



Confidentiality Policy

Policy Author	Simon Woodbridge
Ratified By	
Date Ratified	September 2020
Next Review Date	September 2021
Approved and Authorised By	
Statutory	
On school website	
Rationale	
Main updates since last policy	
This policy has been impact assessed against race, gender and disability and no adverse impact has been identified	

WESSEX PRIMARY SCHOOL

POLICY DOCUMENT - CONFIDENTIALITY

Introduction

This policy document outlines the purpose, nature and management of confidentiality. In drawing up this policy the whole school community, including pupils, parents/carers, staff, governors and partner agencies were consulted. It has the full agreement of the Governing Body. The implementation of the policy is the responsibility of all the teaching staff and will be monitored by the Headteacher and the nominated child protection officer. The policy will be reviewed regularly.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Child Protection, Data Protection Policy, ICT Policy, PSHCE Sex and Relationships, and Drugs policies.

Aims

- To protect the children and to give staff clear, unambiguous guidance as to their legal and professional roles.
- To ensure good practice takes place throughout the school which is understood by children, parents/carers and staff.

Rational

Wessex Primary School seeks to put the child at the heart of the learning process and to provide a safe and secure learning environment.

The school is committed to developing creative and positive ways for the children's voices to be heard whilst at the same time recognising the need to safeguard private information. None the less the school recognises its responsibility to implement child protection procedures when appropriate to do so.

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 taken by staff in all matters where confidentiality could be an issue.

Objectives

- To foster an ethos of trust within the school and ensure that confidentiality is regarded as being whole school issue
- To ensure potentially sensitive information about children is handled appropriately and that when child protection issues arise correct procedures are followed
- When personal information is shared it is kept confidential by all staff on a needs to know basis and must never be shared with anyone outside of the school staff.
- To ensure that staff, parents and children are aware of the school's confidentiality policy and procedures, and the fact that staff cannot offer unconditional confidentiality
- To ensure that children's best interests will be maintained and that there is equality of provision for all regardless of their specific situations.
- To ensure that the possibility of confidential information being disclosed in a public arena is minimised e.g. in circle time.
- To ensure that parents have access to sensitive/confidential information about their own child but not to that of any other child, for example levels of achievement.

Guidelines

- Private information about individual children should only be shared with those staff who 'need to know' This is usually the class teacher, however may extend to any adult to which a child will have contact with during the school day.
- All social 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 school staff

- The school actively promotes a positive ethos and respect for the individual in the following ways:
 - The school Child Protection Officer is a member of the Senior Management Team who regularly attends training to ensure she/ he is up-to-date with all aspects of the role
 - All staff receive regular child protection training and are given clear guidance as to how to handle such incidents
 - Clear procedures are in place should a member of staff be accused of child abuse
 - Staff are aware that effective sex and relationship education which brings an understanding of what is and is not acceptable in a relationship, can lead to disclosure of a child protection issue
 - Staff are aware of the need to handle all issues about families in a sensitive manner
 - Staff and children know that intolerance about gender, faith, race, culture or sexuality is unacceptable
 - Staff do not use information collected for one purpose for something else
 - Parents/carers and children are aware that the school cannot guarantee total confidentiality and that the school has a duty to investigate and if necessary report potential child protection issues when they arise.
- 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 them or us concern. The school encourages children to talk to their own parents/carers about issues causing them concern and may in some cases encourage children to talk to their parents. The school shares with parents any child protection disclosure when informing the correct authorities.
- All children have a right to the same level of confidentiality irrespective of their gender, race, religion, medical concerns or special educational needs. Data is generated in schools using these categories but individual children should not be able to be identified.
- Confidentiality is a whole school issue. Clear ground rules must be set for any classroom work such as circle time and other PHSCE session dealing with sensitive issues such as sex and relationships, 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. Staff need to ensure that children are supported but at the same time should not encourage them to reveal confidential information 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 matters of confidentiality. Medical needs information and the class information sheet should be accessible to the staff who need it but it should not be on general view.
- Photographs of children should not be used without parents/carers permission especially in the press and on the internet. The school gives clear guidance to parents about the use of cameras and videos during public school events.
- Information about children will be shared with parents but only about their own child. Parents should not have access to other children's marks and progress grades. Special care in this respect should be taken at parent's evenings. Parents should be made aware that information about their child will be shared with the receiving school when their child changes school.
- Parents working in school, for instance volunteers or members of the PTA, should not report information about children to other parents, e.g. an individual child's reading ability, behaviour, etc.
- All personal information about children including social services records should be regarded as being confidential. It should be clearly understood by those who have access to transfer information whether they have access to all, or only some of the information. Child protection information will be marked confidential and will if possible be handed directly to the appointed Child Protection Officer in the receiving school. Logs of medication administered to children should not be on public display. Addresses and telephone numbers of parents and children should not be passed on to anyone, other than to a receiving school, except in exceptional circumstances.
- Governors need to be mindful that from time to time confidential issues about staff and children may be discussed or brought to their attention. Any paperwork of this type should be marked as confidential and stored securely or destroyed. Governors must observe complete confidentiality when asked to do so by the governing body especially in relation to matters concerning individual staff, children 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 being confidential. Governors should exercise the highest degree of prudence when the possibility of discussing potentially confidential matters arise outside of the governing body.

- Staff must not post anything about the school, children or parents on social media and must also be aware of their use of social media when maintaining their “Professional image”.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Head teacher has responsibility for monitoring this policy which will be reviewed regularly as part of the schools regular review cycle.

Conclusion

Wessex Primary School has a duty of care and responsibility towards pupils and parents/carers, as and such will ensure that confidential information is kept secure. Nevertheless from time to time sensitive information will need to be shared with outside agencies in which case it will be shared on a professional basis as outlined above. Our GDPR sharing notices do inform parents of this and we are obliged to share concerns of a safeguarding nature with the Local authority MASH team.