you are in any doubt about sharing the information concerned without disclosing the identity of the individual where possible. Managers should contact children's social care for advice where they have doubts or are unsure.

2.4 Share with informed consent where appropriate and, where possible, respect the wishes of those who do not consent to share confidential information. You may still share information without consent, if, in your judgement, there is good reason to do so, such as where safety may be at risk. You will need to base your judgement on the facts of the case. When you are sharing or requesting personal information from someone, be certain of the basis upon which you are doing so.

Where you have consent, be mindful that an individual might not expect information to be shared. Guidelines for consent are part of this procedure.

2.5 Consider safety and well-being: Base your information sharing decisions on considerations of the safety and well-being of the individual and others who may be affected by their actions.

In our setting we:

- Record concerns and discuss these with the setting's designated person and / or designated officer from the management committee for child protection matters;
- Record decisions made and the reasons why information will be shared and to whom; and
- Follow the procedures for reporting concerns and record keeping.

2.6 Necessary, proportionate, relevant, adequate, accurate, timely and secure: Ensure that the information you share is necessary for the purpose for which you are sharing it, is shared only with those people who need to have it, is accurate and up to date, is shared in a timely fashion, and is shared securely.

Our Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy and Children's Records Policy set out how and where information should be recorded and what information should be shared with other agency when making a referral.

2.7 Keep a record of your decision and the reasons for it – whether it is to share information or not. If you decide to share, then record what you have shared, with whom and for what purpose.

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.

3. 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:

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

3.2 We may cover this verbally when the child starts or include this in our prospectus,

3.3 Parents sign our Registration Form at registration to say they understand this.

3.4 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.

3.5 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. Please also see our Safeguarding Policy.

Legal Framework

- Data Protection Act (1998)
- Human Rights Act (1998)

This policy was formulated in consultation with staff and the Management Committee of Neston Pre-school Playgroup and was formally adopted at a committee meeting held on 16 / 5 / 2016

Signed on behalf of the Management Committee

Print Name Joanna L Aldred

Role of Signatory Joint Chair

Date to be reviewed May 2017