Confidentiality and Data Protection Policy

Policy Statement of Intent

In High Kirk Community Preschool our work with children and families will sometimes bring us into confidential information. 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 child(ren). Statutory Guidance: Data Protection Act 1998 and Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Procedure

Staff must maintain confidentiality as stated during induction by the Preschool leader, Mrs Jessica Balmer.

We keep three kinds of paper only records on children attending our setting:

1. Individual development records

   These include observations of children in the setting, individual education plans, samples of their work, summary developmental reports and progress records. They are kept securely in the playroom store and can be accessed and contributed to by staff.

2. Child information records

   These include registration and admission forms, signed consents, emergency contact details, relevant medical history, record of attendance, correspondence concerning the child or family from other agencies (health visitors, speech and language therapists, social services etc) and ongoing record of relevant contact with parents/carers.
   Parents/carers have access, in accordance with the access to records procedure, to the files and records of their own children but do not have access to information about any other child. Staff may discuss relevant personal information given by parents/carers with other members of staff to provide a holistic approach to the child's care and learning.

   Where appropriate, information will, be shared (with the knowledge of parents/carers) with relevant professional agencies (e.g. Health Visitors, Speech and Language Therapists, Educational Psychologists and Social Workers).

Occasionally information relating to a child may need to be discussed at a Committee Meeting or with the Committee Chairperson e.g. child protection or behaviour management. All information discussed is on a need-to-know basis and all involved will comply with the Confidentiality and Data Protection Policy.

3. <u>Child Protection Records</u>
   - Staff/students/volunteers are advised of our confidentiality policy prior to working with children.
   - In cases of child protection, the law requires disclosures of information, without consent, to relevant Social Services personnel and PSNI officers. (see Child and Adult Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedures).
   - If a request for information relating to child protection is received by telephone, steps should be taken to ensure that such information is disclosed to identifiable personnel (i.e. seek verification of identity) and only if the individual is entitled to receive that information. It is advisable to disclose such information only to those known to be involved in child protection. If doubt exists, ask for enquirer to make request through known channel of communication. Always call an enquirer back and be very alert if the number given is that of a mobile number.
   - Requests from parents/carers for list of children's names and addresses will be politely refused.

<u>Access to personal records</u>

Parents/carers may request access to any records held on their child and family following the procedure below.
1. 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 leader Mrs Jessica Balmer.
2. The Preschool leader informs the chairperson of the management committee and sends a written acknowledgement.
3. The Preschool commits to providing access with 14 days – although this may be extended.
4. The Preschool leader and chairperson of the management committee prepare the file for viewing.
5. 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. A copy of these letters will be retained on the file.
6. Third parties' include children/staff involved in interactions during course of play, 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.
7. When all the consents/refusals to disclose have been received these are attached to the copy of the request letter.
8. A photocopy of the complete file is taken.

9. The Preschool leader and chairperson 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.
10. What remains is the information recorded by the setting, detailing the work initiated and followed by them in relation to confidential matters. This is called the 'clean copy'.
11. 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 reviewed with the Preschool Leader, so that it can be explained.
12. The Preschool retains records relating to children's Attendance, Accident and Incidents, Child Protection and Special Educational Needs for forty two years in a secure filling cabinet. All records relating to observations are kept for two years and then incinerated/shredded if they are not included in the previous category.

All the undertakings above are subject to the commitment of High Kirk Community Preschool, which is for the safety and well-being of the child.

<u>Policy Links</u>
Child and Adult Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

Confidentiality and Data Protection Policy has been agreed and adopted by High Kirk Community Preschool Committee

Signed by _____ Date _____
                 Committee Chairperson