



Cheshire East
Information, Advice and Support
for SEND

Confidentiality Policy

Confidentiality Statement:

Any information shared with Cheshire East's Information, Advice and Support (CEIAS) team is treated in confidence and regulated in accordance of the Data Protection Act (2018). We will not share your information with anyone outside of the team unless you tell us we can; or where there is reason to believe that there is a risk of harm to a child, a young person or a third party.

If we feel it would be helpful to talk to another professional on your behalf, we will always seek your permission and check what information you are happy for us to share.

What information will we record?

When you contact us, we will ask you if we may write down some details which are stored electronically. With your permission, we store these on a computer so we can refer to them when we need to.

The kind of written information we keep about you includes: name, address, telephone number, how you heard about the team an outline of your enquiry and basic details of the information, advice or support which the team gave.

The kind of information we keep about you/your child or young person includes: the child/young person's name, date of birth, gender, ethnicity, school, year group, and area of SEN/disability.

Practical arrangements to ensure confidentiality:

- All records containing confidential information are kept in a secure computerised database accessed only by the Cheshire East Information Advice and Support (CEIAS) Team.
- Paper records of meetings/discussions are destroyed once the electronic system has been updated. When confidential records are no longer required they are destroyed as confidential waste, using the provided shredder bins.
- Observations or information about the family are not recorded or communicated unless they are directly relevant to the issue under discussion or there is a Safeguarding/Child Protection concern.

- Computer screens should be locked when left unattended so that information about individuals is not visible.
- Where necessary documents which need to be stored will be scanned and stored securely; paper copies will then be destroyed.
- The CEIAS telephone line is confidential and is used only for CEIAS calls; no one else has access to this line or to the answer phone service attached to it.
- CEIAS respond to general enquiries without asking for detailed information about the parent, young person or child or their family so that personal information is not held without being needed.
- When travelling by car, staff must keep any confidential papers in a secure document holder.
- Personal information sent by email is with only with the permission of the parent or young person and only where necessary. It will only be sent encrypted according to Cheshire East Borough policy.
- All members of the team have received specific training around data protection.

Disclosure of Confidential Information:

CEIAS operates at ‘arms length’ from the Local Authority, but, as a service provided ‘in-house’, it remains subject to the laws that regulate the use and sharing of personal information by public bodies with respect to data on school pupils. All confidential records are governed by the Data Protection Act 1998.

In the event of case notes being requested by parents under the Freedom of Information Act, the Manager of CEIAS will send the requested notes directly to parents/carers.

If we receive a request for information from LA Officers for legal reasons, e.g. judicial review, it will go to the head of service, or if absent, to the CEIAS Manager, who will consider the request and, with the parents’/carers permission, direct that, where necessary, the relevant information be extracted from the electronic file, and sent to the relevant officer, with a copy of it sent to you.

CEIAS will always obtain permission from parents/young people to access records from other professionals; these are often required in order to build a background of the case and to provide appropriate support.

CEIAS will not tell any other person or agency that a parent/young person has approached the team without parental/young person’s agreement.

Exceptions:

The only time we would pass on information without your permission is when the law says we must (for example, when a child's safety is at risk). These exceptional circumstances will be considered in line with both the Data Protection Act and the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Examples of these exceptions are as follows:

- The parent/young person describes a situation which raises concern about the safety of a child, young person or vulnerable adult
- The parent/young person is in immediate danger e.g. suicide
- Information has been shared, which, if disclosed may prevent a crime or assist in the detection of a crime

There is a legal obligation to pass on concerns regarding Child Protection to the relevant safeguarding professional. The individual would be informed if this has occurred (unless it could put the child at greater risk).

Policy Effectiveness:

On initial contact the confidentiality statement will be verbally shared with parents either over the phone or face to face.

A copy of the confidentiality policy will be displayed on the CEIAS website.

Use of Data

CEIAS maintains an electronic recording system which is password protected and accessed only by CEIAS staff to enable us to monitor take up of the service, to identify any policy issues and provide usage statistics (in an anonymous form) to third parties.

All CEIAS staff are responsible for ensuring that all service information given to third parties is produced in an anonymous form, so that individuals cannot be recognised.

Sometimes we will ask you for feedback, some quotes (anonymous) may be used in our promotional materials.

Records are retained for as long as involvement is active and for a maximum of five years after involvement ceases. They are then disposed of confidentially.

