



St. Andrew's Church of England (VC) Primary School Confidentiality Policy

Rationale:

At St. Andrew's Primary School it is our vision for every child in our school to have:

- * positive self-esteem through inner confidence and strength
- * creativity of thought within a life-long passion for learning
- * excellence, high personal achievement and the experience of success
- * a set of values by which to live
- * an enjoyment of childhood
.... developed within a caring Christian environment.

Definition of Confidentiality:

The dictionary definition of confidential is 'something which is spoken or given in confidence; private, entrusted with another's information'. When speaking confidentially, the confider has the belief that the confidant will not share the content of the conversation with another.

Aim:

The safety, well-being and protection of the children are paramount in all decisions staff make about confidentiality.

We aim 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. St. Andrew's C. of E. (V.C.) Primary School seeks to put the child at the heart of the learning process and to provide a safe and secure learning environment. We seek to implement the underlying principles of the Every Child Matters Agenda and to address the issues, which may arise about confidentiality. 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. Sharing information unnecessarily is an erosion of trust. The school is mindful that all stakeholders place it in a position of trust and there is a general expectation that a professional approach will be used in all matters of confidentiality, relating to the work of the school, including all matters relating to individual children or groups of children.

Objectives:

1. To provide consistent messages in school about handling information about children once it has been received.
2. To foster an ethos of trust within the school.
3. To ensure that staff, parents and pupils are aware of the school's confidentiality policy and procedures.
4. To reassure children 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 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. Confidentiality is a whole school issue. Everyone working in school is bound by confidentiality and should be able to trust the boundaries of confidentiality operating within the school. Care and consideration is taken over decisions to break confidentiality.
2. All information about individual children is private and should only be shared with those staff that have a need to know and done sensitively.
3. 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.
4. The school continues to actively promote a positive ethos and respect for the individual
5. 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. Staff encourage children to do so and may in some cases support the children to talk to their parents.
6. Information collected for one purpose should not be used for another.
7. Addresses and telephone numbers of parents and children will not be passed on except in exceptional circumstances or to a receiving school.
8. 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 would be shared with the receiving school when they change school.
9. 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.
10. Photographs of children should not be used without parents'/carers' permission especially in the press and Internet. At no time should the child's name be used with a photograph so that they can be identified. The school gives clear guidance to parents about the use of cameras and videos during public school events. (See also ICT Acceptable Use Policy)
11. Governors need to be mindful that from time to time issues are discussed or brought to their attention about staff and children. All such papers should be marked as confidential and should not be discussed outside the Governors' meeting. These confidential papers should be destroyed after the meeting. Governors must observe complete confidentiality when asked to do so by the Governing Body, especially in relation to matters concerning individual staff, children 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.
12. Volunteer helpers are in a position of trust. They are expected not to discuss any details of children, their behaviour or their work, outside the school. (See also Confidentiality Policy for Volunteers and Visitors in School.)

Additional Guidelines for Specific areas:

Child Protection (see Child Protection Policy):

- The school has appointed a Designated Senior Person (the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher in her absence) for Child Protection who receives statutory training.
- There is clear guidance for the handling of Child Protection incidents (see Child Protection Policy)
- 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.

- The school would share with parents any child protection disclosure before going on to inform the correct authorities, unless this might put the child's welfare at further risk. E.g. if the parent is the alleged perpetrator.
- All staff have three-yearly County-led training on child protection issues and annual in-house, refresher training.
- There is clear guidance for procedures if a member of staff is accused of abuse.
- The police will be informed by the Headteacher (or in her absence the Deputy Headteacher) if a disclosure reveals illegal activity.

Health:

- Health professionals have their own code of practice dealing with confidentiality. Staff should be aware of children with medical needs and this information should be accessible to staff who need that information but not on general view to other parents/carers and children.
- 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 and once read should be returned for secure filing.
- Logs of administration of medication to children should be kept secure. In all other notes, briefing sheets etc a child should not be able to be identified.

PSHE/Sex and Relationship Education (see Sex and Relationship Education Policy and PSHE Policy):

- Clear ground rules must be set for any classroom work such as Circle Time and other PSHE session 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. The school is proactive so that children feel supported when they feel the need to disclose information, but so that 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.
- Staff are aware that effective Sex and Relationship Education brings an understanding of what is and is not acceptable in a relationship and can lead to disclosure of a Child Protection issue, which will be addressed according to prescribed Child Protection procedure and guidelines.
- Staff are aware of the need to handle all issues about different types of family in a sensitive manner.
- Outside agencies are made aware of this policy and work within it when delivering any part of the PSHE curriculum.
- The police will be informed by the Headteacher (or in her absence the Deputy Headteacher) if a disclosure reveals illegal activity.

Equality (see Public Sector Equality Duty):

- Any intolerance about gender, faith, race, culture or sexuality is unacceptable and should follow the school's discipline policy.
- 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 these areas but individual children should not be able to be identified.

Monitoring and Evaluation:

1. This policy will be reviewed as part of the schools monitoring cycle.
2. The Head teacher has responsibility for monitoring this policy.
3. Breaches of Confidentiality should be reported to the Headteacher (or Deputy Headteacher in her absence) who will address them as appropriate. Should the Headteacher be suspected of a breach of confidentiality, the Chair of Governors should be informed.

Conclusion:

St. Andrew's C. of E. (V.C.) 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.

Working together in this way we can enable each individual to feel safe and valued and to realise his/her potential within a caring Christian community.

Related Policies:

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Child Protection
- Sex and Relationship Education
- Public Sector Equalities Duty
- Special Educational Needs
- Confidentiality Policy for Volunteers and Visitors in School
- Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE)
- ICT Acceptable Use Policy

Policy 'owned' by: Governors Curriculum and Ethos Committee

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