Confidentiality Policy

Policy Aims

- The setting recognises that we hold confidential information about our staff and about the children in our settings and their families. Such information is stored and handled in confidence and with care.
- Information about children is particularly sensitive and we comply with the requirements of UK law and guidance to protect the children's best interests and right to dignity and respect.
- Breaches of confidentiality are treated as serious events and may result in disciplinary action or dismissal.
- We comply with the requirements of UK law and guidance (latest versions):
  - UK General Data Protection Regulation
  - Data Protection Act
  - Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework, DfE
  - Working Together to Safeguard Children, DfE
  - Revised Prevent Duty guidance: for England and Wales, Home Office
  - Information sharing: advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services, DfE
  - Safeguarding Policy

Principles

- As a general rule, confidential information is shared only within the setting where it was provided and relevant staff, or with appropriate professionals, on a need-to-know basis.
- Areas of particular sensitivity include:
  - Safeguarding concerns
  - Medical issues
  - SEND
  - Family circumstances
- Detailed information about the settings management of personal data is included in our Data Protection Policy.
- We may share confidential information where we have permission to do so, or when we must do so to meet our legal obligations.
- In particular, child safety can override normal confidentiality and data protection rules. Such situations are serious and decisions are made in consultation with the setting manager, Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or the Committee, according to the relevant policies:
  - If a child is considered to be at risk, we follow the procedures in our Safeguarding Policy.
  - If confidential information is shared outside the setting, we follow the procedures in our Information Sharing Policy.

Procedures

- Any information regarding the settings activities, staff, settings, children and families is treated as confidential.
- Confidential information is stored in lockable cupboards with restricted access, or in password-protected computer files with restricted access.
- Computer data is backed up onto a server and/or the cloud.
- Children and families are not discussed with other parents, outside the setting, or on social media. Staff take particular care to avoid accidental disclosure of confidential information in social settings.
- Discussions with other professionals take place within a professional framework and not on an ad hoc basis.
- Care is taken that telephone conversations about children are only held with authorised individuals.
- Extra care is taken with any confidential information taken off the setting site e.g. emergency contact details on outings, notes about children from meetings with other professionals.
- Parents do not have access to the records of any child other than their own.
- Parental permission is obtained for training observations, and children are not identified in training assignments.
- Staff receive training in confidentiality and information sharing, and are updated about changes to policy and procedures.
- Staff abide by this policy and sign at their induction to say they will do so.
- Upon termination of employment, or at any other time when so requested, any storage device or information held in written form is returned to the setting, and any electronic information kept on a personal storage device is deleted.
- Staff do not disclose any confidential information after their employment without the settings written consent (except as required by law).
- If a data breach occurs the procedure in the Data Protection Policy are followed.