



## Parent Partnership Service

### Confidentiality Policy

#### Statutory Framework

Information about parents (including details about their children) should not be passed from the local authority or the school or the PPS or to any other voluntary organisation or parent support group unless parent know and agree to this in advance.

This also applies to arrangements made by the PPS for referring parents to independent support.

If parents do not want their details passed on to anyone else their wishes should be respected.

The Green Paper, **EVERY CHILD MATTERS**, highlights the need for a balance between sharing enough information to help safeguard children effectively and preserving the privacy of individuals.

#### Definitions

- **Private information** - information about an individual parent or child, their family life or personal relationships that happens to be observed or discovered by an a member of the PPS or independent support
- **Confidential information** – Information about a family that is specifically communicated to the PPS or independent support, orally or in writing, by the parent or anyone else.

## **Implementation of the policy.**

### **1. Respect for the parent's and child's right to privacy**

- 1.1 Observations or information about the family are not recorded or communicated unless they are directly relevant to the issues under discussion
- 1.2 Parents are not required to state the nature of their enquiry in front of other people
- 1.3 Interviews are held in private where they cannot be overheard or observed

### **2. The parent's right to contact the PPS in confidence anonymously**

- 2.1 The PPS undertakes not to inform anyone else that the parent has contacted the PPS unless the parent agrees
- 2.2 The PPS respects the right of anyone to contact the service anonymously
- 2.3 The PPS responds to general enquiries without asking for detailed information about the child or the family

### **3. The PPS's commitment to principles of confidentiality in its relationship with parents**

- 3.1 All information obtained from families is treated as confidential
- 3.2 Information is not shared with anyone else except with the parents permission at the outset

### **4. Practical arrangements to ensure confidentiality**

- 4.1 Office procedures protect the confidentiality of families
- 4.2 Personal information sent by email is with the parent's permission and highlighted as "confidential"
- 4.3 All letters related to individual families are marked as "strictly private and confidential"
- 4.4 Particular care is taken when sending sensitive information by fax to an "open" office.
- 4.5 "Coded" information such as initials and date of birth should be used in electronic and insecure communications

- 4.6 Identities of families are protected in any information published by the PPS
- 4.7 Records are kept securely and comply with the provision of the Data Protection Act

## **5. Confidentiality between PPS and LA**

- 5.1 The PPS has ownership of the information provided by parents
- 5.2 Access to parental records held by the PPS by other LA Departments or other bodies is only with the consent of the parents.

## **6. Information to parents on PPS confidentiality policy**

- 6.1 Parents are informed as to the PPS confidentiality policy
- 6.2 Parents are informed as to who has access to PPS records
- 6.3 Parents are informed of their rights to see any information held on them or their child
- 6.4 Parents are informed that information is kept securely and will not be passed on to anyone else without their permission.

## **7. The priority given to child protection issues at all times**

- 7.1 Child protection issues will take priority over any other consideration

## **8. Office procedures**

- 8.1 All information relating to calls of concern from parents must be recorded on the agreed PPS confidential forms
- 8.2 All “live” cases must be kept in individual plastic wallets in alphabetical order within each case-workers red lever-arch file
- 8.3 All red files must be locked away every night.
- 8.4 Computer screens should not be left unattended with confidential information about parents visible.
- 8.5 Correspondence relating to families should not be left on desks overnight but must be locked away.