



Confidentiality Policy

Article 16 - Every child has the right to privacy

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. PTA, volunteers and visitors will be asked to sign the confidentiality agreement contained at annex A to this policy.

Rationale

Poplar Farm 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 all stakeholders place it in a position of trust and there is a general expectation that a professional approach will be used in all matters of confidentiality. This policy should be read alongside the safeguarding policy.

Objectives

- To provide consistent messages in school about handling information about children once it has been received.
- To foster an ethos of trust within the school.
- To ensure that staff, parents and pupils are aware of the school's confidentiality policy and procedures.
- 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 the school staff cannot offer unconditional confidentiality.
- To ensure that there is equality of provision and access for all including rigorous monitoring of cultural, gender and special educational needs and disabilities.
- To ensure that if there are safeguarding issues then the correct procedure is followed.
- 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 different codes 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.

Guidelines

- All information about individual children is private and should only be shared with those staff that have a need to know.
- 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 continues to actively promote a positive ethos and respect for the individual.
- There is clear guidance for the handling of child protection incidents. All staff have training on safeguarding issues in line with regulations.
- There is clear guidance for procedures if a member of staff is accused of 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 a disclosure of a safeguarding issue.
- Staff are aware of the need to handle all issues about different types of families in a sensitive manner.
- Any intolerance about gender, faith, race, culture or sexuality is unacceptable and should follow the school's disciplinary policy.
- Information collected for one purpose should not be used for another.
- 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.
- The school prides itself on good communication with parents and carers and staff are always available to talk to 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. The school would share with parents any safeguarding disclosure before going on to inform the correct authorities, unless sharing this information increases risk for the child.
- Parents / carers and children should feel reassured that in exceptional circumstances, confidentiality will not be broken.
- All children have the right to the same level of confidentiality irrespective of gender, race, religion, medical concerns, special educational needs and disabilities. A lot of data is generated in schools by these categories but individual children should not be able to be identified.
- The school has appointed three members of staff as Safeguarding Officers. Staff understand safeguarding procedures and training is undertaken in line with regulations.
- 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 relationship, and drugs. Strategies are in place and all children are aware of them for dealing with sensitive information, which might 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.

- Photographs of children should not be used without parents / carers permission especially in the press and 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 child. Parents should not have access to any other child's books, marks and progress grades at any time, including parents' evening. However, parents should be aware that information about their child would 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.
- Information regarding health reports such as speech therapy, medical reports, SEND reports, SEND minutes of meetings and social services minutes of meetings and reports will be securely filed.
- Logs of administration of medication to children should be kept secure and each child should have their own individual log.
- In all other notes, briefing sheets, etc, a child should not be able to be identified. Addresses and telephone numbers of parents and children will not be passed on except in exceptional circumstances or to a receiving school.
- The local governing board 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 destroyed. The local governing board 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 local governing board meetings are normally made public through the minutes or otherwise, the discussions on which decisions are based should be regarded as confidential. The local governing board should exercise the highest degree of prudence when discussion of potentially contentious issues arises outside the local governing board.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- The policy will be reviewed as parts of the schools monitoring cycle.
- The Headteacher has responsibility for monitoring this policy.

Conclusion

Poplar Farm 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.

This policy was adopted on:	February 2021
Review Cycle:	Annual
This policy was subsequently reviewed on:	February 2022

Confidentiality Agreement

Why this agreement is needed

- This agreement and the guidelines below are to help people volunteering at Poplar Farm School to understand that keeping information about children confidential is important for the wellbeing of the children and the wider school community.
- Children don't always behave in a way we as adults want them to; this is a fact of life. However, children learn and with the correct form of encouragement and education such as that provided by a professional teacher. They can overcome behaviour issues, thrive and progress.
- By allowing professional teachers to deal with behaviour in line with the school policy behaviour and discipline is dealt with consistently and fairly.

Who does this agreement apply to?

- Volunteers in this agreement means people working in the school without a contract of employment with the school. This includes (but is not limited to) members of the governing body, Parent-Teachers Association (PTA), visitors and parents working in the school.

Guidelines

- As a volunteer it is important that:
 - Cases of poor behaviour are not discussed (using any media) with other parents or carers.
 - Cases of pupil discipline are not discussed (using any media) with other parents or carers.
 - How well a child is doing at school is not discussed outside of the classroom.
 - Feedback on children's work should be provided to the class teacher or teaching assistant, not directly to the child's parent or carer.
- The specific use of Teaching Assistants' (TA) time for particular pupils or groups of pupils is carefully managed because their time is valuable and needs to be used where it is most effective:
 - Volunteers should note that the provision of work for the Teaching Assistants is for the teacher to decide and should not be discussed with parents or carers.
- Social Networking media can be a source of upset and distress for children, parents or carers
 - Any negative information about the school, or any information about individual staff or children should not be put on any Social Networking sites.

I agree to follow the guideline detailed in this Confidentiality Agreement.

Name: _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

