



Safeguarding Children

Information Sharing

Policy statement

We recognise that parents have a right to know that information they share will be regarded as confidential as well as be informed about the circumstances, and reasons, when we are obliged to share information. **Cricklade Pre-School Playgroup is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). Staff are expected to follow guidelines issued by the ICO, at <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guidance-index/>.**

We record and share information about children and their families (data subjects) in line with the six principles of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) (2018) which are further explained in our Privacy Notice that is given to parents at the point of registration. The six principles state that personal data must be:

1. Processed fairly, lawfully and in a transparent manner in relation to the data subject.
2. Collected for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes and not further processed for other purposes incompatible with those purposes.
3. Adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary in relation to the purposes for which data is processed.
4. Accurate and where necessary, kept up to date.
5. Kept in a form that permits identification of data subjects for no longer than is necessary for the purposes for which the data is processed.
6. Processed in a way that ensures appropriate security of the persona data including protection against accidental loss, destruction or damage, using appropriate technical or organisational measures.

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 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 management or committee members. 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 at risk of suffering significant harm.

To prevent significant harm arising to children and young people or serious harm to adults, including the prevention, detection and prosecution of serious crime.

Procedures

Our procedure is based on the GDPR principles as listed above and the seven golden rules for sharing information in the Information sharing Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers.

1. Remember that the *General Data Protection Regulations 2018* Act is not a barrier to sharing information *as per the Children Act 1989* but provides a framework to ensure that personal information about living persons is shared appropriately.

- Our policy and procedures on information sharing provide guidance to appropriate sharing of information with external agencies.

2. Be open and honest. Explain to families how, when and why information will be shared about them and with whom. Seek consent to share information, unless it puts the child at risk or undermines a criminal investigation *or if we have a legal obligation to do so. A Privacy Notice is given to parents at the point of registration to explain this further.*

In our setting we ensure parents:

- receive a copy of our Privacy Notice and information about our information sharing policy when starting their child in the setting and they sign a form to say that they understand circumstances when information may be shared without their consent. This will only be when it is a matter of safeguarding a child or vulnerable adult.
- have information about our Safeguarding Children and Child Protection policy; and
- have information about the circumstances when information will be shared with external agencies, for example, with regard to any special needs the child may have or transition to school.

3. Seek advice when there are doubts about possible significant harm to a child or others.

- Managers contact children's social care for advice where they have doubts or are unsure.

4. Share with consent where appropriate. Respect the wishes of children and parents not to consent to share confidential information. However, in the interests of the child, know when it is reasonable to override their wish to share information without consent on judgements about the facts of the case and whether there is a legal obligation.

- Guidelines for consent are part of this procedure.

5. Managers are conversant with this and are able to advise staff accordingly. Consider the safety and welfare of the child when making a decision about sharing information – if there are concerns regarding 'significant harm' the child's well being and safety is paramount.

In our setting we:

- record concerns and discuss these with the setting's designated person and/or designated officer from the management committee for child protection matters. Record decisions made and the reasons why information will be shared and to whom; and
- follow the procedures for reporting concerns and record keeping.

6. Information shared should be accurate and up-to-date, necessary for the purpose it is being shared for, shared only with those who need to know and shared securely.

- Our Child Protection procedure and Record Keeping procedure set out how and where information should be recorded and what information should be shared with another agency when making a referral.

7. Reasons for decisions to share information, or not, are recorded.

- Provision for this is set out in our Record Keeping procedure

Consent

Parents have a right to be informed that their consent to share information will be sought in most cases, as well as the kinds of circumstances when their consent may not be sought, or their refusal to give consent overridden.

- Consent must be freely given and *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 as detailed in the Privacy Notice.
- Our policies and procedures set out our responsibility regarding gaining consent to share information and when it may not be sought or overridden.
- Parents are asked 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.
- Consent can be withdrawn at any time.

When sharing information we consider the following questions:

- Is there legitimate purpose to sharing the information?
- Does the information enable the person to be identified?
- Is the information confidential?
- If the information is confidential, do you have consent to share?
- Is there a statutory duty or court order to share information?
- If consent is refused, or there are good reasons not to seek consent, is there sufficient public interest to share information?
- If the decision is to share, are you sharing the right information in the right way?
- Have you properly recorded your decision?

All the undertakings above are subject to the paramount commitment of the Pre-School, 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 (GDPR) (2018)

- Human Rights Act 1998

Further Guidance

- Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE 2023)
- Information Sharing: Advice for Practitioners Providing Safeguarding Services to Children, Young People, Parents and Carers (HMG 2024)
- What to do if you're Worried a Child is Being Abused (HMG 2015)
- Mental Capacity Act 2005 Code of Practice (Office of the Public Guardian 2007)