

Care, Learning and Record Keeping Policy

We are committed to meeting the individual needs of all children. The welfare of the children is central to our provision of care, learning and play. All children are respected and valued and we provide experiences to support their physical, social, emotional and intellectual development in a warm, caring and secure environment. Through carefully planned activities, play opportunities and interactions, staff promote children's self-esteem and support them in developing skills, knowledge and understanding as they explore their world. Children are encouraged and supported in making choices and decisions as active learners. Their progress is monitored regularly in order to ensure that individual needs are identified and provided for.

Planning

Our planning and learning is informed by a thorough understanding of the needs, interests, experiences and diversity of all of our children.

- We will provide a wide range of experiences and activities in order that children can learn through first-hand experiences and play
- We have established systems for planning children's experiences which reflect their individual needs
- We will monitor the progress of individual children and record this regularly and share this information with parents and carers
- We will encourage children to build relationships and develop self-esteem
- We will respect and value all the children, whatever their background, and we encourage staff and children to treat each other with respect

We will encourage children in their activities and provide support and reassurance for new experiences. We will give appropriate praise to support their efforts and achievements.

We will allocate each child a key worker who monitors progress and ensures that the child's needs are met. This member of staff provides the link between The Ark and home. The key worker will also manage communication between The Ark and the parents or carers, particularly on routine matters, and the child's progress.

Learning and play

- We will offer the children a broad and balanced curriculum which follows the Early Years Foundation Stage
- We will offer a variety of activities, both planned and free choice, which provide opportunities to learn through play
- We will offer a mixture of small and large group times both indoors and outdoors
- We will offer a mixture of active and quiet times throughout the day, and the children will have opportunities to participate in both indoor and outdoor activities
- We will take every opportunity to further individual children's communication skills in speaking and listening
- We will encourage the children to look at books and seek opportunities to read stories to, and with, them

- We will develop early mathematical skills through everyday routines, as well as through planned experiences and games
- We will provide activities which engage the children in problem-solving and investigation
- We will stimulate the children's imaginative and creative development through a range of activities, including: role play; a variety of painting, modelling and drawing experiences, both planned and free-choice; singing and dancing to music, as well as listening to music and playing instruments
- We will encourage the children to make choices and decisions during free play. We will also expect them, supported by adults, to take appropriate responsibility for the care and maintenance of resources
- We will make resources accessible to the children, wherever possible, in order that they can choose their activities independently
- We will label all resources so that children can find and return resources and equipment safely and easily
- We will ensure the safe use and storage of resources by the children, but we also support their independence and problem-solving abilities

Children's records

Policy statement

We have record keeping system 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 (GDPR) (2018) and the Human Rights Act (1998).

This policy and procedure should be read alongside our Privacy Notice, Confidentiality and Client Access to Records Policy and our Information Sharing Policy.

Procedures

If a child attends another setting, we establish a regular two-way flow of appropriate information with parents and other providers. Where appropriate, we will incorporate comments from other providers, as well as parents and/or carers into the child's records.

Key workers will make observations on children's interests, schemas, progress and achievements, recording these in the children's individual records. This information will be used to plan appropriate activities that will aid the children's development, and will be shared with other staff to ensure continuity of care and learning. All observations are available to view through children's individual Tapestry login, we encourage parents/carers to view regularly and comment, and to also add photos from home and comment on any experiences children have enjoyed whilst at home or on outings.

- Key workers will be responsible for making sure that these records are updated regularly, and that the information is shared with parents and carers on a regular basis
- We aim to keep parents and carers fully informed about the provision of care, learning and play for their children

We keep two kinds of records on children attending The Ark:

Developmental records

- These include observations of children in the setting, photographs and samples of their work and are kept in a locked cupboard.
- Summary developmental reports are kept in each child's individual folder which is kept in a locked cabinet.

Personal records

These are kept in each child's individual folder in a locked cabinet. They may include the following:

- Personal details – including the child's registration form and any consent forms.
- Contractual matters – including a copy of the signed parent contract, the child's days and times of attendance, a record of the child's fees, any fee reminders or records of disputes about fees.
- Child's development, health and well-being – including a summary only of the child's EYFS profile report, a record of discussions about every day matters about the child's development health and well-being with the parent.
- Early Support – including any additional focussed intervention provided by The Ark (e.g. support for behaviour, language or development that needs an SEN action plan) and records of any meetings held.
- Welfare and child protection concerns – including records of all welfare and protection concerns, and our resulting action, meetings and telephone conversations about the child, an Education, Health and Care Plan and any information regarding a Looked After Child.
- Correspondence and Reports – including a copy of the child's 2 Year Old Progress Check (as applicable), all letters and emails to and from other agencies and any confidential reports from other agencies.
- These confidential records are stored in a lockable file or cabinet, which is always locked when not in use and which the manager keeps secure in the office or other suitably safe place.
- We read any correspondence in relation to a child, note any actions and file it immediately
- We ensure that access to children's files is restricted to those authorised to see them and make entries in them, this being the manager, deputy or designated person for child protection, the child's key person, or other staff as authorised by the manager.
- We may be required to hand children's personal files to Ofsted as part of an inspection or investigation process; or to local authority staff conducting a S11 audit, as long as authorisation is seen. We ensure that children's personal files are not handed over to anyone else to look at.
- Parents have access, in accordance with our Privacy Notice, Confidentiality and Client Access to Records Policy, to the files and records of their own children, but do not have access to information about any other child.
- Our staff will not discuss personal information given by parents with other members of staff, except where it affects planning for the child's needs. Our staff induction programme includes an awareness of the importance of confidentiality in the role of the key person.
- We retain children's records for three years after they have left the setting; except records that relate to an accident or child protection matter, which are kept until a child reaches the age of 21 years or 24 years respectively. These are kept in a secure place.

Archiving children's files

- When a child leaves The Ark, we remove all paper documents from the child's personal file and place them in a robust envelope, with the child's name and date of birth on the front and the date they left. We seal this and place it in an archive box, stored in a safe place The Ark Loft for three years. After three years it is destroyed.
- If data is kept electronically it is encrypted and stored as above.
- Where there were s.47 child protection investigations, we mark the envelope with a star and archive it for 25 years.
- We store financial information according to our finance procedures.

Other records

- We keep a daily record of the names of the children we are caring for, their hours of attendance and the names of their key person.
- When students need to make observations in The Ark, they are advised of our Confidentiality and Client Access to Records Policy and are required to respect it.

Legal framework

- General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) (2018)
- Human Rights Act (1998)

Transfer of records to school

Policy statement

We recognise that children sometimes move to another early years setting before they go on to school, although many will leave The Ark to enter a nursery or reception class.

We prepare children for these transitions and involve parents and the receiving setting or school in this process. We prepare records about a child's development and learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage in The Ark; in order to enable smooth transitions, we share appropriate information with the receiving setting or school at transfer.

Confidential records are shared where there have been child protection concerns according to the process required by the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

The procedure guides this process and determines what information we can and cannot share with a receiving school or setting. Prior to transferring information, we will establish the lawful basis for doing so (see our Privacy Notice).

Procedures

Transfer of development records for a child moving to another early years setting or school

- Using the Early Years Outcomes (DfE 2013) guidance and our assessment of children's development and learning, your child's key person will prepare a summary of achievements in the seven areas of learning and development.
- The record refers to:
 - any additional language spoken by the child and his or her progress in both languages;
 - any additional needs that have been identified or addressed by The Ark;
 - any special needs or disability, whether a CAF was raised in respect of special needs or disability, whether there is an Education, Health and Care Plan, and the name of the lead professional.
- The record contains a summary by the key person and a summary of the parent's view of the child.
- The document may be accompanied by other evidence, such as photos or drawings that the child has made.
- When a child transfers to a school, most local authorities provide an assessment summary format or a transition record, which we will follow as applicable.
- If there have been any welfare or protection concerns, we place a star on the front of the assessment record.

Transfer of confidential information

- The receiving school or setting will need to have a record of any safeguarding or child protection concerns that were raised in The Ark and what was done about them.
- We will make a summary of the concerns to send to the receiving setting or school, along with the date of the last professional meeting or case conference. The Local Safeguarding Children Board will stipulate the forms to be used and provide these for us to use.
- Where a CAF has been raised in respect of any welfare concerns, we will pass the name and contact details of the lead professional on to the receiving setting or school.
- Where there has been a s47 investigation regarding a child protection concern, we will pass the name and contact details of the child's social worker on to the receiving setting or school – regardless of the outcome of the investigation.
- We post or take the information to the school or setting, ensuring it is addressed to the setting or school's designated person for child protection and marked as 'confidential'.
- We do not pass any other documentation from the child's personal file to the receiving setting or school.

Legal framework

- General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) (2018)
- Freedom of Information Act (2000)
- Human Rights Act (1998)
- Children Act (1989)

Further guidance

- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused: Advice for practitioners (HM Government 2015)
- Information sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers (HM Government 2015)