

Sparsholt C of E Primary School

Confidentiality Policy 2020-2021



Sparsholt C of E Primary School strives to provide a safe and secure learning environment with children's well-being at its core. Our relationships are our greatest strength and the school is mindful that it is placed in a position of trust by all involved with it. It is essential that this trust is not undermined by the unnecessary sharing of information and it is expected that a professional approach will be used in all manners of confidentiality.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all members of the school community have a clear understanding of the levels of confidentiality that they are required to provide for others and those which they can expect for themselves.

Key aims:

- To promote consistency in the handling of all personal information and thus foster trust in the school
- To ensure that all staff, governors, volunteers, parents and pupils are aware of this policy and the procedures specified within it. This includes knowledge that school staff cannot promise unconditional confidentiality
- To ensure that there is equality of provision and access for all, including the monitoring of culture, gender, medical needs and SEND.
- To ensure that if there are child protection concerns, the correct procedure is followed
- To ensure that confidentiality is a whole school issue and that in all contexts, for everyone's protection, ground rules are considered and implemented
- To ensure that everyone understands that health professionals are bound by a different code of conduct.

Different levels of confidentiality are appropriate for different circumstances. In a small school, where most of the staff have regular contact with most of the children, it is particularly important to scrutinise what information needs sharing and what does not. For example, staff may need to have some information about children if friendship or significant family issues have arisen, even if that child is not in their class. If any adult in school is unclear about what they should disclose to anyone else about an issue, they should speak to the head teacher.

Generally speaking, the following guidelines apply:

- School staff (including volunteers, non-teaching staff and Governors) should not promise confidentiality. Pupils do not have the right to expect that incidents will not be reported to his/her parents/carers unless it is considered to be in their best interests.
- All information about individual children is private and should only be shared with those staff that need to know.

- Parents/carers have the right to access their child's school records but they do not have the right to access those of others.
- Parents/carers do not have access to any other child's books, marks and progress grades at any time. However, that information about their child will be shared with the receiving school when they change school.
- Photographs of children are not used without parents'/carers permission especially in the press and Internet
- 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.
- All staff must ensure that any discussions with children takes place in rooms/areas where they can be seen – eg leave the door slightly open and ensure they are in a room with a glass window section.
- 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 through these categories but individual children should not be able to be identified. It is recognised that this can be difficult in a small school, but every effort must be made to ensure confidentiality.
- All social services, medical and personal information about a child is held in a secure place which cannot be accessed by individuals other than school staff.
- Any member of staff or volunteer can disclose information to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) Mrs Elizabeth Hanratty and or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) Mrs Jane Gwilliam and Miss Carol Sheppeck if they have concerns about a child's well-being. Staff are also encouraged to use the Child Protection Online System (CPOMS) to record concerns.
- Only the DSLs have access to all the information on CPOMS and they may need to make decisions about how information is shared and to whom.
- All staff receive regular child protection and safeguarding training. This includes how to respond to disclosures made by children. The DSLs receive annual safeguarding training and bi-annual DSL refresher training.
- There are clear procedures in place for the handling of child protection issues, including if a member of staff or a child is accused of abuse.
- Any personal data collected must be used only for the purpose specified in the collection notice and should not be used for any other purpose.

- Sparsholt C of E Primary School strives to ensure good communication with its families and staff are always available to discuss concerns with children and parents/carers.
- The school actively encourages children to talk to their parents/carers about things that worry them. As part of its Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) curriculum, however, the school will also make pupils aware of specialist confidential services where they can seek assistance if they wish – eg ChildLine, the School Nurse.
- The school will usually share a child protection disclosure with parents/carers before informing the correct authorities, unless this is deemed inappropriate by the DSL.
- Parents/carers and children should feel reassured that confidentiality will only be broken in exceptional circumstances – ie where the well-being of the child would otherwise be compromised.
- All adults working or volunteering in school undertake an induction session where the need for confidentiality is highlighted and there is opportunity for discussion.
- The school has appropriate system and controls in place to ensure that it is compliant with its obligations under the General Data Protection Regulation which sets out the way in which all personal information is collected, used, stored and destroyed by the school. See separate Data Protection policy.

Confidentiality of pupil and family information

Discussions about children’s personal information should be of a professional nature and should only be held in areas of the school where confidentiality and privacy can be guaranteed. Corridors or the library area, where parents or other children may hear confidential information are not appropriate at most points of the day.

The staffroom is sometimes used by external visitors and parent volunteers and therefore permanent members of staff should consider this before embarking on any discussion about pupils.

Consideration should also be given to the information/notices displayed on the whiteboard. It is recognised, however, that some essential information has to be displayed in the staffroom – eg on the health and safety board – but this is kept to a minimum.

Staff meetings always begin with ‘Concerns’ so that information that needs to be shared amongst teachers can be discussed. To protect privacy, staff meeting minutes only use children’s initials and give only brief information about concerns and any key actions.

Teachers speak to the HT separately and/or use CPOMS to record information in more detail if necessary.

In some circumstances, only certain members of staff who work closely with a pupil will be made aware of confidential information from external agencies. This information must not be shared with any other member of staff. Appropriate information will be passed on to those that need to know – eg when a pupil moves from one class to another.

Information within health reports, SEN reports, minutes of meetings relating to SEN and social services etc are circulated to appropriate staff members and, once read, should be returned for secure filing or to confidential waste.

Logs of administration of medication to children should be kept secure and each child should have their own individual log.

Curriculum

Confidentiality is a whole school issue. Clear ground rules are set for any class work such as circle time and PSHE, especially if a session is dealing with sensitive issues such as sex and relationships or drugs education. They reduce anxiety and minimise the unconsidered, unintended personal disclosures. It is made clear from the outset that confidentiality cannot be promised by the teacher if they believe that there is a risk of harm to a child.

Example of ground rules are:

- We won't ask each other or the teacher any personal questions
- We will respect each other and not laugh, tease or hurt others' feelings
- We won't say things we want to keep private
- We can pass or opt out of something if it makes us feel uncomfortable
- If we do find things out about other pupils which are personal and private, we won't talk about it outside the lesson, BUT
- If we are worried about someone else's safety or well-being, we will tell a teacher or other trusted adult in school.

If a health professional is contributing to a school health education programme in a classroom setting, he/she is required to work within the same boundaries of confidentiality as a teacher.

Health and Safety

Health Professionals – School Nurse Team

Health professionals can offer confidential health services to pupils under the age of sixteen, provided they follow the Fraser Guidelines which require:

- The young person understands the advice and has sufficient maturity to appreciate what is involved in terms of moral, legal, social and emotional implications for themselves.
- They cannot be persuaded to tell their parent, or allow them to be informed.
- The young person's physical or mental health is likely to suffer unless they receive advice or treatment.
- It is in the young person's best interests to give advice or treatment.
- The requirement to offer a confidential service is within the professional code of practice for school nurses and other health staff. Health professionals must also inform appropriate services if they become aware of a child protection issue in discussions with a young person.

Children with Medical Conditions

The information relating to a child's medical condition and any treatment (emergency or otherwise) that is required is shared only with the members of staff that need to know – ie head teacher, class teacher, 1:1 support assistant if applicable and school first aiders.

All records and documentation are stored securely in the school office, first aid cabinet and secure classroom cupboards, and only appropriate school staff may have access to it.

School trips and visits

When classes go on school trips, a risk assessment is completed. This assessment gives information about which children have medical conditions that may require emergency treatment – eg allergies to nuts, bee stings etc. Other information, such as which children have an SEN that may affect their behaviour, is also contained within the assessment. Parent volunteers who accompany a class on a trip are required to read this information. Information about specific children in the assessment is kept to the minimum required for health and safety purposes. The head teacher, class teachers and the senior administrative assistant (who is the Educational Visits Co-ordinator) discuss specific requirements and arrangements in more detail.

Staff and Governors

Governors need to be mindful that from time to time issues are discussed or brought to their attention about staff and children. Any papers relating to these issues should be marked as confidential and destroyed securely after reading.

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, 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.

All staff and governors can normally expect that their personal situations and health issues will remain confidential unless:

- This impinges upon their terms of contract.
- It endangers children or other members of staff.
- There is a legal obligation to disclose such information.
- It is necessary for legal proceedings.
- Despite the duty of confidence, the staff member's interest or wider public interest justifies disclosure.

Signed:Date:

Chair of Governors

Signed:Date:

Headteacher

This policy is intended to be used in conjunction with the following policies:

- Child Protection
- Safeguarding
- Behaviour & Anti-Bullying
- Whistle-Blowing
- Supporting Children with Medical Conditions
- Sex and Relationships Education
- SEND
- Code of Conduct
- Data Protection