

Confidentiality Policy

Date:

Feb 2011

Update:

June 2013

Review Date:

June 2015

Updated September 2015

Review September 2017

Staff Responsible: Mr. Stephen Garside

Confidentiality Policy

Aim

To protect the child at all times and to give all staff involved clear, unambiguous guidance as to their legal and professional roles and to ensure good practice throughout the school which is understood by pupils, parents/carers and staff.

Rationale

The Vale of Evesham School seeks to put the child at the heart of the learning process and to provide a safe and secure learning environment. It seeks to address the issues, which may arise about confidentiality. It is committed to developing creative and positive ways for the child's voice to be heard whilst recognising 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:

1. To provide consistent messages in school about handling information about children once it has been received.
2. To foster an ethos of trust within the school.
3. To ensure that staff, parents and pupils are aware of the school's confidentiality policy and procedures.
4. To encourage children to be aware of confidentiality issues relating to their peers.
5. To reassure pupils that their best interests will be maintained.
6. To encourage children to talk to their parents and carers.
7. To ensure that pupils and parents/carers know that school staff cannot offer unconditional confidentiality.
8. 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

Guidelines

1. All information about individual children is private and should only be shared with those staff that have a need to know.

2. 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.
3. The school prides itself on good communication with parents and carers and staff are available to talk to both children and parents/carers about issues that are causing concern.
4. All children have a right to the same level of confidentiality irrespective of gender, race, religion, medical concerns and disability. A lot of data is generated in schools by these categories but individual children should not be able to be identified.
5. Confidentiality is a whole school issue. Clear ground rules must be set for any classroom work such as circle time and other PHSE sessions dealing with sensitive issues such as sex and relationships and drugs.
6. All children, parents, staff members and governors must enjoy privacy from gossip. All matters are dealt with according to the school's procedures and out of the eye of the wider community. It is important that:-
 - Staff do not discuss details of individual cases arising in staff meetings to any person without direct professional connection to and interest in the welfare and education of the individual concerned.
 - No member of staff discusses an individual child's behaviour in the presence of another child in school.
 - Staff do not enter into detailed discussion about a child's behaviour with other children or their parents.
 - Governors do not divulge details about individuals (be they staff, families or individual children) to any person outside of the meeting.
 - Parents in school, working as volunteers do not report cases of poor behaviour or pupil discipline to other parents in the school. This allows teachers to deal with such matters in line with school policy.
 - Communication with children and adults, by whatever methods, should take place within professional boundaries and staff should avoid any personal subject.
 - At full Governing Body meetings matters such as pupil exclusion, personnel issues and personal details of any member of the school community will be dealt with in the headteachers Report under Part 2 confidential. This is not for the knowledge of persons outside the Governing Body meeting. Minutes in Part 2 are minuted separately and minutes are not published.
 - Staff performance management will be carried out privately. Targets for individuals, named lesson observation sheets and other performance data will be in the headteachers office and electronic records will only be available from the headteachers computer.

- Matters of Child Protection are made known to staff on a need to know basis.
- It is important that class teachers and support staff are aware of some confidential matters in order to support individuals. These staff will respect the sensitivity of such cases and not divulge information to people unconnected professionally with the individual concerned.
- When volunteers, such as parents and friends of the school work in school they undertake an induction process where confidentiality is addressed.

Other Professionals

Health professionals are bound by their professional codes of conduct to maintain confidentiality when working in a one to one situation. When working in a classroom, they are bound by relevant school policies. In line with best practice guidance, like other school staff, they will seek to protect privacy and prevent inappropriate personal disclosures in a classroom setting, by negotiating ground rules and using distancing techniques.

7. Staff should be aware of children with medical needs. This information should be accessible to staff who need it but not on general view to other parents/carers and children.
8. Photographs of children should not be used without parents/carers permission especially in the press and internet. The school seeks media permissions from parents on an annual basis. The school gives clear guidance to parents about the use of cameras and videos during public school events.
9. Information about children will be shared with parents but only about their child. However parents should be aware that information about their child will be shared with the receiving school when and if they change school.
10. 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.
 - Information regarding health reports such as speech therapy, medical reports, social services minutes of meetings and reports will be circulated to relevant staff and once read should be returned for secure filing.
 - Logs of administration of medication to children should be kept secure and each child should have their own individual log.
 - In all notices, briefing sheets etc a child should not be able to be identified by name
 - Addresses and telephone numbers of parents and children will not be passed on except in exceptional circumstances or to a receiving school.
11. Governors need to be mindful that from time to time issues are discussed or brought to their attention about staff and children.

All such papers should be marked as confidential and should be copied onto different coloured paper. These confidential papers should be collected and 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

1. The policy will be reviewed as part of the schools monitoring cycle.
2. The PHSE scheme of work, Sex and Relationship policy and Drug Policy will enable identified opportunities to deliver aspects of this policy in specified year groups.
3. The Head teacher has responsibility for monitoring this policy. Following any curriculum monitoring a positional statement is written which contributes to the School Development Plan.

Conclusion

Vale of Evesham 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.

APPENDIX 1

SIX KEY POINTS ON INFORMATION SHARING

1. You should explain to children, young people and families at the outset, openly and honestly, what and how information will, or could be shared and why, and seek their agreement. The exception to this is where to do so would put that child, young person or others at increased risk of significant harm or an adult at risk of serious harm, or if it would undermine the prevention, detection or prosecution of a serious crime (see glossary for definition) including where seeking consent might lead to interference with any potential investigation.
2. You must always consider the safety and welfare of a child or young person when making decisions on whether to share information about them. Where there is concern that the child may be suffering or is at risk of suffering significant harm, the child's safety and welfare must be the overriding consideration.
3. You should, where possible, respect the wishes of children, young people or families who do not consent to share confidential information. You may still share information, if in your judgement on the facts of the case, there is sufficient need to override that lack of consent.
4. You should seek advice where you are in doubt, especially where your doubt relates to a concern about possible significant harm to a child or serious harm to others.
5. You should ensure that the information you share is accurate and up-to-date, necessary for the purpose for which you are sharing it, shared only with those people who need to see it and shared securely.
6. You should always record the reasons for your decision – whether it is to share information or not.