

## **Oakfield Primary School - Confidentiality Policy**

### **Introduction**

This document is a statement of the aims, objectives and strategies for ensuring confidentiality at Oakfield Primary School.

### **Rationale**

Oakfield Primary School seeks to put the child at the heart of the learning process and to provide a safe and secure learning environment. We are 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. We seek to implement the underlying principles of the Every Child Matters Agenda and to address the issues which may arise about confidentiality.

All schools are asked on occasions to keep information confidential. This can relate to a variety of issues and people (children and adults). It is important that the whole school follows the same clear and explicit policy. Governors, teachers (including peripatetic teachers), school staff, pupils, parents, including parents working in school, carers should be made aware of this and how it works in practice.

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.

### **Aims**

- To give all members of the school, clear, unambiguous guidance about confidentiality and to ensure good practice throughout the school.
- To protect the child at all times and to encourage children to talk to a trusted adult if they are having problems.
- To give staff confidence to deal with sensitive issues.

### **Objectives**

- To ensure that confidentiality is a whole school issue and to provide consistent messages in school about handling information 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 ensure that pupils and parents/carers know that 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.
- To ensure that if there are child protection issues then the correct procedure is followed.
- 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.

### **Delivery**

- All information about individual children, staff and parents is private and will only be shared with those staff who need to know.
- All social services, medical and personal information about a child will be held in a safe and secure place which cannot be accessed by individuals other than school staff, health and educational professionals. Computer held records are kept securely.
- The school actively promotes a positive ethos and respect for the individual. In lessons ground rules are set for the protection of all e.g. Clear ground rules must be set for any classroom work such as circle time and other PSHE 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 may fall outside the boundaries of child protection procedures.
- The Headteacher is the appointed Designated Lead for Safeguarding and Child Protection Liaison Officer (CPLLO) for the school and receives regular training. The Deputy Head is the deputy CPLLO and receives regular training. There is clear guidance for the handling of child protection incidents and all staff have regular training on child protection issues. If a member of staff receives information that leads them to believe that there is a child protection issue, they should refer the case directly to the child protection officer. 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 disclosure of a child protection issue. Staff will always ensure that children know that staff **cannot** offer unconditional confidentiality. Children should be reassured that, if confidentiality has to be broken, they will be informed first and then supported appropriately.

- Parents/carers and children are made aware that the school cannot guarantee total confidentiality and the school has a duty to report child protection issues.
- 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.
- All children have a right to the same level 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.
- Staff are aware of the need to handle all issues about different types of families in a sensitive manner. Any tolerance about gender, faith, race, culture or sexuality is unacceptable and should follow the school's behaviour policy.
- 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.
- Staff will be made aware of children with medical needs and the class information sheet will 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.
- 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. 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. This is made clear to all those who have access to it via induction procedures and school policy dissemination.
- 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.

- Addresses and telephone numbers of parents and children will not be passed on except in exceptional circumstances or to a receiving school.
- For all pupils, staff members and governors to enjoy privacy from gossip, for the school to be fair to all its community and for children and adults to have matters dealt with according to the school's own procedures and out of the eye of the wider school community, it is important that
  - Staff do not discuss details of individuals to any person without a direct professional connection and an interest in the welfare and education of the individual concerned.
  - No member of staff discusses an individual child's behaviour or learning with other children or other children's parents.
  - Governors do not divulge details about individuals (be they staff, families or individual children) to any person outside governor meetings. Governors need to be mindful that from time to time issues are discussed or brought to their attention about staff and children. 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.
  - Parents in school, working as volunteers, or as part of the parent association, do not report cases of poor behaviour or pupil discipline to other parents in the school or any person other than the teacher and Headteacher. This allows teachers to deal with such matters in line with the school policy.
  - When volunteers, such as parents and friends of the school are working in classes, they do not discuss educational matters outside the classroom.
  - Staff, volunteers, students and supply teachers are asked to read this policy before working in school.

## **Monitoring and evaluation**

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

The PSHE scheme of work, Sex and Relationship policy and Drug Policy will enable identified opportunities to deliver aspects of this policy in specified year groups.

The Headteacher has responsibility for monitoring this policy. Everyone in the school has a duty of care and responsibility towards pupils, parents/carers and staff. The school 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.

Policy agreed: 18<sup>th</sup> November 2014

Policy review date: November 2017