

WALTHAMSTOW MONTESSORI SCHOOL

Confidentiality Policy

We respect the privacy of all children and their parents and carers who attend our school, while ensuring that they access high quality care and education throughout all age groups. We aim to ensure that all parents and carers can share their information with us professionally in the confidence that it will only be used to enhance the welfare of their children.

WMS shares a purpose with parents and keeps all personal and confidential information or documentation in a secure locked place with only designated access. We are committed to working with parents positively, openly and honestly. We respect parents' rights to privacy and confidentiality and will not share sensitive information unless we have permission or it is necessary to do so in order to protect a child.

Consistent with the current statutory guidelines, we keep two kinds of records on children attending Walthamstow Montessori School.

1. Developmental records

- These include observations of children at WMS pre-school, examples of their work, photographs and film footage of them taking part in activities and summary developmental reports of achievement.
- These are kept in the classrooms and can be accessed, and contributed to, by staff, the child and the child's parents. Children enjoy looking through their own work.

2. Personal records

- Names and contact details of persons with whom the child normally lives
- Names and contact details of all persons with parental responsibility (if different from above)
- Emergency contact details (if different from above)
- Details of any persons authorised to collect the child from setting/childminder (if different from above)
- Any relevant court orders in place including those, which affect any person's access to the child (e.g. Residence Order, Contact Order, Care Order, Injunctions etc.)
- If the child is or has been subject to a child protection or care plan
- Name and contact detail of G.P.
- Any other factors which may impact on the safety and welfare of the child

The above is usually collected through registration and admission forms, signed consents, and correspondence concerning the child or family, reports or minutes from meetings concerning the child from other agencies, and observations by staff on any confidential matter involving the child, such as developmental concerns or child protection matters.

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.
- Students on a recognised training placement with us are advised of our confidentiality policy and required to respect it.

Policy statement

- Confidentiality will be respected by all members of school staff, students on placement and any volunteers.
- No details regarding the children and their families will be discussed outside the school environment.
- Any information kept on a child which relates to a child's safety will be kept in a confidential file that is secure and only shared with the relevant staff when necessary.
- Confidential records are stored in a lockable file or cabinet and are kept secure by the person in charge in an office or other suitability safe place.
- All students on placement and/or volunteers will be made aware of the confidentiality policy.
- Information shared by parent/carers will not be passed on without permission from the parent/carer.
- Parents 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.
- Written permission will be sought from the parents when their child joins the school to allow us to take photographs of their children for use in our school. For any photograph to be used by students or for use outside the school, extra written permission will be asked for.
- All child protection documents will be retained in a 'Child Protection' file, separate from the child's main file. The main file will clearly show an alert that a child protection file exists and the location of this. This child protection file will be locked away and only accessible to the manager and designated safeguarding lead. These records will be copied and transferred to any setting or setting the child moves to, clearly marked 'Child Protection, Confidential, for attention of Designated Person Child Protection. Original copies will be retained according to setting policy on retention of records.

“Where there is a concern that the child may be suffering or is at risk of suffering significant harm, the child’s safety and welfare must be the overriding consideration.”

Duty of care to the child may override the duty of confidentiality, and in such cases we will pass appropriate information to other organisations.

With any concerns regarding suspected child abuse our confidentiality policy will be extended to include relevant persons from appropriate agencies. The setting policy indicates:

- a) Information must be shared with police and Social Care where the child/young person is / may be at risk of significant harm
- b) When the child’s and/or parent’s confidentiality must not be breached
- c) That information is shared on a need to know basis

Procedure for parents to access to personal records

Parents may request access to any records held on their child and family following the procedure below.

- Any request to see the child’s personal file by a parent or person with parental responsibility must be made in writing to the Principal.
- A written acknowledgement will be sent.
- We have a commitment to providing access within 14 days – although this may be extended if necessary.
- The Principal and Class teacher prepare the file for viewing.

- 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. Copies of these letters are retained on the file.
- '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. 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.
- What remains is the information recorded by WMS detailing the work initiated and followed by them in relation to confidential matters. This is called the 'clean copy'.
- The 'clean copy' is photocopied for the parents who are then invited in to discuss the contents. The file will be gone through by the Principal, 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 school or another (third party) agency.

All the undertakings above are subject to the paramount commitment of WMS, which is to the safety and well-being of every child at all times. Please see also our policy on child protection.

Essential: All senior staff to have read "Information Sharing: For Managers and Practitioners Guide" HM Gov 2008.

(A signed policy is available upon request)

This policy was adopted on dated: **01.02.2016**

Signed (Principal):

Signed (Senior member of school staff):

Signed (Parent Representative):

Date signed: 1/5/17

Date to be Reviewed: **01.05.2018**