

Lymington CE (Aided) Infant School

Confidentiality Policy

Building Bright Futures Together



Document Adopted By Governing Body	Date: April 2019
Signed (Chair):	Date
Date of Next Review:	April 2022

Overview and Aims

The aim of this policy is to ensure that every member of the school community understands how the school deals with confidential information and the varying levels of confidentiality which are appropriate for different circumstances. The school is mindful that it is placed in a position of trust and that sharing information unnecessarily is an erosion of that trust.

By developing a clear understanding of confidentiality we are able to nurture an ethos of trust within the school, where children feel able to confide in members of staff, as well as being encouraged to talk to their parents and carers. We are committed enabling positive ways for the child's voice to be heard, whilst recognising the responsibility to use, hold and safeguard information received.

In all circumstance, the **welfare of each child is paramount** and as such all issues arising will be handled in a sensitive manner.

Confidentiality and Pupils

Confidentiality is a whole school issue and staff are aware that classroom work, such as circle-time, PSHE or P4C sessions dealing with sensitive issues such as family relationships can lead to disclosure of a child protection issue. Should such situations arise, teachers are to protect the child's dignity by preventing such information from being shared with the group and as soon as is practically possible talk to the child in private. If it is felt that there is a possibility of children being harmed or put in danger, the necessity to inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL.) This may lead to further action, such as the DSL making a referral to Children's Services. In all cases the DSL and other staff should follow guidance as laid down in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures. The child must be reassured that confidential information will only be shared on a strictly need-to-know basis and given reassurance that they had acted appropriately.

Parents/carers and children need to be aware that the school cannot guarantee total confidentiality and has a duty to report child protection issues. These will not be discussed in advance of a referral being made where it is felt to do so would compromise the safety of the child concerned. Further information on this can be found in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures.

Confidentiality and Parents

Parents have the right to access information for children for whom they have parental responsibility. Information regarding other pupils, whether medical or academic, should not be shared with other parents. Parents should not have access to any other child's, marks and progress grades at any time, especially at parents evening when marks or grades may inadvertently be shared with other parents. However, parents should be aware that information about their child will be shared with the receiving school when they leave. Contact details of parents and children are will not be shared with other parents, except in exceptional circumstances. *eg where there is an emergency and it has not been possible to contact identified people on the schools contact list.*

Parents working as volunteers in classrooms must not report cases of poor behaviour or pupil discipline to other parents. This allows the teachers to deal with such matters in line with school policy and on occasions to allow children to redress the matter without the direct involvement of their parents.

Confidentiality and families

We understand that sometimes there may be issues affecting children which family members wish to share in confidence. We will respect the wishes of the family wherever possible; however, where it is felt necessary to share the information, this will be discussed with the parent first, unless a pupil is considered to be at immediate risk and/or there is an overriding child protection concern.

Confidentiality and Staff

All staff can expect that their personal situations and health will remain confidential, unless it impinges on their terms of contract or endangers pupils or members of staff. Staff performance management will be carried out privately. Targets for individuals, named lesson observation sheets and other performance data will be securely stored in the headteacher's office. A copy will also be held by the person concerned.

Confidentiality and Governors

Governors need to be mindful that confidential issues, about staff, children and their families, may be discussed or brought to their attention. Any sensitive correspondence should be clearly marked as 'confidential' and minuted separately. Once read, these confidential papers should be destroyed, or returned to the Chair for secure filing. Governors serving on committees where sensitive or contentious issues about staff, children or families are discussed, should not share this information with the wider body of governors, particularly, in the case of Appeal or Complaint Procedures, where having prior knowledge may mean the case is not given a fair hearing.

Governors must observe complete confidentiality in dealing with issues concerning individual staff, pupils and families. They should not share information with their family members and, with this in mind, care should be taken when making phone calls and using email.

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, and names of individuals need not be mentioned. Where contentious issues linked to whole school development are discussed, Governors must be mindful that confidential items are not shared inappropriately through group email as to do so may offend others receiving the information and breach confidentiality. Any governor known to have intentionally committed a breach of confidentiality must be asked to stand down. Governors should exercise the highest degree of prudence when discussion of potentially contentious issues arises outside the governing body, being careful not to appear to give opinions on behalf of the Governing Body.

Confidentiality and other Professionals

All information about individual children is private and is only shared with relevant staff on a 'need to know' basis. All social services, medical and personal information about a child, including Special Education Needs (SEN) paperwork, will be held in a safe and secure place which cannot be accessed by individuals other than the Headteacher and SENCO.

Professionals visiting the school, such as school nurses and occupational therapists for example, are bound by professional codes of conduct which uphold confidentiality, but in school situations will work within the school policy, sharing information to enable the school to meet the child's needs.

Where any information is shared with another professional, in the interests of the child, then a record of the information and with whom it was shared will be kept in school.

Confidentiality and the Media

Full names of children will never be publicised alongside photographs of children in the press or on the web-site/internet. Consent must be obtained from parents to give staff permission to take photographs and share them on the school website. Where this is refused; school has a responsibility to ensure staff comply with this request.

Confidentiality and Visitors

A 'visitor' in this context is any person who works in school either in a paid or a voluntary capacity, for example, parent readers or peripatetic music teachers. In some instances, a visitor may become privy to personal information regarding pupils, parents and staff that is of a sensitive or confidential nature. All regular visitors to school receive Safeguarding Advice through a meeting with the DSL who gives clear guidance about what to do in the event of 'disclosure' by a child. All regular voluntary workers are asked to sign confidentiality agreements to say they will uphold the guidance and procedures as set out in this policy.

Links to Other Policies / Documentation

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures
- Whistle Blowing Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Acceptable use of ICT Policy
- Freedom of Information Procedure
- Safeguarding Audit and Policy Checklist