



Melrose Rural Care Confidentiality Policy

From our philosophy: **"We aim to provide high quality care and education through a partnership between parents, children, community, staff and the Department of Education and Children's Services."**

With the belief that:

- ❖ "Children develop individually through stages, in their own learning style varying through cultural and family values and perception of these may vary.
- ❖ Healthy self esteem is the basis of positive physical, intellectual and social growth.
- ❖ We believe children need to express themselves in a safe environment.
- ❖ Children learn most effectively through hands on experience, through play.
- ❖ We value involvement of families and community and we encourage open communication.
- ❖ Our planning and evaluation is inclusive to children with additional needs.
- ❖ Our aims of planning and daily activities reflect our philosophy and are made available to families.

As a result, this means that:

Everyone associated with the Service (staff, parents and children) has the right to the protection of personal information.

Children need

- ❖ **Confidentiality re; sensitive health issues, learning difficulties, behavioural difficulties and family situations.**

Parents need

- ❖ **Confidence that private information given to the service re: income, custodial arrangements etc. are kept confidential.**
- ❖ **The ability to speak to staff about confidential matters that impact on their child's care.**

Staff need

- ❖ **Their personal records, details, appraisals treated as confidential.**
- ❖ **Clear guidelines re: what they should/should not disclose about children and families and to whom.**
- ❖ **Freedom to raise personal issues that impact on workplace.**

Management need

- ❖ **To make decisions about confidential issues.**
- ❖ **To obtain relevant personal details from clients.**

Therefore:

The MELC protects the privacy and confidentiality of individuals by ensuring that all records and information about individual children, families, staff and management are kept in a secure place and are only accessed by or disclosed to those people who need

the information to fulfil their responsibilities at the centre or have a legal right to know.

Procedure or Code of Conduct:

- ❖ Confidential conversations between staff and parents, or between Director and staff members, will be conducted in a quiet area away from other children and adults.
- ❖ Children's progress records are kept confidential and passed onto parents when leaving the centre.
- ❖ Personal forms and information will be stored securely.
- ❖ Information about staff members will only be accessed by the Director, and the individual staff member concerned.
- ❖ All discussions at committee meetings will be treated as confidential.
- ❖ No member of staff may give information or evidence on matters relating to children and/or families to anyone other than the custodial parent/guardian or to persons specified by the parent/guardian, when that information has been obtained in the course of employment in the service. Exceptions may apply regarding information about children when subpoenaed to appear before a court of law. Confidential information may be exchanged in the normal course of work with other staff members and may be given to the governing council only when this is reasonably needed for the proper operation of the service or the wellbeing of users and staff.
- ❖ In the cases where it is unclear whether parents/guardians or anyone else has the right to information, the matter must be referred to the Director.
- ❖ Staff will protect the privacy and confidentiality of other staff members by not relating personal information about another staff member to anyone either within or outside the service.
- ❖ Students, people on work experience and volunteers will not make staff, children or families in the service an object for discussion outside of the service (eg. College, school, home etc.), nor will they at any time use family names in the recorded or tutorial information.

Referenced:

- ❖ Laws relating to the protection of privacy and confidentiality (S.64 South Australian Health Commission Act 1976)
- ❖ Legislation requiring disclosure (S.11 Children's Protection Act 1993.SA)

Signed:

.....

Director
Rural Care

Ratified/...../2008

Reviewed