



St Ann's Heath Junior School

Confidentiality Policy

This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all members of the school and its community to share this commitment.

Aim

The aim of this policy is to protect our children at all times and to give all staff and adults in school clear, unambiguous guidance as to their legal and professional roles, thereby ensuring that good practice throughout the school is adhered to and understood by all.

Rationale

St Ann's Heath Junior School seeks to put the child at the heart of the learning process and to provide a safe and secure learning environment. It is committed to ensuring effective communication, including developing creative and positive ways for the child's voice to be heard, whilst recognising the importance of confidentiality and the responsibility to use, hold and safeguard information received. Sharing information unnecessarily is an erosion of trust. The school is mindful that it is placed in a position of trust by all stakeholders and there is a general expectation that a professional approach will be used in all matters of confidentiality.

Objectives

- To ensure that staff, governors, volunteers, parents and pupils are aware of the school's confidentiality policy and procedures.
- To provide consistent messages in school about handling information about children once it has been received.
- To ensure that if a child protection issues arises then the correct procedure is followed.
- To foster an ethos of trust within the school.
- To reassure pupils that their best interests will be maintained.
- To encourage children to talk to their parents and carers.
- To ensure that pupils and parents/carers know that school staff cannot offer unconditional confidentiality.
- To ensure that there is equality of provision and access for all including monitoring of cultural, gender and special educational needs.
- To ensure that confidentiality is a whole school issue and that in lessons ground rules are set for the protection of all.
- To understand that health professionals are bound by a different code of conduct.
- To ensure that parents have a right of access to any records the school may hold on their child, but not to any other child that they do not have parental responsibility for. This will not apply in certain safeguarding situations, for example if there are allegations of abuse to a child by the parents themselves.

Other related policies and documents include:

- Staff Code of Conduct
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Attendance Policy
- PSHE policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-bullying policy
- SRE Policy
- Drugs Education Policy
- Guidelines for Volunteers

Guidelines

- All information about individual children is private and should only be shared with those staff that have a need to know. Generally, this means essentially those working closely with the child as opposed to those who may come across them only rarely during the course of a school day.
- All children's services, medical and personal information about a child should be held in a safe and secure place which cannot be accessed by individuals other than authorised school staff. Any child protection information is held securely and has limited access within the school.
- Mr Graham Bollands is our Designated Safeguarding Lead, with Mrs Jackie King and Mrs Pip O'Connor as the deputies. Child protection procedures are understood by staff and training is undertaken every two years for all staff. Mrs Sue Dyer is our Governor for Safeguarding and Child Protection issues and for Looked After Children.
- Parents/carers and children need to be aware that the school cannot guarantee total confidentiality and the school has a duty to report child protection issues. If a child's safety or well being is at risk, the school will contact social services and share information in accordance with the Safeguarding Policy.
- The school prides itself on good communication with parents and carers and staff are always available to talk to both children and parents/carers about issues that are causing concern. The school encourages children to talk to parents/carers about issues causing them concern and may in some cases support the children to talk to their parents.
- All children have a right to the same level of confidentiality irrespective of any subgroup status, e.g. gender, race, religion, medical concerns and special educational needs and others as relevant.
- Confidentiality is a whole school issue. Clear ground rules must be set for any classroom work such as circle time and other PHSE session dealing with sensitive issues such as sex and relationship and drugs. Strategies are in place and all children are aware of them for dealing with sensitive information which may fall outside the boundaries of child protection procedures.
- School needs to be proactive so children feel supported but information is not unnecessarily revealed in a public arena. Even when sensitive information appears to be widely known it should not be assumed by those immediately involved, that it is appropriate to discuss or share this information further.
- Health professionals have their own code of practice dealing with confidentiality. Staff should be aware of children with medical needs and the class information sheet should be

accessible to staff who need that information but not on general view to other parents/carers and children.

- Appropriate information about children will be shared with parents/carers but only about their own children.
- Parents should not have access to any other child's books, marks and progress grades at any time.
- However parents should be aware that information about their child will be shared with the receiving school when they change school.
- All personal information about children including social services records should be regarded as confidential. It should be clearly understood by those who have access to it, and whether those concerned have access to all, or only some of the information.
- Logs of administration of medication to children should be kept secure and each child should have their own individual log.
- Addresses and telephone numbers of parents and children will not be passed on without parental permission, except in exceptional circumstances or to a receiving school.
- Photographs of children should not be used without parents/carers permission especially in the external public press and/or internet. The school gives clear guidance to parents about the use of cameras and videos during public school events.
- Governors need to be mindful that from time to time issues are discussed or brought to their attention about staff and children. (Part 2 items). All such papers should be marked as confidential. Once read, these confidential papers should be destroyed. Governors must observe complete confidentiality when asked to do so by the governing body, especially in relation to matters concerning individual staff, pupils or parents.
- Although decisions reached at governors' meetings are normally made public through the minutes or otherwise, the discussions on which decisions are based should be regarded as confidential. Governors should exercise the highest degree of prudence when discussion of potentially contentious issues arises outside the governing body.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The implementation of this policy will be monitored by staff and governors. The policy will be reviewed by staff and by governors as part of the schools regular monitoring cycle every 2 years or earlier if need arises.

Conclusion

St. Ann's Heath Junior School has a duty of care and responsibility towards pupils, parents/carers and staff. It also needs to work with a range of outside agencies and share information on a professional basis. The care and safety of the individual is the key issue behind this document.

Written and agreed by staff	March 2016
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