



## Confidentiality Policy

This policy exists to protect children, parents, carers, families and staff, and to ensure that everyone using the service is absolutely clear about issues of confidentiality and what the procedures and routines are in respect of this matter. Underpinning the policy is the service provider's recognition that the safety and wellbeing of children and families is of paramount importance, as is respect for the privacy of those involved in the service.

### Working with Children and Families

The preschool service recognises that its work with children and families sometimes involves staff and committee members dealing with confidential information. All information, verbal or written, provided by parents or carers will be treated confidentially and will not be disclosed to a third party without the consent of the individuals concerned, unless it is a Child Protection issue. \*See Note 1.

In respect of recorded information:

- Parents or carers will be informed of records being kept on their child.
- Parents or carers will have access to their child's records only.
- Children's records will be kept in individual files and stored securely in a locked cabinet.
- Records will be available at each session but will only be accessed by staff.
- Committee members, staff and adult helpers will not talk publicly about matters relating to the children and their families.
- Staff will not discuss children, other than for curriculum development and service development purposes, with any other person/s without the parents or guardian's knowledge and consent, unless it is a Child Protection matter. \* See Note 1.

Old Rayne Preschool is aware that abuse does occur in society. It recognises it has a prime responsibility to ensure the safety and well-being of children and has a duty to report any suspicions of abuse to the local authority.

- Any evidence relating to a child's personal safety will be kept in a separate secure confidential file.
- Contents of the file will be open only to specified personnel/agencies.

Insert the names of the individuals/agencies that are specified as having access to the confidential information contained in a child's personal safety record:

Preschool Manager/Social Services/Police

Each child's personal records concerning information relating to, for example, medical matters, child protection matters, additional support needs will be retained for a ten-year period and safely disposed of by shredding, pulping or burning. In collecting, holding and processing personal data the group complies with current Data Protection rules and guidance. *\*See Note 2.*

It is not the responsibility of any early year's worker to investigate a suspected case of child abuse. Discussing suspicions with parents may destroy any evidence and any chance of a successful investigation. It is important to recognise that, whilst this information is confidential, it is essential to discuss this with a line manager, development worker/officer, Early Years Scotland Centre or child protection monitor or co-ordinator.

This is good practice and parents should be informed of the potential necessity to discuss their child's welfare in this manner from the outset of their child's pre-school group experience. A statement to this effect should be included in the group's Welcome Pack or equivalent and parents should be asked to sign it to state that they have read and understood this.

It may also be necessary to inform the Social Services of these concerns (after the above discussions) and parents should be made aware on the enrolment of their child to the group, that it may be necessary to inform the Social Services without their knowledge or permission. This should also be stated in the Welcome Pack.

## **Social Media**

Confidentiality should be maintained when utilising social networking sites. Staff, committee members, students and volunteers involved with the service should be made aware of the need to follow the same standards of conduct and behaviour online as would be expected offline. Acceptable use of the internet and social networking sites should be emphasised in the group's social networking guidance/policy, this should be based on the organisation's policies in other areas, such as its codes of conduct and policies on bullying, equal opportunities and child protection with the key message being the need to maintain the same standards of behaviour online as would be expected offline.

## **Employer/Employee Relationship**

All issues regarding the employment and management of staff are confidential to the people directly involved, that is, the staff member and those involved with making personnel decisions.

As a responsible employer the service recognises that holding certain information could amount to an intrusion into an employee's privacy. It ensures that an individual's personnel record contains only relevant information and that it is stored securely.

In collecting, holding and processing personal data the group complies with current Data Protection rules and guidance. \*See Note 2.

### **Confidentiality of Employee information**

The employer will ensure that:

- Individual records are kept for each staff member in a confidential personnel file - an individual employee's personnel record contains only relevant information and that it is safeguarded, securely stored and safely disposed of (by burning, pulping or shredding) as the need arises.
- Staff have access to their own personal record.
- Files are kept securely by the person/s specified by the employer (the employer must specify clearly in writing the person/s identified as having access to personnel files. In committee managed services these names will need to be regularly reviewed, annually at least and any changes recorded appropriately.)

Insert the names of the individuals who are specified as having access to employee personnel files:

### **Preschool Manager/Chairperson**

- Staff personal details will not be passed to another person without their prior knowledge and consent.
- They (the employer) will not talk publicly about:
  - an individual's work performance.
  - terms and conditions of employment for individual members of staff.
  - disciplinary or grievance matters brought to their attention.
- Other staff will not talk publicly about:
  - the work performance of their colleagues.
  - disciplinary or grievance matters in which they are directly involved.

Any breach of the procedures and routines specified in this policy document will be investigated and will result in disciplinary action being taken if a staff member is involved. In a committee managed service, any breach to this policy by a committee member or adult helper will lead to a complaint being raised against him or her.

**\* Notes**

1. Refer to the setting's Child Protection Policy.
2. For information regarding Data Protection contact:

*The Information Commissioner's Office - Scotland*

*45 Melville Street, Edinburgh EH3 7HL*

*Telephone: 0303 123 1115*

*Email: [Scotland@ico.org.uk](mailto:Scotland@ico.org.uk)*