

Greenhaugh Primary School

Confidentiality Policy

Aims

- To protect the child at all times and to give all staff involved clear, unambiguous guidance as to their legal and professional roles
- To ensure good practice throughout the school that is understood by pupils, parents/carers and staff.

Rationale

Greenhaugh Primary School seeks to put the child at the heart of the learning process and to provide a safe and secure learning environment. It seeks to address the issues which may arise about confidentiality. It is committed to developing creative and positive ways for the child's voice to be heard while recognising the responsibility to use, hold and safeguard information received.

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.

Objectives

- To ensure that staff, parents and pupils are aware of the school's confidentiality policy and procedures.
- To provide consistent messages in school about the handling of information regarding children once it has been received.
- To foster an ethos of trust within the school.
- To reassure pupils that their best interests will be maintained.
- To encourage children to talk to their parents and carers.
- To ensure that pupils and parents/carers know that school staff cannot offer unconditional confidentiality. There may be times when information may need to be passed on to other professional bodies e.g. if you suspect anyone may be at risk from harm.
- To ensure that there is equality of provision and access for all, including rigorous monitoring of cultural, gender and special educational needs and disability.
- To ensure that if there are safeguarding issues then the correct procedure is followed.
- To ensure that confidentiality is a whole school issue and that in lessons, "ground rules" are set for the protection of all.
- To understand that health professionals are bound by different codes of conduct.
- To ensure that parents have a right of access to any records the school may hold on their child but not to those of any other child that they do not have parental responsibility for.

Guidelines

1. All information about individual children 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. 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 those concerned have access to all or only some of the information. Information regarding health reports such as speech therapy, medical reports, SEND reports, SEND minutes of meetings and social service minutes of meetings and reports will be circulated in envelopes and once read should be returned for secure filing. Logs of administration of medication to children should be kept secure and each child should have their own individual log. In all other notes, briefing sheets etc. a child should not be able to be identified. Addresses and telephone numbers of parents and children will not be passed on except in exceptional circumstances or to a receiving school.

3. The school continues to actively promote a positive ethos and respect for the individual.
 - The school has appointed two senior lead teachers for Safeguarding who receive regular training.
 - There is clear guidance for the handling of safeguarding incidents and all staff have regular training on child protection issues.
 - 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 safeguarding issue.
 - Staff are aware of the need to handle all issues about different types of families in a sensitive manner.
 - Any intolerance about gender, faith, race, culture or sexuality is unacceptable and should follow the school discipline policy.
 - Information collected for one purpose should not be used for another.
4. Parents/carers and children need to be aware that the school cannot guarantee total confidentiality and the school has a duty to report safeguarding issues.
5. The school prides itself on the 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. 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. The school would share with parents any child protection disclosure before going on to inform the correct authorities.
6. Parents/carers and children should feel reassured that only in exceptional circumstances will confidentiality be broken.
7. 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 by these categories but individual children should not be able to be identified.
8. The school has appointed two senior members of staff as Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for Child Protection (please see Safeguarding Policy). Child protection procedures are understood by staff and training is undertaken every two years for Designated Safeguarding Leads, and every three years for all other members of staff. DSL's access monthly updates from NCC website.
9. Confidentiality is a whole-school issue. Clear ground-rules must be set for any classroom work such as circle time and other Personal Social Health Education (PSHE) / Social Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) sessions dealing with sensitive issues such as Sex and Relationship Education (SRE). Strategies are in place for dealing with sensitive information which may fall outside the boundaries of child protection procedures. School needs to be proactive so children feel supported but 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.

10. Health professionals have their own code of practice dealing with confidentiality. Staff should be aware of children with medical needs and the class information sheet should be accessible to staff who need that information but not on general view to other parents/carers and children.
11. Photographs of children will not be used without parent's/carers' permission. At no time should a child's name be used with a photograph so that they can be identified. The school gives clear guidance to parents/carers about the use of cameras and videos during public school events.
12. Information about children will be shared with parents but only about their child. Parents/carers 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.
13. Governors need to be mindful that from time to time issues are discussed or brought to their attention about staff and children and that complete confidentiality must be maintained. 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.

'Confidentiality' also refers to protecting the information we hold about the pupils in our school and their families. All staff will endeavour to maintain confidentiality when appropriate, for example by considering the conversations they have about pupils and their families, the purpose of these conversations and where these take place. Staff should be especially vigilant when conversations are held outside the school premises. All students and helpers at the school will be made aware of this through our confidentiality statement as below:

Confidentiality on School Matters

Teachers talk about their work constantly. Conversations at breaks and lunchtimes are often about school, individual children and their families. We ask that such conversations are regarded as confidential. Similarly, the work, progress and behaviour of individual children is a matter of fact for the teacher, the child and the parents of the child. Any comments made to others about a child, or an incident at school may be misinterpreted and lead to misunderstandings.

Small incidents are dealt with in school and should end there. More serious incidents will be discussed ***in confidence*** with parents.

We feel sure that you will understand the need for confidentiality on school matters. **As a Governor, member of staff, student or helper in the school we ask that you respect confidentiality** on such matters to avoid misunderstandings and upset.

A copy of this Confidentiality Policy can be found on the school website or a hard copy from the school office.

Monitoring and Evaluation

1. The policy will be reviewed as part of the school's monitoring cycle.
2. The PSHE scheme of work and SRE policy will enable identified opportunities to deliver aspects of this policy in specified year groups.
3. The Headteacher has responsibility for monitoring this policy.