



Rationale

- The safety, well being and protection of our children are the paramount consideration in all decisions staff at this Centre make about confidentiality. The appropriate sharing of information between Centre staff is an essential element in ensuring our children well being and safety.
- It is an essential part of the ethos of our Centre that trust is established to enable children, staff, and parents/carers to seek help both within and outside the Centre and minimise the number of situations when personal information is shared to ensure children and staff are supported and safe
- Children, parents/carers and staff need to know the boundaries of confidentiality in order to feel safe and comfortable in discussing personal issues and concerns, including sex and relationships.
- The Centre's attitude to confidentiality is open and easily understood and everyone should be able to trust the boundaries of confidentiality operating within the Centre.
- Issues concerning personal information including sex and relationships and other personal matters can arise at any time. Everyone in the Centre community needs to know that no one can offer absolute confidentiality.
- Everyone in the Centre community needs to know the limits of confidentiality that can be offered by individuals within the Centre community so they can make informed decisions about the most appropriate person to talk to about any health, sex and relationship or other personal issue they want to discuss.
- This policy has been written in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders and has been disseminated to staff, children and parents and partner agencies.
- The policy forms part of the induction of all new staff, including voluntary staff and is reviewed every 3 years.

Definition of Confidentiality

The dictionary definition of confidential is "something which is spoken or given in confidence; private, entrusted with another's secret affairs" When speaking confidentially to someone the confider has the belief that the confidant will not discuss the content of the conversation with another. The confider is asking for the content of the conversation to be kept secret. Anyone offering absolute confidentiality to someone else would be offering to keep the content of his or her conversation completely secret and discuss it with no one. In practice there are few situations where absolute confidentiality is offered in Birth and Beyond Centre. We have tried to strike a balance between ensuring the safety, well being and protection of our children and staff, ensuring there is an ethos of trust where children and staff can ask for help when they need it and ensuring that when it is essential to share personal information child protection issues and good practice are followed. This means that in most cases what is on offer is limited confidentiality. Disclosure of the content of a conversation could be discussed with professional colleagues but the confider would not be identified except in certain circumstances.

The general rule is that staff should make clear at the beginning of the conversation that there are limits to confidentiality. These limits relate to ensuring children's' safety and well being. The children will be informed when a confidence has to be broken for this reason and will be encouraged to do this for themselves whenever this is possible.

Different levels of confidentiality for different circumstances.



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ground rules to ensure confidential disclosures are not made. It should be made clear to children that this is not the time or place to disclose confidential, personal information. When a health professional is contributing to a Centre health education programme in a classroom setting, s/he is working with the same boundaries of confidentiality as a teacher.

2. One to one disclosures to members of Centre staff (including voluntary staff).

It is essential all members of staff know the limits of the confidentiality they can offer to both children and parents/carers and any required actions and sources of further support or help available both for the children or parent/carer and for the staff member within the Centre where appropriate. All staff at this Centre encourages children to discuss difficult issues with their parents or carers, and vice versa. However, the needs of the children are paramount and Centre staff will not automatically share information about the children with his/her parents/carers unless it is considered to be in the child's best interests.

3. Disclosures to a counsellor, Centre nurse or health professional operating a confidential service in the Centre.

Health professionals such as Centre nurses can give confidential medical advice to children provided they are competent to do so and follow the Fraser Guidelines (guidelines for doctors and other health professionals on giving medical advice to under 16s). Centre nurses are skilled in discussing issues and possible actions with children and always have in mind the need to encourage children to discuss issues with their parents or carers. However, the needs of the children are paramount and the Centre nurse will not insist that children's parents or carers are informed about any advice or treatment they give.

The legal position for Centre staff:

Centre staff (including non-teaching and voluntary staff) should not promise confidentiality. Children do not have the right to expect that incidents will not be reported to his/her parents/carers and may not, in the absence of an explicit promise, assume that information conveyed outside that context is private. No member of this Centre's staff can or should give such a promise. The safety, well being and protection of the child is the paramount consideration in all decisions staff at this Centre make about confidentiality. Centre staff are NOT obliged to break confidentiality except where child protection is or may be an issue, however, at Birth and Beyond Centre we believe it is important staff are able to share their concerns about children with colleagues in a professional and supportive way, on a need to know basis, to ensure staff receive the guidance and support they need and the children's safety and well being is maintained. Centre staff should discuss such concerns with their line manager.

Visitors and non-teaching staff:

At Birth and Beyond Centre, we expect all non teaching staff, including voluntary staff, except those identified in the paragraph above, to report any disclosures by children or parents/carers, of a concerning personal nature to the designated child protection co-ordinator as soon as possible after the disclosure and in an appropriate setting, so others cannot overhear. This is to ensure the safety, protection and well being of all our children and staff. The designated child protection co-ordinator will decide what, if any, further action needs to be taken, both to ensure the children gets the help and support they need and that the member of staff also gets the support and supervision they need.



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Birth Beyond Centre believes that it is essential to work in partnership with parents and carers and we endeavour to keep parents/carers abreast of their child's progress at Centre, including any concerns about their progress or behaviour. However, we also need to maintain a balance so that our children can share any concerns and ask for help when they need it. Where a children does discuss a difficult personal matter staff at Centre, they will be encouraged to also discuss the matter with their parent or carer themselves. The safety, well being and protection of our children is the paramount consideration in all decisions staff at this Centre make about confidentiality.

Statement of ground rules to be used in lessons

We adopt ground rules to ensure a safe environment for teaching in particular in PSHE and Circle time. This reduces anxiety to children and staff and minimises unconsidered, unintended personal disclosures.

At the beginning of each PSHE lesson and Circle time, children are reminded of the ground rules by the teacher or outside visitor. The teacher establishes the ground rules together with the children at the beginning of each half term of teaching PSHE and Circle time.

- We won't ask each other or the teacher any personal questions
- We will respect each other and not laugh, tease or hurt others
- We won't say things we want to keep confidential
- We can pass or opt out of something if it makes us feel uncomfortable
- If we do find out things about other children, which are personal and private, we won't talk about it outside the lesson, If we are worried about someone else's safety we tell a teacher

When confidentiality should be broken and procedures for doing this:

See the Child Protection Policy

Where this does not apply and you are still concerned and unsure of whether the information should be passed on or other action taken you should speak to either the Centre Manager or Inclusion Manager.

If the Centre Manager issues instructions that s/he should be kept informed, all staff must comply. There is always a good reason for this, which you may not know about.

The principles we follow at Birth and Beyond Centre are that in all cases we:

- Ensure the time and place are appropriate, when they are not we reassure the child that we understand they need to discuss something very important and that it warrants time, space and privacy.

See the child normally (and always in cases of neglect, or abuse) before the end of the Centre day. More serious concerns must be reported immediately to ensure that any intervention necessary to protect the child is accessed as early as possible.

- Tell the child we cannot guarantee confidentiality if we think they will:
 - hurt them selves
 - hurt someone else
 - or they tell us that someone is hurting them or others
- Not interrogate the child or ask leading questions
- We won't put children in the position of having to repeat distressing matters to several people
- Inform the children first before any confidential information is shared, with the reasons for this
- Encourage the children, whenever possible to confide in his/her own parents/carers



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...an may have support needs themselves in dealing with some of the personal issues of our children.
At Birth and Beyond Centre we prefer you to ask for help rather than possibly making a poor decision because you don't have all the facts or the necessary training, or taking worries about children home with you. There are many agencies we can refer children to who need additional support which and we have procedures to ensure this happens. We all work together as part of a team to support our children and asking for help is a way we ensure

Dissemination and implementation:

This policy has been distributed to all teaching and non-teaching staff, including volunteers, at the Centre as part of a whole Centre training day, where all staff received training on the content and practical applications of the policy. The Centre Manager has developed a simplified version for children and parents/carers, which forms part of the Centre prospectus. All new staff, including volunteers, receive a copy of the policy, together with basic training on the Centre's Child Protection Policy and procedures from the Designated Child Protection Co-ordinator for the Manager.