



## **CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY**

### **Statement of intent**

It is our intention to respect the privacy of children and their parents/carers, while ensuring that they access high quality early years care and education in our setting.

### **Aim**

We aim to ensure that all parents/carers can share their information in the confidence that it will only be used to enhance the welfare of their children.

### **Methods**

We keep two kinds of records on children attending Impstone & Cherry Trees Preschool:

#### ***1. Online Learning Journals:***

- These include observations (both written and photographic) of children in Preschool including samples of their work, summary developmental reports and records of achievement.
- They are kept within our password controlled, online account and can be accessed, and contributed to, by staff, the child and the child's parents. This is also password controlled by both the staff and the parents for each child.

#### ***2. Personal records:***

- These include admission forms, comprising of signed consents, correspondence relating to the child or family, reports or minutes from meetings concerning the child from other agencies, an ongoing record of relevant contact with parents, and observations by staff on any confidential matter involving the child, such as developmental concerns or safeguarding matters.
- These confidential records are stored securely in a cloud online with only access from the Manager and Chair.
- Parents have access, in accordance with the access to the 'Personal Records procedure' below, to the files and records of their own children but do not have access to information about any other child.
- All staff, parents/carers, volunteers and committee members must complete a confidentiality agreement to be retained, agreeing to keep confidential any personal information which they may come across in the course of being in the preschool area.
- Staff, volunteers and committee members will not discuss personal information given by parents with other members of staff, volunteers and committee members, except where it affects planning for the child's needs. Staff



induction includes an awareness of the importance of confidentiality in the role of the key person.

- Staff, parents/carers, volunteers and committee members are identified with the Preschool and as such are expected to behave appropriately on the Internet eg on social networking sites such as Facebook, WhatsApp and other social media sites. It is not appropriate to share work-related information whether written or pictorial in this way. Also, under no circumstances should comments be made about Preschool staff on the Internet; members are expected to respect the privacy and feelings of others and failure to do so could be a disciplinary offence.

### **3. Other records:**

- Issues to do with the employment of staff, whether paid or unpaid, remain confidential to the people directly involved with making personnel decisions.
- Students completing a recognised qualification and/or training course, when they are observing in the setting, are advised of our confidentiality policy and required to respect it.

### **Access to personal records**

Parents may request access to any records held on their child and family following the procedure below:

- Any request to see the child's personal file by a parent or person with parental responsibility must be made in writing to the Preschool Manager
- The Preschool Manager informs the chair of the management committee and sends a written acknowledgement to the requester
- The Preschool commits to providing access within 14 days, although this may be extended.
- The Preschool manager and chair of the management committee prepare the file for viewing
- All third parties are written to, stating that a request for disclosure has been received and asking for their permission to disclose to the person requesting it. Copies of these letters are retained on the file
- 'Third parties' include all family members who may be referred to in the records
- It also includes workers from any other agency, including social services, the health authority, etc. It is usual for agencies to refuse consent to disclose, preferring the individual to go directly to them
- When all the consents/refusals to disclose have been received these are attached to the copy of the request letter
- A copy of the complete file is taken
- The Preschool Manager and chair of the management committee go through the file and remove any information which a third party has refused consent to disclose. This is best done with a thick black marker, to score through every reference to the third party and information they have added to the file



- What remains is the information recorded by Preschool, detailing the work initiated and followed by them in relation to confidential matters. This is called the 'clean copy'
- The 'clean copy' is photocopied for the parents who are then invited in to discuss the contents. The file should never be given straight over, but should be gone through by the setting manager, so that it can be explained
- Legal advice may be sought before sharing a file, especially where the parent has possible grounds for litigation against Preschool or another (third party) agency

#### **Related law:**

- Data Protection Act 2018
- Human Rights Act 1998

*All the undertakings above are subject to the paramount commitment of Preschool, which is to the safety and well-being of the child.*

*Please see also our policies on data protection and safeguarding children.*