



BEDFORD
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Information sharing and consent

A guide for
parents, carers and families

Information Sharing

Agencies and professionals working with children in Bedford Borough want to make sure that the services your child/ren requires and receives is planned and delivered to meet their individual needs.

When staff from different departments and agencies work together to deliver the services your child/ren requires, they may have to share information.

Before information is shared we may need your agreement to do so; this is called consent.

Effective information sharing helps agencies and organisations deliver support to children and young people that is appropriate to their needs. To be effective the information shared must be within what the law says can be shared; it must be relevant and it must be appropriately protected, stored and secured.



Why do we need to share your child/ren's information?

- There may be times when we need to make sure your child/ren is safe
- It helps prevent you being asked the same basic questions over and over again by different staff
- It helps your child/ren to receive a joined-up service
- It helps reduce delays in providing services
- It helps us build better services.

Who will be involved in Information Sharing?

Any agency or individual (Statutory, Voluntary, Community or Private sector) that comes into contact with children and young people are involved in the sharing of information. They all have a role to play in ensuring that vulnerable children and young people are identified and supported with key information being available to all those involved.



What information will be shared?

There are two types of information that may be shared:

- **Personal information:** this is information used to identify your child/ren and includes their name, date of birth, address and post code
- **Sensitive information:** this is other information that is specific to your child/ren's situation, such as ethnicity, religious beliefs, education, health, difficulties they may be having and details of who may be helping them and your family.



How do we share information?

Information can be shared in writing, verbally or on a computer. Some of your child/ren's information can be held in health, social care and education records. All staff are required to keep written records of their work.

Who will see the information?

Only people who are working with your child/ren will be able to see the information held. This information can be shared with other services where it is necessary to ensure that the right service is offered and that your child/ren is kept safe. Information may be shared between Children's Social Care, Police, Health Agencies, some Voluntary Organisations, Schools, Courts and Legal Services.

Sharing information about your child/ren with your agreement or your child/ren's agreement is called giving consent.



Who gives consent?

- Children over the age of 12 can normally give consent themselves
- Some children over 12 might not fully understand what consent means, so we will seek consent from the person with legal authority to act on the child/ren's behalf. This could be a parent, guardian or other person with parental rights
- Some children under 12 can understand what consent means and in those cases we will ask them directly, however in most cases, consent will be sought from the person with legal authority to act on the child/ren's behalf.

Can information be shared without consent?

We will ask for your child/ren's consent or your consent before we share information with any other service and at any time you can change your mind about sharing information.

However, in some circumstances where there are concerns for your child/ren's safety, then information may be shared without your consent. In some cases a Court may order information to be shared. Also where people believe it may prevent a crime, then information can be shared.

Keeping your personal information safe

All information about you/your child/ren has to be stored and used in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

This says that information has to be:

- Used fairly and legally
- Only used for the purpose for which it was collected
- Correct and up to date
- Only kept for as long as it is needed
- Stored safely.

If you require any further information then please talk to your child/ren's Social Worker. You/your child/ren may have access to the information held by agencies that the law entitles you/your child/ren's to see. You may wish to contact the appropriate agency - your child/ren's head teacher for their education records and your child's GP for their health records.

Finding out more

If you would like further copies, a large-print copy or information about us and our services, please telephone or write to us at our address below.

Për Informacion

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برای اطلاع

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Informacja

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Za Informacije

Per Informazione

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