

Confidentiality Statement

Date of last review: October 2016

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Introduction

It is our intention to respect the privacy of children and their parents/carers, whilst ensuring that they receive high quality care and education. All employees, parent/carers and governors are required to adhere to the practice ensuring confidentiality in professional interaction and communication of all Centre issues. We aim to ensure that all parents/carers can share their information in confidence and the knowledge that it will only be used to enhance the welfare of their children.

Definition

Confidential information is personal details from our lives which we may not want to share with others. It can include our address, phone number, date of birth, employment history or other personal information. It may also include information about our past or present health and development. Individuals have the right to keep information of this type private.

Procedures

At Ambler Children's Centre the following is upheld:

- Records (personal information about children, families and staff) to be stored confidentially - i.e. in a lockable file in the office for most sensitive information. Access to files must be arranged with the Head of Centre or Assistant Head.
- Parents/carers can have ready access 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 of the child's needs. Staff induction includes an awareness of the importance of confidentiality in the role of the key person.
- Any concerns/evidence relating to a child's personal safety are kept in a secure, confidential file and are shared with as few people as possible on a "need to know" basis
- Issues to do with the employment of staff, whether paid or unpaid, remains confidential to the people directly involved
- All issues concerning parents/carers, children or employees will be dealt with privately. If private time is not immediately possible, a suitable time will be agreed.
- Issues requiring further discussion or action will be decided on a "need to know" basis.
- If communication over any issue with any outside agency (e.g. Social Services) is required confidentiality within the Centre will still be maintained.

Relevant legislation

The Data Protection Act 1998 places duty on all to take care in the use, maintenance, transfer or disclosure of personal information. It is important that information is not disclosed to anyone that is not entitled to receive it. We also have regard to Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Disclosing information

At Ambler Children's Centre, while the rights and desires of families to keep their personal details private are important, there are also some circumstances under which identifying information should be shared.

In order to ensure the health and safety of our children, staff must be informed of all needs or health concerns that particular children may have (e.g. special education).

In the case of serious infectious diseases the Centre must report to Islington's Infectious Disease Clerk on 020 7527 3025, inform Ofsted and gather guidance from the Health Protection Agency, this may result in identifying information about the infected child, including the name, age and how to contact the family.

We are required to report any cases of suspected child abuse to the authorities (please see Child Protection Policy).

Observations regarding children are conducted with the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum in mind. Observations are beneficial in planning activities, updating parents/carers on their children's development progress, notes for Learning Journeys and also in dealing with behavioural concerns.

Golden Rules of Information Sharing

Ambler Children's Centre adheres to the following Golden Rules of Information Sharing:

1. Remember that 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
2. Be open and honest with the person (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.
3. See advice if you are in any doubt, without disclosing the identity of the person where possible.
4. Share with 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 if in your judgement, the lack of consent can be overridden in the public interest. You will need to base your judgement on the facts of the case.
5. Consider safety and well-being: Base your information sharing decisions on consideration of the safety and well-being of the person and others who may be affected by their actions.
6. Necessary, proportionate, relevant, 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.
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.

Related policies: Freedom of Information and Data, ICT Physical Security of Information