Auckland House Day Nursery Confidentiality Policy

Policy Statement

Auckland House is committed to protecting the privacy, dignity, and confidentiality of all children, parents/carers, staff, students, volunteers, and visitors. We recognise that maintaining confidentiality is essential in building trusting and professional relationships with families and ensuring children feel safe, secure, and supported within the setting.

We aim to ensure that all personal and sensitive information is collected, stored, used, and shared appropriately and in accordance with current legislation and guidance, including the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework, the Data Protection Act 2018, UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), Working Together to Safeguard Children, and the Children Act 1989 and 2004.

All information shared with the nursery will be treated with respect and handled sensitively. Confidential information will only be shared where there is a lawful reason to do so, where consent has been obtained, or where safeguarding responsibilities require information to be shared in order to protect a child.

Aims of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that everyone connected to Auckland House understands their responsibilities regarding confidentiality. We aim to protect children and families from inappropriate sharing of information, ensure legal compliance, promote professional conduct, and maintain secure systems for recording and storing information.

Auckland House also aims to ensure that parents/carers feel confident when sharing information with staff and understand how that information may be used to support their child's care, learning, development, and wellbeing.

Definition of Confidential Information

Confidential information refers to any personal or sensitive information relating to children, parents/carers, staff, students, volunteers, or visitors that is not publicly available. This may include personal details, addresses, medical information, developmental records, safeguarding concerns, family circumstances, employment information, financial details, and professional discussions.

Confidentiality also applies to verbal discussions, written records, photographs, digital records, emails, observations, reports, and any information shared during meetings or professional conversations.

All confidential information must be treated with care and only discussed with appropriate individuals who have a legitimate need to know.

Confidentiality in Practice

Staff develop close and trusting relationships with children and families as part of their role within the nursery. During these relationships, families may share sensitive or personal information regarding their home circumstances, health, finances, relationships, or wellbeing. Staff must treat this information with respect and confidentiality at all times.

Confidential information should never be discussed in public areas, outside of work, with family or friends, or with anyone who does not have a professional reason to know the information. Conversations regarding children, families, or staff should only take place in appropriate private areas within the setting.

Staff are expected to use professional judgement when handling information and to seek advice from the nursery manager or Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) if they are unsure whether information should be shared.

Responsibilities of Staff, Students, and Volunteers

All staff members, students, volunteers, apprentices, and any other adults working within the nursery have a responsibility to maintain confidentiality. During induction, all adults working within the setting will be informed of the confidentiality policy and expected standards of conduct.

Staff must not disclose confidential information about children, families, or colleagues to anyone outside the nursery unless authorised to do so. Information must only be shared on a 'need to know' basis and where it supports the welfare, safety, or development of the child.

Staff must ensure that paperwork, records, electronic devices, and discussions are kept secure and protected at all times. Any concerns relating to confidentiality breaches must be reported immediately to the nursery manager.

Failure to follow the confidentiality policy may result in disciplinary action in line with the nursery's disciplinary procedures.

Information Sharing

Auckland House recognises that effective information sharing is important in supporting children's learning, development, and welfare. Information will only be shared appropriately, lawfully, and when necessary.

In most situations, parental consent will be obtained before information is shared with external agencies or professionals. This may include health visitors, speech and language therapists, schools, social workers, or other professionals involved in supporting the child.

However, there may be situations where information must be shared without parental consent. This applies where there are safeguarding concerns, concerns that a child may be at risk of harm, or where the nursery is legally required to disclose information.

The safety and welfare of the child will always take priority over confidentiality.

Safeguarding and Child Protection

Confidentiality must never prevent staff from reporting concerns regarding a child's welfare or safety. All staff have a legal duty to safeguard children and follow the nursery's safeguarding procedures.

If a member of staff has concerns about a child, they must report these concerns immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Staff must not promise confidentiality to parents/carers or children if information relates to safeguarding concerns.

Safeguarding records will be kept securely and separately from general child records where appropriate. Access to safeguarding information will be restricted to authorised individuals only.

Information relating to safeguarding concerns may be shared with children's social care, the police, OFSTED, or other safeguarding agencies where necessary to protect a child.

Storage and Security of Records

The nursery is legally required to maintain certain records relating to children, parents/carers, staff, students, and volunteers. These records may be stored manually or electronically.

Paper records will be stored in locked filing cabinets or secure storage areas. Electronic records will be password protected and only accessible to authorised members of staff.

Auckland House takes reasonable steps to ensure that all information is accurate, up to date, and securely maintained. Staff must ensure that records are not left unattended in public areas and that confidential documents are stored appropriately after use.

Records will only be retained for the period required by law and guidance. Once records are no longer required, confidential documents will be securely shredded or permanently deleted.

Access to Records

Parents/carers have the right to access records and information relating to their own child in accordance with data protection legislation. Requests for access to records should be made to the Head of Early Years / nursery manager.

Parents/carers will only be permitted to view records relating to their own child and will not have access to information relating to other children, families, or staff members.

Auckland House reserves the right to withhold certain information where legal exemptions apply or where disclosure may place a child or another individual at risk.

Use of Photographs, Mobile Phones, and Social Media

Auckland House understands the importance of protecting children's images and personal information. Photographs and videos of children will only be taken using nursery devices and in accordance with parental permissions.

Staff, students, and volunteers are not permitted to use personal mobile phones or devices to photograph or record children.

Confidential information, photographs, nursery discussions, or details about children and families must never be shared on social media platforms.

Staff must ensure that their use of social media does not compromise the confidentiality, reputation, or professionalism of the nursery.

Meetings and Discussions with Parents/Carers

Any discussions relating to concerns about a child's development, behaviour, wellbeing, or care needs will take place in a confidential and respectful manner.

Meetings with parents/carers will be held in private wherever possible to ensure confidentiality is maintained.

The Head of Early Years / nursery manager, key person, or relevant staff member will ensure that information shared during meetings is recorded appropriately and stored securely.

OFSTED and External Agencies

As part of legal and regulatory requirements, certain records and documentation may be accessed by OFSTED inspectors, Local Authority representatives, safeguarding professionals, or other authorised agencies.

Auckland House will ensure that information is shared appropriately and in line with legal requirements during inspections, investigations, or professional visits.

Any information shared with external agencies will remain confidential and only relevant information will be disclosed.

Confidential Waste Disposal

Auckland House recognises the importance of securely disposing of confidential information.

Documents that are no longer required will be shredded, securely archived, or permanently deleted in line with legal retention guidance and data protection requirements.

Staff must not dispose of confidential paperwork in general waste bins.

Breaches of Confidentiality

Any breach of confidentiality will be treated seriously.

Examples of breaches may include discussing confidential matters outside the setting, sharing information without permission, leaving confidential records unsecured, or inappropriate use of social media.

Where a breach occurs, the nursery will investigate the matter thoroughly and take appropriate action. This may include additional training, disciplinary action, dismissal, or referral to external agencies where necessary.

If a data breach occurs, the nursery will follow data protection procedures and report breaches to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) where legally required.

Training and Staff Awareness

All staff, students, and volunteers will receive confidentiality and data protection training as part of their induction and ongoing professional development.

Training will ensure that staff understand their responsibilities regarding confidentiality, safeguarding, data handling, record keeping, and information sharing.

Staff will regularly review nursery policies and procedures to ensure continued compliance with current legislation and best practice.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or earlier where changes in legislation or guidance occur.

The Head of Early Years / nursery manager and leadership team are responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of this policy and ensuring all staff adhere to confidentiality procedures.

Feedback from staff, parents/carers, and external professionals may be used to support ongoing improvements.

Related Policies

This policy should be read alongside the following nursery policies:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Data Protection and GDPR Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Staff Behaviour Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Behaviour Management Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Record Keeping Policy

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