

**GUIDELINES FOR RELEASE OF INFORMATION TO THE POLICE  
AND HEALTH & COMMUNITY SERVICES**

**1. Purpose**

*To provide guidelines for the release of information to the Police and Health & Community Services.*

**2. Persons Affected**

*Medical staff, nursing staff, allied health staff, Educational Resource Centre and medical records staff.*

**3. Policy**

*The aim of this policy is to protect the confidentiality of patients at the Royal Children's Hospital by ensuring that the appropriate steps are taken when releasing information to the Police and Health & Community Services.*

**4. Definitions**

*Nil.*

**5. Responsibilities**

*It is the responsibility of all staff who are approached by the Police or Health & Community Services for information, to follow the guidelines in this policy.*

**6. Procedure**

**6.1 Requests for Information via the Telephone**

*6.1.1 All requests for information from the Protective Services Branch of Health & Community Services should be directed to the duty worker at the Gatehouse Centre, and information released at his/her discretion once the identity of the caller is verified.*

*6.1.2 For other requests, limited information may be given once the identity of the caller is verified e.g. date and time of attendance and treating doctor.*

*6.1.3 If further information is required, the caller should be directed to the Medical Information Co-ordinator or the Executive Director (Nursing), or the procedure in 6.2 followed.*

**6.2 Requests for "Written" Reports/Statements etc**

*6.2.1 A written request for information is required from the Police or Health & Community Services worker.*

*6.2.2 A written authorisation is required from the parent(s)/guardian(s) or child (if age appropriate) except in the case of alleged physical or sexual abuse.*

6.2.3 *Written reports/statements for Police are to be co-ordinated by the Medical Information Co-ordinator, and written reports should be forwarded to the Medical Information Co-ordinator, who will forward them on to the Police, except when required for Children's Court at 10.00 am the next day when the "court report" page in the proforma should be used.*

6.2.4 *Reports for Health & Community Services workers are to be co-ordinated by the Gatehouse Centre. The "court report" page in the proforma for handling alleged cases of physical and sexual abuse, can be used if steps 6.2.1 and 6.2.2 have been completed.*

6.3 *Requests for Copies of Photographs from the Unit Record*

6.3.1 *A written request for photographs is required.*

6.3.2 *Written authorisation from the parent(s)/guardian(s) or child (if age appropriate) is required except in the case of alleged abuse.*

6.3.3 *All requests are to be co-ordinated by the Medical Information Co-ordinator who will send a memo to the Educational Resource Centre requesting copies of the photographs and will send the copies of the photographs to the Police/Health & Community Services worker.*

6.3.4 *A charge may be levied at the discretion of the Medical Information Co-ordinator.*

6.4 *Requests for Copies of Photographs, Videos, etc. held at the Gatehouse Centre*

6.4.1 *Requests for these are to be co-ordinated by the Gatehouse Centre.*

6.5 *Requests for Copies of Pages from the Unit Record or Gatehouse File*

6.5.1 *A written request for copies of pages from the unit record is required.*

6.5.2 *Written authorisation from the parent(s)/guardian(s) or child (if age appropriate) is required, except in the case of alleged abuse.*

6.5.3 *Requests from the unit record are to be co-ordinated by the Medical Information Co-ordinator, who will organise for the Medical Records Department to copy the appropriate pages and will send the copies to the Police/Health & Community Services worker.*

6.5.4 *Requests for copies of pages from the Gatehouse file to be co-ordinated by the Gatehouse Centre.*

6.6 *Requests for Oral Statements by Police*

*Staff may provide verbal information to assist Police in their investigations. Staff are strongly discouraged from making formal oral statements to the*

*Police - in particular dictating a statement to Police or signing a statement that Police have written based on your conversation.*

*If a formal statement is requested by the Police, the steps in 6.2 should be followed and a statement/report supplied, which has been written by the staff member involved. Nursing staff should consult with their unit manager before providing any kind of statement/report. Medical staff should consult the Medical Information Co-ordinator, the Executive Director (Nursing) or a senior medical staff member if they are unfamiliar with the correct protocol. Support and advice can also be obtained from staff at the Gatehouse Centre.*

3 April, 1995

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