

Yeadon Westfield Infant school
Confidentiality Policy 2017
[Review 2020]

This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of all children, and expects our staff, governors and volunteers to share this commitment. This policy should be read in conjunction with all other school policies.

Aims and objectives

This policy states our approach

- We will support procedures for child protection set out in our safeguarding and child protection policy.
- We will ensure that anyone working in the school is aware of the boundaries of their legal and professional responsibilities.
- We will establish a common understanding of what is meant by confidentiality and its limits throughout the school.
- We will ensure that other professionals working in the school are aware of the policy.

We will comply with the Data Protection Act and the Freedom of information act.

This policy also relates to our policies for:

- Anti-bullying
- Behaviour
- PSHCE
- Relationships and Sex
- Performance Management
- Child Protection and Safeguarding
- Whistleblowing

The needs of pupils

- We will implement this policy with a view to the age, emotional maturity, cultural and social needs of the children.
- We will ensure that the policy is supported by the formal and informal learning that takes place in our school.
- We will provide opportunities which develop the skills and confidence of children to identify situations where they may need support or advice and possible ways to access it.
- Children will be made aware of the contents of this policy as and when the need arises.

The needs of staff

- We will ensure that all staff in school are made aware of the policy and procedures.
- We will advise staff that any concerns about child protection issues must be reported immediately to the designated staff: Dawn Lowry and Jane Fryer and that they should never give an absolute guarantee of confidentiality to a child.

Procedures - General

- All information about individual stakeholders [this includes parents, staff, children, governors and volunteers] however obtained, eg from personal records, through observation, through meetings, through situations that arise during class, playtime or outside of school, is private and will only be shared with those who have a need to know, ie those who need the information in their professional capacity.
- Information which relates to any individual stakeholder or brings our school into disrepute will never be posted or shared online, through any means including all areas of social media, eg Facebook, Twitter. Staff, governors, regular visitors and volunteers understand that this is a requirement both during and after their time at our school and confirm this through signing a statement of confidentiality.
- Even when information appears to be widely known, it will not be assumed by those immediately involved that it is appropriate to discuss or share this information further.
- All social care, medical and personal information will be held in a safe and secure place which cannot be accessed by individuals other than nominated school staff. It will be considered whether staff concerned have access to all, or only some, of the information.
- Staff are always available to talk to both children and parents/carers about issues that are causing concern. We encourage children to talk to parents/carers about issues and may, in some cases, support children to talk to their parents/carers.
- Parents/carers and children will be made aware that our school cannot guarantee total confidentiality and that we have a duty to report child protection issues. Any child protection disclosure will be shared with parents/carers before we inform the appropriate authorities unless we believe that this puts the child at greater risk.
- Data generated by our school will be anonymized where necessary to ensure confidentiality. Information collected for one purpose will not be used for another.
- Photographs or video of children will not be used without parents/carer's permission and our policy on the use of images of children will be adhered to at all times.
- We ensure that parent/carers have a right of access to any records the school may hold on their child, within legislative requirements.
- Only those identified on SIMS as having parental responsibility will be contacted in relation to their child. Should there be any concerns, these will be referred to the designated person for child protection before a parent/carer is contacted.

Procedures - Staff

- Personal information such as social services reports, speech therapy reports, medical reports, SEND reports, minutes of meetings etc will be circulated, where necessary, in sealed envelopes and once read will be returned to the appropriate person for secure filing.
- Correspondence to parents/carers relating to social care, medical and personal information will be handed directly to the parent/carer, not put in book bags.

- The designated staff for Child Protection receive regular training. Child Protection procedures are understood by all the staff and training is undertaken regularly.
- Details of children are not to be disclosed to any parents other than those of the child concerned.
- Information regarding a child's progress, positive or negative, is passed on only by the class teacher concerned, the head teacher or the TA (where the TA is **contracted** to work with a specific child) to the parent.
- Staff should feel that they can talk freely about children in the staffroom, safe in the knowledge that what they say will not be repeated elsewhere.
- Concerns about the performance of a colleague should only be discussed with the head teacher or deputy or, in the case of the head teacher, the chair of governors **or if necessary HR support**
- Staff should not pass confidential information to spouses/partners.
- Any issue which staff have been asked to keep confidential, must remain confidential.
- Clear ground rules will be set for any classroom work such as circle time and other PSHE sessions dealing with sensitive issues such as sex and relationship education and drug education. Staff are aware that effective sex and relationships education which brings an understanding of what is and is not acceptable in a relationship, can lead to the disclosure of a child protection issue. Strategies are in place for dealing with such disclosures. Staff will be proactive so children feel supported but information is not unnecessarily revealed in a public arena.

Procedures - Parent Helpers and Volunteers

- As parents involve themselves with the school they become members of a professional team. As such we ask them to complete an application form and sign a copy of our statement of confidentiality prior to starting in school. We have an informal interview to discuss confidentiality, safeguarding, security and health and safety.
- Parents, particularly those who volunteer their time to help the school during the school day, will see and hear a great deal in the classroom but must not discuss any of this information with the wider community. Parents working in classrooms do so on the understanding that they support teaching staff and will not pass opinion on such matters as discipline or teaching styles outside of the school.
- Parents need to acknowledge the fact that some circumstances may not be fully understood by them because the teacher may not be at liberty to discuss them, eg confidential aspects of the children's lives which may affect their behavior or progress.

Procedures - Governors

- The important role of the Governing body ensures that it has to be informed of highly personal and confidential matters at each meeting. The *Governors' Guide to the law* states: 'how individual governors vote, and opinions by governors involving a named person which are in a way sensitive or critical, should always be regarded as confidential'. Although decisions reached at governors' meetings are normally made public through the

minutes and otherwise, the discussions on which decisions are based will be regarded as confidential.

- To help Governors understand the professional balance which needs to be maintained, the following points should be considered:
 - No information about individual children's assessment and test results, other than that legally required, should be passed on to others.
 - All papers relating to the governing body should be stored securely.
 - **Some governing body's documents are public and should be shared appropriately.**
 - Governors should not pass confidential information to spouses/partners.
 - E-mail communication should only be sent to addresses that can only be accessed by the named governor (individual governors should inform the chair if their e-mail address can be accessed by anyone other than themselves).
 - Details of a head teacher's performance review should only be discussed by those governors directly involved in the review and **the appointed SIA**
 - Paperwork containing individual salaries remains confidential to the Resources Committee.
 - It is important to label minutes of meetings as 'draft' before they have been approved by the group.
 - Any issue which governors have been asked to keep confidential, should remain confidential.
 - If governors receive complaints about governors, the head teacher or a member of staff, it is important that they first ascertain that the complainant has first attempted to resolve differences with the person concerned. On those rare occasions when complaints need to be made formal, written complaints should be passed directly to the chair (complaints re head teacher and governors) or the head teacher (complaints re staff), so all governors are available to act impartially as panel members at complaint hearings. It is for the complainant to decide whether or not their concern should become a formal complaint. The complaints procedure states "Governors approached by parents need to steer them in the direction of the school staff rather than becoming involved in direct discussions".
 - Governors should exercise the highest degree of prudence when discussion of potentially contentious issues arises outside Governing Body meetings.

Maintenance of the Policy

To ensure the high standards of confidentiality are maintained, a copy of this policy will be issued to:

- Every member of staff
- All parents who help in school
- Every member of the governing body

Procedures for the collection and maintenance of information, and for enquiry logging, will incorporate the requirements of this policy.

Unauthorised access to data about individuals will be prevented by a password system for the database, and secure storage of paper records.

Breaches of confidentiality will be treated as a serious matter and will be dealt with accordingly.

All these undertakings are subject to the paramount commitment of the school, which is to the safety and well-being of the child. We must also be clear that sharing relevant information with the right people at the right time is vital to good safeguarding practice.