



A Touch of the Wild

Confidentiality Policy

Date Created: September 2024

Statement of intent

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

Aim

We aim to ensure that all parents and 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 our setting:

1. Developmental Progress records

- These include observations of children in the setting, samples of their work, summary developmental reports and records of achievement recorded in each child's online learning journal.
- They are usually kept on a secure website via Tapestry software, and can be contributed to, by staff, the child and the child's parents.
- Parents have free access on a daily basis to see their child's developmental records. To access these records, parents must sign-in with a secure password

2. Personal records

- These include personal information sheets, signed consent forms, and any correspondence concerning the child or family, reports or minutes from meetings concerning the child from other agencies, any ongoing record of relevant contact with parents, and observations by staff on any confidential matter involving the child, such as developmental concerns or child protection matters.

These confidential records are stored in a lockable file or cabinet and are kept secure by the person in charge in a secured office.

Parents have access, in accordance with the access to records procedure (below), 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 for the child's needs or the child's direct welfare. Staff induction includes an awareness of the importance of confidentiality in the role of the key person.

Personal records are kept for a suitable period of time and then destroyed. (Please see Record Retention Policy for more information on this).

Access to personal records

Parents 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 manager.
2. The manager informs the operations manager/director and sends a written acknowledgement.
3. The setting commits to providing access within 28 days - although this may be extended.
4. The setting's manager and deputy manager 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 is retained on the file.
6. '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.
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 manager and operations manager/director 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 gone through by the setting leader, 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 the setting or another (third party) agency.

All the undertakings above are subject to the paramount commitment of the setting, which is to the safety and well-being of the child. Please see also our policy on Safeguarding children.

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.

A Touch of the Wild will not share personal contact information of any employee either current or past with any parent.

All staff, visitors and students are advised of our confidentiality policy and required to respect it.