

Policy:	INFORMATION SHARING POLICY & PROCEDURES
Reviewed:	November 2011
Next Review:	3 years or as legislation may require
Responsibility:	Senior Link Worker
Category:	Safeguarding (Family Support & Inclusion)

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■ PART 1

Introduction

This document sets out the roles and responsibilities of Walton Lane Nursery School and Rocking Horse Club staff and volunteers in relation to Information Sharing. This article must be read in conjunction with Walton Lane Children's Centre Safeguarding Policies and Procedures 2009.

All staff and volunteers throughout Walton Lane Nursery School and Rocking Horse Club and associated centres should follow the policies and procedures set out in this article.

Mission Statement

Safeguarding children and ensuring their well-being is central to the work at Walton Lane Nursery School and Rocking Horse Club. Staffs aims are to provide information, advice and support for children and their families that co-ordinate around individual needs.

Information sharing is vital to delivering better and more efficient services. It is essential that information sharing should enable improved outcomes for children and families through early intervention and preventative work, for safeguarding and promoting welfare and wider public protection.

Walton Lane Nursery School and Rocking Horse Club understands that it is important that people feel confident that their personal information is kept safe and secure and that all staff maintain the privacy of individuals and families.

Whilst sharing information staff must understand and follow the framework for information sharing. It is extremely important that all staff are aware of information sharing procedures and understand the appropriateness of the information they are sharing, and who they are sharing the information with, staff must also be aware of the consequences of not sharing appropriate information.

Therefore, staff must use their professional judgement regarding information sharing.

Adhering to the guidelines of information sharing maintains ongoing trusted relationships between staff, children and their families whilst contributing to the protection of the public and to promote the life chances of children and their families.

Ethos Underpinning Legislation and Guidance

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The Data Protection Act 1998 provides a framework for sharing information correctly and reinforces common sense rules of handling information. The guidance from the Data Protection Act 1998 and HM Government Information Sharing has been used to compile the policy.

Data protection law benefits all people by protecting the privacy rights of individuals whilst contributing to more effective services.

It is the aim of the government to provide better and more efficient services that are cohesive and co-ordinated around the needs of individuals. Sharing information correctly can prevent duplication and misunderstanding; promote well-being and safeguard, therefore improving outcomes for all.

■ PART 2 – PROCEDURES

Make sure that the information you are sharing is essential for the purpose for which you are sharing it i.e. preventing harm, safeguarding, promoting well-being, where a crime has been committed and in the interests of safety.

Ensure the information is shared with the relevant people and on a need to know basis, is accurate, relevant and up-to-date, is shared securely and at an appropriate time.

Appropriate information can sometimes be information that you think other staff/agencies need to know that is in the interest of their safety. For example if you are working with a parent who is suffering from mental health problems and you think in your professional judgement that the parent is likely to cause harm to themselves, another person/child or the members of the public/staff, then you would need to share information appropriately and with the appropriate people.

If you are in any doubt about information sharing you should seek advice from a more senior member of staff without disclosing the identity of the person unless necessary.

You should respect the wishes of those who do not consent to share confidential information; however you can share appropriate information when you have consent. Consent can be either verbal or written although written consent can prevent disputes.

You must also consider whether the person has the capacity to understand what they are consenting to, if they do not have that capacity it is important that another person who is authorised to act on their behalf consent on behalf of that person.

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Consent can be retracted at any time. However even when you don't have consent you may still need to share information in certain circumstances.

If you think in your own professional judgement that the information you are sharing is in the public interest, the lack of consent can be lawfully overridden if the decision can be justified.

When sharing information you should be clear as to why you are sharing the information. You must consider the safety and well-being of the person concerned and others who may be affected by that person's actions. Balance your decision to share information against what might happen if you do not share the information.

You would need to base your decision to information share, using your own professional judgement and on the facts of the case whilst considering the safety and well-being of others.

If you decide it is appropriate to share information you should keep a record of your decision and state the reasons for your decision. Record what information you have shared, with whom and for what purpose. Do not assume that you need to share the whole case file of information only relevant, timely and appropriate information. This is to be recorded on an information sheet.

Pass on relevant information in an appropriate setting. For example to pass on confidential information to another staff member in a corridor and within earshot of others is not good practice.

Establish whether or not the recipient intends to pass the information on to other people and inform the person whom the information relates to.

If at any stage you decide not to share information you should also record this decision and the reasons for it. This is to be recorded on an information sheet.

Storage/Transfer of information

Children's and Families' files are stored in the Link Workers office in a secured cabinet. All personal information is to be treated as confidential and shared with staff on a need to know basis, with consent where appropriate. Relevant information will be shared with other agencies at children's transition periods with the consent of parents/carers.

Link Workers are responsible for the transition of Child Protection files to the relevant school. The file must be passed onto the Head Teacher/Designated Person and a record made of who it was passed onto and when.

Seven **golden rules** for information sharing (HM Government Information Sharing)

Walton Lane Nursery School & Rocking Horse Club

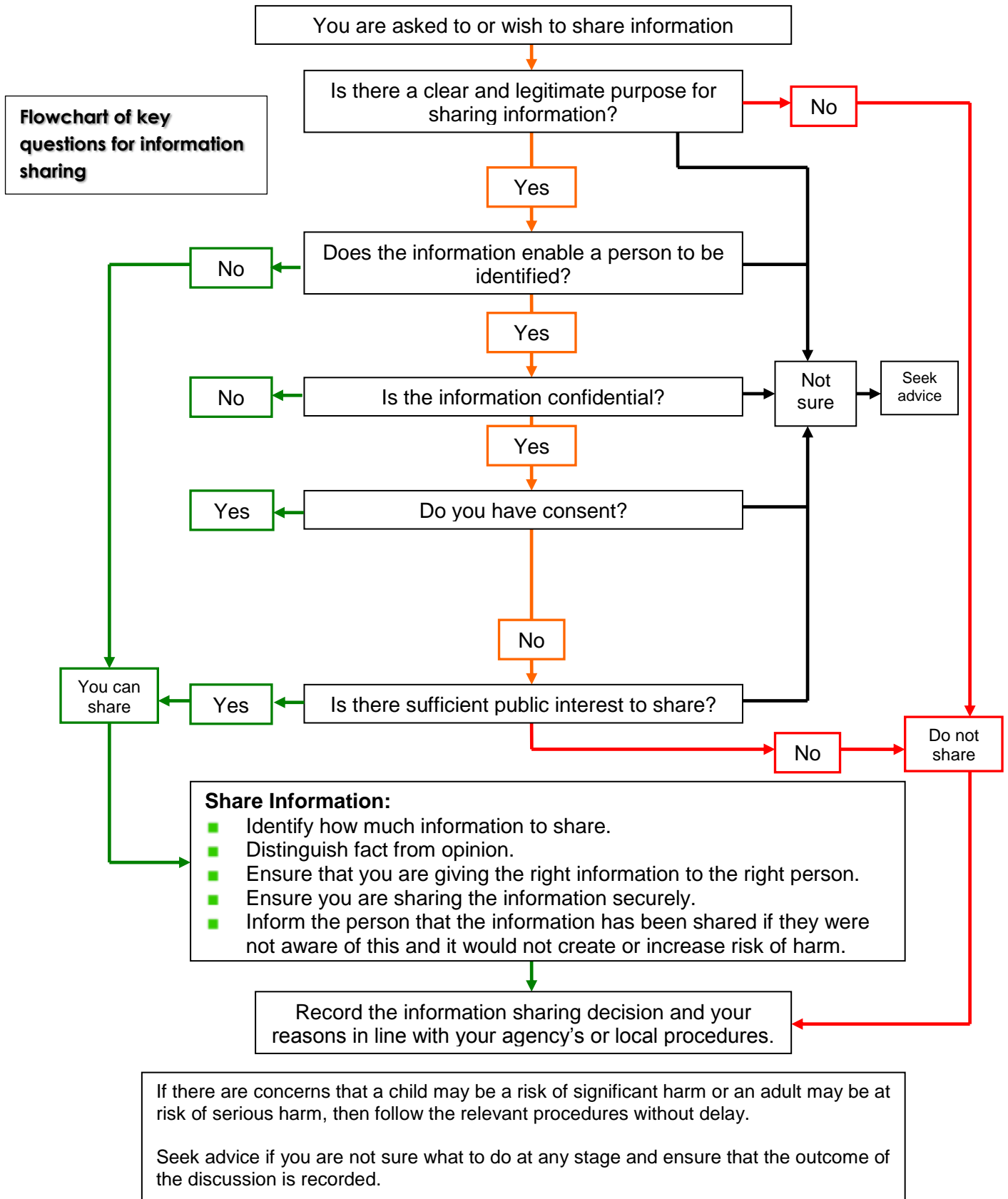
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1. Remember that the data protection act is not a barrier to sharing information but provides a framework to ensure that personal information about living persons is shared appropriately.
2. Be open and honest with the person (and/or their family where appropriate) from the onset about why, what, how and with whom information will, or could be shared, and seek their agreement, unless it is unsafe or inappropriate to do so.
3. Seek advice if you are in any doubt, without disclosing the identity of the person where possible.
4. Share with consent where appropriate and, where possible, respect the wishes of those who do not consent to sharing confidential information. You may still share information without consent if, in your judgement, that lack of consent can be overridden in the public interest. You will need to base your judgement on the fact of the case.
5. Consider safety and well-being: Base your information sharing decisions on consideration of the safety and well-being of the person and others who may be affected by their actions.
6. Necessary, proportionate, relevant, accurate, timely and secure: Ensure that the information you share is necessary for the purpose for which you are sharing it, is shared only with those people who need to have it, is accurate and up-to-date, is shared in a timely fashion, and is shared securely.
7. Keep a record of your decision and the reason for it-whether it is to share information or not. If you decide to share, then record what you have shared, with whom and for purpose.

For further information and guidance please consult a Member of the Senior Management Team. If necessary a member of the Senior Management Team will seek advice from the Legal Team at County Hall

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Date:

Entry number in
Serious Incident Book:

Walton Lane Nursery School & Rocking Horse Club

INFORMATION SHEET

Name of pupil / staff / parent / centre user (highlight as appropriate)	
Date & time	
Place	
Others present	
Information:	

Signed:

Print:

Report passed to:

Date & time:

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FOR USE BY HEADTEACHER, DELEGATED PERSONNEL OR SENIOR DESIGNATED TEACHER

CP File		Health & Safety		Care & Control		Pupil File		Headteacher's File(s)	
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ACTION TAKEN

Continuous sheet: Y / N

Signed	Date:
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Copies to:	Serious Incident book?
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