Confidentiality Policy

Academic year 2026/27 | Reviewed at least annually

Statement of Intent

At The Wendy House, we recognise that our work with children and families requires us to receive, record and sometimes share personal and sensitive information.

We are committed to respecting the privacy of children, families, staff, volunteers and others associated with the setting.

Information will be handled confidentially, securely and appropriately, in accordance with our safeguarding responsibilities and applicable data protection legislation.

Our Principles

We will:

- only collect and use personal information where there is an appropriate reason to do so;
- ensure information is relevant and, where appropriate, kept accurate and up to date;
- store personal information securely;
- restrict access to confidential information to those who have an appropriate need to know;
- share information appropriately where this is necessary to support a child or protect their welfare;
- respect the privacy of children, families and staff; and
- dispose of information securely when it is no longer required to be retained.

Children's and Families' Information

Information about children and families may include:

- contact and emergency-contact details;
- attendance information;
- medical, allergy and dietary information;
- developmental information and observations;
- SEND information;
- photographs and recordings where appropriate;
- accident, incident and medication records;
- safeguarding information;
- funding or administrative information; and

- other information required to provide safe and appropriate care.

Information will only be accessed by those who require it for a legitimate purpose.

Sharing Information Within the Setting

Staff will not discuss confidential information unnecessarily.

Relevant information may be shared between appropriate members of staff where it is necessary to:

- safeguard a child;
- meet a child's care or medical needs;
- support learning and development;
- support SEND;
- manage an emergency;
- meet legal or regulatory responsibilities; or
- ensure the safe and effective operation of the setting.

Information will be shared on a **need-to-know basis**.

Staff induction and ongoing practice will reinforce the importance of confidentiality.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding children takes priority over confidentiality.

Where there is a concern that a child may be at risk of abuse, neglect or other harm, information may be shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and appropriate professionals or agencies.

Parental consent is not required before sharing information where seeking consent would place a child at increased risk, prejudice a safeguarding investigation or where there is another lawful basis for sharing the information.

Staff must never promise a child or adult that information relating to a safeguarding concern will be kept secret.

Safeguarding records will be kept securely and separately from children's general records where appropriate, with access restricted to those who need the information.

Please also refer to our **Safeguarding Policy**.

Parents' and Carers' Access to Information

Parents/carers may access appropriate information relating to their own child in accordance with applicable data protection requirements and our procedures.

They will not be given access to confidential information relating to another child, family or individual unless there is a lawful basis for doing so.

Where a document contains information relating to another person, this will be considered carefully before information is disclosed.

Requests to exercise formal data-protection rights will be handled in accordance with our Privacy Notice and applicable legislation.

Accuracy of Information

We take reasonable steps to ensure personal information is accurate and up to date where necessary.

Parents/carers and staff are encouraged to tell us when relevant information changes.

Where a person believes factual personal information held about them is inaccurate, they may ask for it to be corrected.

Where a record reflects a professional opinion, observation or judgement rather than an objectively incorrect fact, the original record may need to be retained. Where appropriate, the individual's differing view may also be recorded.

Storage and Security

Personal and confidential information will be stored securely.

Paper records containing confidential information will be appropriately secured when not in use.

Electronic information will be protected through appropriate security measures.

Access will be limited to authorised individuals.

As a pack-away preschool, particular care will be taken to ensure confidential paperwork and records are secured appropriately when the setting is packed away and when the premises are not in use.

Photographs and Digital Information

Photographs, videos and other digital information relating to children will be managed in accordance with our permissions, safeguarding procedures and data protection responsibilities.

Personal devices must not be used to photograph or record children contrary to the setting's policies.

Images or information about children will not be shared publicly without an appropriate lawful basis and any permissions required by our procedures.

WhatsApp, Email and Electronic Communication

Where WhatsApp, email or other electronic communication is used for legitimate setting purposes, staff will take reasonable care to protect children's and families' personal information.

Confidential information will not be shared more widely than necessary.

Staff must follow setting procedures regarding appropriate devices, accounts and communication with families.

Particular care will be taken when sharing photographs or information relating to individual children.

Staff Information

Information relating to staff, applicants and volunteers will be treated confidentially and securely.

Personnel information will only be available to those with an appropriate reason to access it.

Employment matters will be discussed only with those directly involved or those who have an appropriate management, governance, safeguarding or legal responsibility.

Students and Volunteers

Students and volunteers will be informed about confidentiality as part of their induction.

They must not discuss information about children, families or staff outside the setting.

Information obtained during a placement must not be shared on social media or used for purposes unrelated to the placement.

Management Committee

Management Committee members may have access to confidential information as part of their governance and employer responsibilities.

Committee members must maintain appropriate confidentiality regarding children, families and staff.

Where individual cases need to be discussed, information will be limited to what is necessary and individuals will not be identified unnecessarily.

Conversations Within the Setting

Staff will be mindful of where confidential conversations take place.

Sensitive information will not knowingly be discussed where children, other parents/carers or unauthorised people can overhear.

Parents/carers are also asked to respect the privacy of other children and families.

The Wendy House cannot control information that a parent/carer independently chooses to disclose to another parent/carer.

Information Sharing With Other Professionals

Information may be shared with relevant professionals and agencies where there is an appropriate reason and lawful basis.

Depending on the circumstances, this may include:

- schools and other early years settings;
- health professionals;
- local authority services;
- SEND professionals;
- children's social care;
- the police;
- Ofsted; and
- other appropriate agencies.

Where consent is appropriate, it will be sought.

Where information must be shared to safeguard a child or meet another legal responsibility, information may be shared without consent where permitted or required.

Only information that is relevant and proportionate to the purpose will be shared.

Breaches of Confidentiality

Any suspected loss, inappropriate disclosure or unauthorised access to personal information must be reported promptly to the Manager.

The Manager will consider what action is required, including whether the incident constitutes a personal-data breach that requires further action or notification.

A deliberate or serious breach of confidentiality by a member of staff may be dealt with under the setting's disciplinary procedures.

Personal Mobile Phones and Devices

Staff must not have personal mobile phones or other personal devices on their person while they are working directly with children.

Personal phones must be stored away securely during working time and may only be accessed during designated breaks when the member of staff is away from the children.

Personal mobile phones must not be used to photograph, record or store information about children.

Any urgent personal contact should be managed through the setting's agreed procedures.

This requirement supports children's safeguarding, privacy and confidentiality and applies to all staff working directly with children.

Retention and Disposal

Records will be retained for appropriate periods according to their type and applicable legal, regulatory, insurance and safeguarding requirements.

When confidential information is no longer required, it will be securely destroyed or deleted.

Data Protection

The Wendy House will process personal information in accordance with applicable data protection legislation, including the:

UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
Data Protection Act 2018

Further information about how personal data is collected, used, retained and shared is contained within our **Privacy Notice**.

Review

This policy will be reviewed at least annually and sooner where legislation, statutory guidance, data protection requirements or the needs of the setting change.

Policy Approval & Review

Policy year	2026/2027
Approval status	Awaiting Management Committee approval
Next scheduled review	March 2027