



Otterburn First School

Confidentiality Policy

Document Status	
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Date of origin	5 th February 2016
Version	V1
Review requirements	Three Yearly
Date of next review	5 th February 2019
Approval Body	Policy Committee
Review	

Confidentiality Policy

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 the confidentiality policy is understood by pupils, parents/carers and staff.

Rationale

Otterburn First School seek to put the child at the heart of the learning process and to provide a safe and secure learning environment. The schools recognises that staff within the school are in a position of trust towards children and their parents/carers and as such, children and their parents/carers should be able to expect confidentiality of information. This is particularly relevant in a small school, in a close community where the boundaries between roles can sometimes be less clear. While recognising the need for confidentiality, this policy also incorporates the need to protect the safety of children through the divulging of information.

Objectives:

1. Ensure children and parent/carers are fully informed about their child's progress
2. Ensure that parents/carers have a right of access to any records the school may hold on their child
3. Ensure confidentiality of information about individual children and their parents carers and in particular to ensure information about other children and their parents/carers is not divulged
4. Ensure confidentiality of information about children's health or special educational needs
5. Ensure staff, children, parents/carers understand that while the majority of time the school will ensure absolute confidentiality of information, in incidences where children are potentially at risk, information must be shared with appropriate others
6. Ensure that if there are child protection issues then the correct procedures are followed
7. Ensure that confidentiality is a whole school issue and that in lessons clear ground rules are set for the protection of others
8. Understand that health professionals are bound by different codes of conduct

Guidelines

1. All information about individual children and their parents and carers is private and should only be shared with those staff that have a need to know.
2. 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.
3. The schools pride itself on good communication with parents/carers and staff are always available to talk to children and their parents/carers about issues causing concern. The school encourages children to talk to parents/carers about issues causing them concern and in some cases may support the child in talking to their parents.
4. Information collected for one purpose should not be collected for another
5. Staff should be aware of children with medical needs and the class information sheet should be accessible to staff who need that information but should not be on general view to other parents/carers and children
6. Photographs of children should not be used without parent/carers permission especially in the press and internet .This is often a cultural issue that the schools need to be aware of. At no time should a

child's name be used with a photograph so that they can be identified. An exception to this is in a case of medical need where a child needs to be identified to staff members because of a potential health risk e.g. an allergy. The schools give clear guidance to parents/carers about the use of cameras during public school events.

7. Information about children will be shared with parents/carers but only about their child. Parents should not have access to any other child's books or performance data, especially at parents' evening. Parents should be aware, however that information on their child will be shared with the receiving school on transfer
8. All personal information about children, including social services records should be regarded as confidential. This should be clearly understood by those who have access to it whether or no there is access to some or all of the information.
9. Information regarding health reports, including speech and language therapy, medical reports, SEN and Social Services reports and minutes of meetings will be circulated in envelopes and once read, should be returned for secure filing.
10. Logs of administration of medicines to children should be kept secure and each child should have their own log (Ref Administration of Medicines policy.)
11. Addresses and phone numbers of parents will not be passed on except in exceptional circumstances or to a receiving school.

Confidentiality and Governors

1. Governors need to be mindful that from time to time issues are discussed or brought to their attention about staff or children
2. All papers should be marked as confidential. These confidential papers should be destroyed. Governors must observe complete confidentiality when asked to do so by the governing body, especially in matters concerning individual staff, pupils or parents/carers.
3. Although decisions made 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 discussing potentially contentious issues arising outside the governing body.

Confidentiality within lessons

1. Confidentiality is a whole school issue. 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 relationships and drugs.
2. Strategies are in place for dealing with sensitive information which lies outside of the child protection remit.
3. Staff are aware of the need to handle all issues about different types of families in a sensitive manner.
4. Any intolerance about gender, faith, race, culture or sexuality for both adults and children in school is unacceptable –ref schools racial equality policy and school discipline policy.
5. The schools will be proactive so that children feel supported but information is not unnecessarily revealed in a public arena.
6. 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 information further.

Child protection issues

1. Parents/carers and children need to be aware that the schools cannot guarantee total confidentiality and that the schools have a duty to report child protection issues.
2. The schools will ensure a member of staff has responsibility for child protection and this person will receive regular training. (Ref Child Protection Training)
3. There is clear guidance for the handling of child protection incidents.
4. There is clear guidance for procedures if a member of staff is accused of abuse.
5. Staff are aware that effective relationship and sex education, which brings an understanding of what is and is not acceptable in a relationship, can lead to disclosure of a child protection issue.
6. The schools will share with parents any child protection disclosure before going on to inform the correct authorities.

Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation

1. All new staff will be made aware of the contents of the confidentiality policy at induction. They will also sign to register that they have received a written copy of the schools' confidentiality policy.
2. All existing staff will be made aware of the confidentiality policy and be given a written copy of it.
3. The head teacher will be responsible for ensuring staff have undertaken the relevant training as outlined in the policy.
4. The Governors and headteacher are responsible for ensuring there is a lead for child protection within each school and that the lead for child protection is able to attend relevant training.
5. Adherence to the policy will be monitored in part through the annual parent's questionnaire.
6. The policy will be reviewed as part of the schools' monitoring cycle.
7. The PSE scheme of work, Sex and Relationships policy and Drugs Policy will enable identified opportunities to deliver aspects of this policy in specified year groups.
8. The Head teacher has responsibility for monitoring this policy. Following any curriculum monitoring a positional statement is written which contributes to the School Development Plan.

Conclusion

Otterburn First School has a duty of care and responsibility towards pupils, parents/carers and staff. The schools also need 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.