



# **Abacus and Footsteps Policy**

## **Policy Statement**

### ***Abacus***

At St Helen's Pre-School we use a system called Abacus to record and hold our families' information. This system is run by Parenta and enables us to keep all of our records in one place. The programme is engineered to the highest levels, with extensive systems to address security. There is no public access into the data centre at any time.

Parenta staff have access to view the records held on Abacus but cannot make any alternations or changes. All Parenta staff have to pass the same security checks as the Pre-School before they are allowed access to the Abacus system. This includes each member of their staff going through the Disclosure & Barring Service check.

### ***Footsteps***

St Helen's Pre-School provides each child attending the setting a personal Learning Journal through the platform of Footsteps which runs alongside and is linked to Abacus. Footsteps enables staff to take photographs and make written observations in line with the Early Years outcomes to build up a record of each child's achievements during their time with us.

## **Procedures**

Parents/carers are given access to view their child's information online on the Parent Portal using a confidential username and password. Parent Portal allows parents to have direct and secure access to their child's data and contact details.

Parents will be able to view their child's learning journey through their Parent Portal login. Parents will only have access to their child's journal which cannot be seen by other parents. However, other children in the pre-school will sometimes be photographed with others as they work together.

Parents are required to sign a permission form for Abacus and Footsteps before they are given access to Parent Portal. Permission is required from parents:

- To hold contact information and their child's information on Abacus.
- To create and maintain an online Footsteps Learning Journal for their child.
- For St Helen's Pre-School to take photographs and videos of their child to be used in their online Footsteps Learning Journal.
- For their child to appear in any group photos used in the Footsteps Learning Journal where their child's image will be viewable by all parents/carers of the children featured in that particular photo.

- To not electronically share, by social media or other platforms, any part of their child's Learning Journal (including photographs and videos) and that their child's Learning Journal is to be used for personal use (meaning that information cannot be shared with others, or published in any way). To understand that any breach of this confidentiality will result in their Parent Portal access being withdrawn.
- To keep their login details safe and secure.

The photographs taken and uploaded to Footsteps by the pre-school are the property of St Helen's Pre-School and parents do not have permission to upload them onto any website on the internet. We ask that parents protect the images of their own and other people's children by viewing and using them carefully. Any incidents where this confidentiality is broken will be dealt with seriously and will result in access to the system being withdrawn.

Whilst Footsteps is a fantastic tool for sharing information between the Pre-School and parents, it is not used as a way of sharing general communication. Each child's learning journal is a document to record their learning and development. Any further discussion of progress or concerns will be done during a face to face conversation at the setting during a prior agreed time. Observations are regularly monitored by the managing staff to ensure they are providing relevant and informative information.

### **Footsteps Staff Agreement**

All staff are required to sign a Footsteps Staff Agreement agreeing that:

- All entries on Footsteps must be appropriate.
- All entries on Footsteps remain the property of St Helen's Pre-School.
- Staff must at all times comply with child protection and ICT policies.
- Staff must not share login or password details with any person not employed by St Helen's Pre-School.
- Staff must log out of Footsteps when they are finished in order to maintain confidentiality.
- Staff must not share any information or photographs relating to children with any person not employed by St Helen's Pre-School.
- Staff must take all responsible steps to ensure the safekeeping of any portable device that they are using and report any missing devices.
- If staff do lone working on Footsteps at home they should be aware of any other people around them and make sure they are not overlooked, i.e. by family members and friends. They must logout as soon as they have stopped working.
- Staff must not share or publish photographs or information relating to the children in the setting anywhere other than on Footsteps. This includes online platforms, onto your own personal devices or printing hard copies which will not be kept in the setting.
- If accessing Footsteps via a private computer or device not on pre-school premises, staff must maintain confidentiality and professionalism.

- If any member of staff suspects that their login details have been compromised in any way, they must inform the Manager and new login details will be created.
- If any member of staff suspects or becomes aware that there has been a breach of the staff agreement, they must inform the Safeguard Lead or the Manager immediately.

This policy runs in conjunction with the following policies:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- ICT
- Confidentiality
- Code of Conduct
- Whistle Blowing
- Complaints

This policy has been adopted by St Helen's Pre-School

Signed on behalf of the setting by:

..... Chairperson

..... Manager

Date: January 2018

Review Date: January 2019