

Confidentiality Policy

Ensuring Privacy and Data Protection

Policy statement

At Little Acorns Pre-school, we are committed to safeguarding the privacy and confidentiality of all individuals associated with our organisation, including children, families, staff, and visitors. This policy outlines the principles and procedures we follow to ensure that information is protected in accordance with legal requirements, including the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

This policy applies to:

- All staff, volunteers, and families involved with Little Acorns Pre-school.
- All forms of information, whether written, electronic, or verbal that is shared within the pre-school.
- All types of personal data collected, processed, and stored by the pre-school.

Principles of Confidentiality

We adhere to the following principles to protect confidential information:

- Lawfulness, Fairness, and Transparency: Personal data will be processed lawfully and transparently.
- Purpose Limitation: Data will only be collected for specified, explicit, and legitimate purposes.
- Data Minimisation: We collect only the data that is necessary for the intended purpose.
- Accuracy: Personal data will be kept accurate and up to date.
- Storage Limitation: Data will not be kept longer than necessary.
- Integrity and Confidentiality: Appropriate security measures will be in place to protect data from unauthorised access.

GDPR Compliance

As part of our commitment to GDPR, Little Acorns Pre-School ensures the following:

Data Collection

We collect personal data such as names, addresses, health information, and emergency contacts for children and staff. This is done with consent from parents, guardians, or employees. This information is gathered through registration forms and during staff inductions.

Data Storage

All data is securely stored using password-protected electronic systems and locked filing cabinets for paper records. No documents containing children's personal information should be left out when not at the setting.

Only designated staff have access to personal information, on a need-to-know basis.

Data Sharing

Personal data is shared only with authorised individuals, such as staff and external agencies, when there is a legitimate reason to do so, such as safeguarding, support for children with additional needs and medical emergencies. Little Acorns Pre-school will seek permission before sharing information with external services unless doing so will endanger a child.

Subject Access Requests

Under GDPR, individuals have the right to access their personal data. Requests can be made in writing and will be fulfilled within 30 days.

Data Breaches

In the event of a data breach, we will take immediate steps to mitigate the breach, notify affected individuals, and report the breach to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) if necessary.

Confidentiality with Children and Families

We recognise the importance of maintaining trust and confidence with children and families. The policy includes:

- Ensuring that sensitive information about children's development, behaviour, or family circumstances is shared only with authorised staff and professionals.
- Private and personal matters will be discussed discreetly in a private space.
- Obtaining parental/guardian consent before sharing information with external agencies unless doing so is a safeguarding risk and could result in the harm of a child.

Confidentiality with Staff

Staff members' personal data, including contracts, payroll information, and health records, are treated with strict confidentiality. Employee-related discussions are held privately and securely.

Staff are not to discuss confidential matters such as information discussed in supervisions, appraisals, disciplinary meetings or payroll.

Training and Awareness

All staff and volunteers are trained on confidentiality and GDPR compliance during their inductions and through refresher sessions. Topics covered include:

- Recognising confidential information.
- Understanding GDPR principles.
- Implementing secure data handling practices.
- Reporting breaches or concerns.

Record Retention

We retain records for children, employees, and volunteers for the minimum time required by law and professional standards. For instance:

- Children's records: Retained for three years after they leave the pre-school.
- Personnel files: Retained for 6 years post-employment.

Destruction of Records

Once the retention period has expired, records are securely destroyed, either shredded or permanently deleted from electronic systems.

Safeguarding and Confidentiality

There are exceptions to confidentiality when safeguarding concerns are raised. In such cases:

- Information may be shared with relevant authorities, such as social services or law enforcement, without prior consent.
- We will adhere to safeguarding policies and legal requirements while maintaining discretion.

Online Learning Journeys

We use an online platform, Family, to document and share children's learning journeys securely and transparently. This platform allows parents and guardians to access information about their child's progress and activities while ensuring privacy and confidentiality. Our approach includes:

- Using GDPR-compliant platforms with strong encryption and access control.
- Providing individual login credentials to parents/guardians for secure access.
- Seeking parental consent before taking or sharing any images, videos, or other data of children online.
- Ensuring that only authorised staff can upload or manage content.

- Staff must only access Famly outside of the setting with a manager's permission. In this instance staff can only access children's learning journeys when they are on their own in a private area and close the Famly app down if stepping away from any device.
- Staff must not access Famly on shared devices, when in public spaces or on unsecure networks.

Virtual staff meetings

When participating in a virtual staff meeting, all staff should wear headphones so that no one else in their household can hear what is being discussed and full names of children should not be used.

Transfer of records to other settings

Children in our care will sometimes move to another early years setting or will leave us to continue their education at primary school. During this time, with consent, we will share information with the setting that the child is transitioning to.

Information that could be shared includes, but is not limited to:

- The child's name, date of birth, medical and health information, developmental progress, behaviour, friendship groups.
- The relationship of parents, if both parents live with the child, if they are co-parenting, if a parent does not have legal access to the child.

If there are any previous or ongoing safeguarding concerns these will also be shared with the other pre-school, nursery or primary school, with or without consent.

Working together to safeguard children (2023)

Monitoring and Review

This policy is monitored continuously to ensure effectiveness and compliance. It is reviewed annually or when significant changes to the law or our operations occur.

We take confidentiality and data protection seriously at Little Acorns Pre-school to create a safe and trustworthy environment for everyone.

These measures help create a collaborative and engaging learning environment while maintaining the highest standards of confidentiality and data protection.

If staff were to breach this policy we would follow disciplinary procedures.

Policy reviewed on: 14th July 2025

Reviewed by: Jade Mann

Next review due: 14th July 2026