



Information sharing

'Sharing information is an intrinsic part of any frontline practitioners' role when working with children and young people. Practitioners should use their judgement when making decisions on what information to share and when and should follow organisation procedures or consult with their manager if in doubt. The most important consideration is whether sharing information is likely to safeguard and protect a child'.

Information sharing: advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services (HM Gov 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 relates, 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:

- 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

Our procedures are based on the seven golden rules for information sharing as set out in *Information sharing: advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services* (HM Gov 2006)

The seven golden rules to sharing information;

1. Remember that the General Data Protection Regulations 2018 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.
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.
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.
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.
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.
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 individuals who need to have it, is accurate and up-to-date, is shared in a timely fashion, and is shared securely (see principles).
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

Consent

When parents choose our setting for their child, they will share information about themselves and their families. This information is regarded as confidential. Parents have a right to be informed that we will see their consent to share information in most cases, as well as the kinds of circumstances when we may not seek their consent, or may override their refusal to give consent. We inform them as follows:

- Our policies and procedures set out [our/my] 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 prospectus.
- Parents sign our Registration Form at registration to confirm that they understand this.
- We ask parents 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 give parents copies of the forms they sign.

- We consider the following questions when [we/I] need to share:
 - Is there legitimate purpose to [us/me] sharing the information?
 - Does the information enable the person to be identified?
 - Is the information confidential?
 - If the information is confidential, do [we/I] have consent to share?
 - Is there a statutory duty or court order requiring [us/me] to share the information?
 - If consent is refused, or there are good reasons for [us/me] not to seek consent, is there sufficient public interest for [us/me] to share information?
 - If the decision is to share, [are we/am I] sharing the right information in the right way?
 - Have we properly recorded [our/my] decision?
- Consent must be *informed* - that is the person giving consent needs to understand why information will be shared, what will be shared, who will see information, the purpose of sharing it and the implications for them of sharing that information.
- Consent may be *explicit*, verbally but preferably in writing, or *implicit*, implied if the context is such that sharing information is an intrinsic part of [our/my] service or it has been explained and agreed at the outset.
- We explain our Information Sharing Policy to parents.

Separated parents

- Consent to share need only be sought from one parent. Where parents are separated, this would normally be the parent with whom the child resides. Where there is a dispute, we will consider this carefully.
- Where the child is looked after, we may also need to consult the Local Authority, as 'corporate parent' before information is shared.

All the undertakings above are subject to [our/my] paramount commitment, which is to the safety and well-being of the child. Please also see our Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy.

Legal framework

- General Data Protection Regulations (2018)
- Human Rights Act (1998)

Further guidance

- *Information sharing: advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services (DFE 2015)*

Policy adopted by Acton Playgroup and Committee

On: _____ (date)

Date to be reviewed _____ (date)

On behalf of provider _____

- Name of signatory Kim Farley Sabrina Elsden
- Role of signatory Lead Practitioner Committee Chairperson

Reviewed August 2024