# Confidentiality and Client Access to Records Policy

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**Authorisation Signature(s)**

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| 06.06.10 | 2 | 09.06.10 | Formally Confidentiality Policy. |
| 12.11.10 | 3 | 05.01.11 | Guidance on use of social networking websites |
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| May 15 | 4 | 17.04.13 | No changes required |
| May 17 | 4 | 17.04.13 | No changes required |
| Jan 19 | 5 | Jan 21 | Updated in line with PLA policy and new GDPR guidelines |
| Jan 23 | 5 | Jan 21 | No changes required |

# Policy statement

*‘Share with informed consent where appropriate and, where possible, respect the wishes of those who do not consent to share confidential information. You may still share information without consent if, in your judgement there is good reason to do so, such as where safety may be at risk. You will need to base your judgement on the facts of the case’*

*Information sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers (HMG 2015)*

At Ridgeway Under Fives, staff and managers can be said to have a ‘confidential relationship’ with families. It is our intention to respect the privacy of children and their parents and carers, while ensuring that they access high quality early years care and education in our setting. We aim to ensure that all parents and carers can share their information in the confidence that it will only be used to enhance the welfare of their children. There are record keeping systems in place that meet legal requirements; the means we use to store and share that information takes place within the framework of the General Data Protection Regulations (2018) and the Human Rights Act (1998).

**Confidentiality procedures**

* We always check whether parents regard the information they share with us to be confidential or not.
* Some parents may share information about themselves with other parents as well as staff; the setting cannot be held responsible if information is shared beyond those parents whom the person has ‘confided’ in.
* Information shared between parents in a discussion or training group is usually bound by a shared agreement that the information is confidential to the group and not discussed outside of it. We are not responsible should that confidentiality be breached by participants.
* We inform parents when we need to record confidential information beyond the general personal information we keep (see our Keeping Records Procedure and Privacy Notice) - for example with regard to any injuries, concerns or changes in relation to the child or the family, any discussions with parents on sensitive matters, any records we are obliged to keep regarding action taken in respect of child protection and any contact and correspondence with external agencies in relation to their child.
* We keep all records securely (see our Keeping Records Procedure and Privacy Notice).
* If staff or management committee members use social networking sites such as Facebook and YouTube, they must not name Ridgeway Under Fives or other staff members. Also any inappropriate comments or images that may reflect badly on Ridgeway Under Fives and the staff must not be posted on such websites, either intentionally or unintentionally. We have a named committee member (Jacqui Oxley) who is responsible for checking these sites on a regular basis.

## Client access to records procedures

Parents may request access to any confidential 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 setting supervisor.
* The supervisor informs the chairperson of the management committee and sends a written acknowledgement.
* The setting commits to providing access within 14 days, although this may be extended.
* The setting’s supervisor and chairperson 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 file.
* ‘Third parties’ include all family members who may be referred to in the records.
* It also includes workers from any other agency, including children’s social care, the health authority, etc. It is usual for agencies to refuse consent to disclose, preferring the individual to go directly to them.
* When all the consents/refusals to disclose have been received these are attached to the copy of the request letter.
* A photocopy of the complete file is taken.
* The setting supervisor and chairperson go through the file and remove any information which a third party has refused consent to disclose. A thick black marker is used, to score through every reference to the third party and information they have added to the file.
* What remains is the information recorded by the setting, 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 should never be given straight over, but should be gone through by the setting supervisor, 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 setting or another (third party) agency.

All the undertakings above are subject to the paramount commitment of the setting, which is to the safety and well-being of the child. Please see also our policy on Safeguarding Children and Child Protection.

**Legal framework**

* Data Protection Act 1998
* Human Rights Act 1998

### Further guidance

* Information Sharing: Guidance for Practitioners’ and Managers (DCSF 2008)

# Confidentiality and Client Access to Records Policy

**AMENDMENT FORM**

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