



Policy on working in partnership with other agencies.

Aim – To outline when and how we will share information about children and families in our care with other agencies.

Introduction.

The Exwick Ark recognises the advantages of working in partnership with other agencies to support the needs of families and children. Everyone wants the best outcomes for a child and happy, secure and confident families. We recognise that other agencies have different knowledge, skills and resources that can often be utilized to support the families. We also recognise that we have knowledge, skills and resources that can be shared to support the work of other agencies.

Sharing information.

It is sometimes necessary to share information about the children and families in our care with other agencies. The reasons for sharing information include; to access appropriate services for our families, to allow for a smooth transition, to work co-operatively with other service providers to meet the needs of a child or to protect a child from harm or abuse. We will usually get consent from a child's parent before sharing information unless we feel that by doing so we are placing the child or adult at greater risk of harm or to prevent serious harm to an individual through the prevention, detection and prosecution of serious crime.

When sharing information with other agencies we will ensure that the information shared is necessary for the purpose for which we 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.



We will keep a record of our decision to share or not share and the reasons for our decision. If we decide to share we will record what we have shared, with who and for what purpose.

The attached pocket guide to information sharing can be used to support decisions surrounding information sharing.

Transitions.

When a child starts at the Ark parents will be asked to complete our standard application form during or prior to our home visit. This form contains the information necessary for us to provide a smooth transition into the setting for the child and family. This form also asks for details of other service providers who are currently working with the child.

When a child leaves The Ark to attend school we will complete a standard transition form detailing the achievements of the child during their time with us and the identified next steps. This form will be shared with the child and parents, who will also have an input, and with the permission of the parents will be shared with the child's reception teacher. If a child leaves the Ark to attend another provider we will give the child's records to their parent and suggest that they pass them to their new setting.

We also usually meet with the reception class teacher of our feeder schools prior to transfer to ensure the needs of the children are understood.

Work with other childcare providers, schools and child minders.

We are keen to work in partnership with other childcare providers. We regularly attend briefing meetings in which best practise and developments in early years are shared. We work closely with early year's advisory teachers and Devon Early Years and Childcare Partnership. We regularly have visitors from other settings in to observe our practise and in turn visit other settings to learn from them.

If a child attending the Ark attends another childcare provider we send a form sharing development matters stages for each area of learning along



with personal comments and request the other provider returns the form with their assessments and comments completed in return.

Referrals.

Sometimes we are not able to meet the needs of a child or family within our setting and we need to access support or advice from other professionals. In this case with the parents' consent we will refer the child or family to another agency using standard referral procedures. In some cases the child's parents may prefer to do this themselves.

Multi agency working.

Sometimes the needs of the child or family may be more complicated and the child's needs may be best met by more than one agency working in partnership. In such cases we will ask the parents if they would like to complete an Early Help Assessment. This is a standardized approach to conducting an assessment of a families additional needs and is a key part of delivering frontline services that are integrated and focussed around the needs of the family. His will be recorded on the Devon data base Rights for children with parental consent. Further information about the Early Help process can be found in our inclusion policy.

Safeguarding.

If we consider a child to be at risk of harm we will make a referral to the Multiagency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) as detailed in our safeguarding policy. In most cases we will inform the parents before doing this. The only reason for not informing parents first would be if we consider that this will put the child at greater risk.

Statutory involvement.

Within the group of children with additional needs, a small proportion have more significant needs which meet the threshold for statutory involvement. Thresholds for statutory involvement can be found on the Devon Children and Families Partnership website. These children are;



- Children who are the subject of a child protection plan.
- Looked after children.
- Care leavers.
- Children for whom adoption is the plan.
- Children with severe and complex special educational needs.
- Children with complex disabilities or complex health needs.
- Children diagnosed with significant mental health problems.

In these cases we will support the process of statutory involvement and attend any review meetings required of us.

Signed: