

Lower Earley *Family Contact Centre*

Confidentiality Policy

The Lower Earley Family Contact Centre recognises that the contact process requires explicit confidentiality which all volunteers are obliged to observe. Therefore, we will ensure that:

1. Volunteers undertake not to discuss or disclose any details relating to a family outside of the Centre.
2. Volunteers do not make verbal or written reports in any family proceedings.
3. The dates and times of a family's attendance will be made available to referring agencies upon request. No other information will be released unless:
 - a) a child is felt to be at risk of harm either inside or outside of the Centre or
 - b) anyone using the Centre, or a volunteer is at risk from physical violence.
4. A parent's details such as their address and telephone number will not be passed to any other person (including their former partner) or agency without their permission. The only exceptions to this will be if a) a child is felt to be at risk of harm or b) anyone using the Centre or a volunteer is at risk of physical violence.
5. Solicitors, CAFCASS Officers, Social Workers or any other individual or agency will not be allowed to carry out family assessments on Contact Centre premises, unless there is an agreement which allows them to do so.
6. All potential volunteers must have an Enhanced DBS disclosure carried out. The results of this check will be made available to the Co-ordinator and/or the Chair of the Management Committee.
7. All information relating to families and volunteers will be kept in a secure place at all times.
8. All information relating to families and volunteers which has not been used for six months will be treated as confidential waste and disposed of as such, except in the case of the accident book and registers, which will be kept indefinitely.
9. Confidentiality issues will be overridden by the need to act for the welfare of the child.
10. Centre users, referrers and volunteers will all be aware of the existence of this policy and have access to it upon request.
11. This policy will be reviewed, and if necessary updated, every two years.

Centre volunteers are expected to adhere to the following seven rules in relation to confidentiality:

1. Volunteers should not disclose information about what they have seen or heard in the Centre to outsiders.
2. Volunteers should never give out their own telephone number or address.
3. Volunteers should only talk in general terms about themselves and avoid disclosing personal or intimate information.
4. Volunteers should not make arrangements to meet individuals or families outside of the Centre.
5. If a volunteer encounters an individual or family away from the Centre, they should not introduce them to their family or friends.
6. A volunteer should tell the Co-ordinator or another volunteer if somebody known to them comes to use the Centre.
7. Volunteers must not commit themselves or others to make verbal or written reports in any family proceedings.

If a volunteer feels a child has either suffered or may suffer any physical, sexual, or emotional harm, the matter should be discussed with the Co-ordinator or another volunteer in advance of a possible referral to Social Services.