



Confidentiality Policy

Aim

To provide clear advice and guidance on the rules of pupil confidentiality in the school and to reassure staff, parents/carers, visitors and pupils.

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

Packington Church of England Primary 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 implement the underlying principles of the Every Child Matters Agenda and 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.

“At Packington Church of England Primary School we are learning to succeed and achieve our full potential together.”

and for the pupils

“Together we can achieve more – with Jesus as our guiding light.”

At Packington Church of England School we positively promote our Christian value of trust and understand that the 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. Pupils occasionally make personal disclosures, either in class or to individual members of staff. They may disclose issues relating to their family or that they have been abused or engaged in under age sexual activity or friends or relatives are using drugs etc. Staff may come to possess sensitive information about pupils, some of it about illegal activity. Staff may also be privy to sensitive information about school management, organisation and staffing issues and likewise Governors may be privy to such information as well as information about pupils. All parties need to be clear about the rules of confidentiality which apply in these circumstances.

This policy has been formulated through consultation with staff, governors, parents and pupils.

Objectives:

1. To provide a clear and consistent message for pupils, staff, parents and visitors about confidentiality in school.
2. To provide consistent messages in school about handling information about children once it has been received.
3. To foster an ethos of trust within the school.
4. To provide guidance about who needs to know what in particular circumstances.
3. To ensure that staff, parents and pupils are aware of the school's confidentiality, policy and procedures.
4. To reassure pupils that their best interests will be maintained.
5. To encourage children to talk to their parents and carers.
6. To ensure that pupils and parents/carers know that school staff cannot offer unconditional confidentiality.
7. To ensure that there is equality of provision and access for all including rigorous monitoring of cultural, gender and special educational needs.
8. To ensure that if there are child protection issues then the correct procedure is followed.
9. To ensure that confidentiality is a whole school issue and that in lessons ground rules are set for the protection of all.
10. To understand that health professionals are bound by a different code of conduct.

11. 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

1. Staff have a contractual obligation to comply with this policy.
2. Students and volunteer helpers must also be made aware of this policy and are expected to comply by it.
3. All information about individual children is private and should only be shared with those staff that have a need to know.
4. Information about pupils should not be passed on indiscriminately and staff should seek the advice of the head teacher before passing information on to outside agencies.
5. 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.
6. 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 especially at parents evening. 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.

Information regarding health reports such as speech therapy, medical reports, SEN reports, SEN minutes of meetings and social services minutes of meetings and reports will be circulated in envelopes and once read should be returned for secure filing.

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

7. The school continues to actively promote a positive ethos and respect for the individual:
 - a) The school has appointed a Designated teacher for child protection who receives regular training (Mrs C Price).
 - b) There is clear guidance for the handling of child protection incidents. And all staff have regular (three yearly) training on child protection issues.
 - c) There is clear guidance for procedures if a member of staff is accused of abuse (see Safeguarding and Child Protection Policies).
 - d) 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.
 - e) Staff are aware of the need to handle all issues about different types of families in a sensitive manner.
 - f) Any intolerance about gender, faith, race, culture or sexuality is unacceptable and should follow the schools policies.
 - g) Information collected for one purpose should not be used for another.
8. 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. Unconditional confidentiality should not be offered to pupils or their parents. Information about behaviour likely to cause harm to the pupil or to others must be passed to the appropriate agency.
9. It should be made clear to pupils that teachers cannot promise confidentiality and that on some occasions information may need to be passed on in the young person's best interest. However, the pupil should be informed about when this has to happen, what will be done with the information and who will have access to it.
10. 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. The school will share with parents any child protection disclosure before going on to inform the correct authorities, unless in doing so this puts the child at risk of harm.
11. Parents/carers and children should feel reassured that only in exceptional circumstances confidentiality will be broken.
12. In the case of illegal activity, the school should take actions in the best interests of the pupil. This does not necessarily involve informing the police. For example, teachers are not obliged the police about illegal drug activity. The LA's Handling Incidents of Drug Misuse Policy gives clear guidance on this matter (contact Substance Misuse Coordinator Michael Coll – 0116 3059150 for up to date advice and further information)
13. Teachers are not obliged to pass on information about pupils to their parents/ carers, although where the teacher believes the pupil to be at moral or physical risk, or in breach of the law, they must ensure that the pupil is aware of the risks and encourage them to seek support from their parents/carers.
14. All children have a right to the same level of confidentiality irrespective of gender, race, religion, medical concerns and special educational needs. A lot of data is generated in schools by these categories but individual children should not be able to be identified.

15. 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 personal information, 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. In lessons, teachers should establish from the beginning that it is inappropriate to disclose personal information. Ground rules, which ensure pupils agree not to pressure one another to answer questions about their own experiences, also apply to staff.
16. Health professionals have their own code of practice dealing with confidentiality eg the medical code of confidentiality (Fraser Guidelines). Staff should be aware of children with medical needs and information about the class or individual pupils should be accessible to staff who need that information but not on general view to other parents/carers and children. For example, the list of children with epi-pens in school is kept in the brown marked enveloped next to the staff information board in the staffroom.
17. Outside agencies must be made aware of, and abide by the school policy on disclosures and confidentiality. However, they may also have a role in providing advice and support directly to pupils. The boundary between these two roles must be agreed with the school and the distinction, in terms of the right to confidentiality, be made clear to pupils.
18. Photographs of children will not be used without parents/carers permission. Permission letters will be sent out to parents each year asking permission to use photographs in printed publications for school use such as the brochure, on the school website and in newspapers. A list of children who cannot have photographs used will be kept in the school office. Children's names will not be used with their photographs so they cannot be identified. Where photographs are requested for outside agency use and special events then parents will be asked for their permission. The school provides clear guidance to parents about the use of cameras and videos during public school events. Photography is allowed with the understanding that they are for personal and private use.
19. Governors need to be mindful that from time to time issues are discussed or brought to their attention about staff and children, or they may be involved in staff recruitment and the performance management of staff. Any papers pertaining to such issues should be marked as confidential and should be copied onto different coloured paper. 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.
20. All work undertaken by children that is disposed of (tests for example) will have names removed before. The named sheets will be shredded.

Monitoring and Evaluation

1. The policy will be reviewed as part of the schools monitoring cycle.

2. The PHSCE 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 or issues statement is written which contributes to the School Development Plan.

Conclusion

Packington CE Primary 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.

Name of Head TeacherCarol Price.....

Date of reviewSept 2016.....