

# St Paul's Whitechapel CE Primary School

## Confidentiality Policy

### Aim

To protect all children at all times and to give 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 and carers and staff.

### Rationale

At St Paul's Whitechapel CE Primary School the needs of the child are paramount. We aim to put the child at the centre of the learning process and to provide a safe and secure learning environment. We aim 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 children's voices 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 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 provide consistent messages in school about handling information about children once it has been received
- To foster an ethos of trust in the school
- To reassure children that their best interests will be maintained
- To encourage children to talk to their parents and carers. However there may be some situations (e.g. abusive situations within the home) where children may need to talk to a professional first
- To ensure that children and parents/ carers know that the school staff cannot offer unconditional confidentiality
- To ensure that there is equality of provision and access for all
- To ensure that if there are child protection 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 a different code of conduct
- To ensure that parents have a right of access to any records that the school may hold on their child (excluding child protection and medical issues) but not to any other child that they do not have parental responsibility for

### Guidelines

The school actively promotes a positive ethos and respect for the individual. All information about individual children is private and should only be shared with those staff who have a need to know.

If a member of staff is in any doubt about an issue, they should speak to the Headteacher. If a member of the governing body is in any doubt about an issue, they should speak to the Chair of the Governing Body. There is clear guidance for procedures if a member of staff is accused of abuse.

Information collected for one purpose should not be used for another.

Staff are aware of the need to handle all issues about different types of families in a sensitive manner.

Confidentiality is a whole school issue. Clear ground rules must be set for any classroom work such as Circle Time and PSHE sessions dealing with sensitive issues. Strategies are in place to

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deal with sensitive issues which may fall outside the boundaries of child protection procedures. We support children but do not encourage them to disclose personal issues to the whole class. Adults may remind children that they can always talk to an adult in private if there is something that is worrying them.

Parents/carers and children should feel reassured that only in exceptional circumstances will confidentiality be broken. All personal information about children including social service records should be regarded as confidential. It should be clearly understood by those who have access to all or part of the information. Addresses and telephone numbers of parents and children will not be passed on except in exceptional circumstances or to a receiving school. Information about the children will be shared with parents but only about their child. Parents should not have access to any other child's books, marks or progress, especially at parent conferences. However, parents should be aware that information about their child will be shared with the receiving school when they change schools. Where sensitive information is widely known, it should not be assumed by those immediately involved that it is appropriate to discuss or share this information further.

### **Health**

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. Health professionals have their own code of practice dealing with confidentiality. Staff should be aware of children with medical needs and class information sheets 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 and social service minutes of meetings and reports will be circulated in envelopes and, once read, will be filed securely.

### **Child Protection**

The Headteacher is the appointed child protection officer. There are clear guidelines for the handling of child protection incidents as set out in the Child Protection Policy

Staff are aware that effective sex and relationship education which brings an understanding of what is and what is not acceptable in a relationship, can lead to disclosure of a child protection issue.

The school prides itself on good communication with parents/carers. Staff are available to talk to both children & parents/carers about issues that are causing concern. Where there has been a disclosure or where information of a concerning nature has been gathered, the school will discuss the issues with social services. In some cases the child may be encouraged to talk to their parents/ carers but in other instances e.g. where there is an abusive situation within the home, professionals will need to talk to the parents.

### **Equal Opportunities**

Any intolerance about gender, faith, race, culture or sexuality is unacceptable and should follow the school's behaviour policy. All children have the right to the same level of confidentiality irrespective of gender, race religion, medical concerns and special educational needs. Much data is generated in schools but individual children should not be able to be identified.

### **Governors**

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 be copied on different coloured paper.

These papers should be destroyed by governors when asked to do so by the governing body, especially in relation to matters concerning individual staff, parents or children.

Decisions made by the governing body are usually 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

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outside the governing body.

### **Photographs**

Photographs of children should not be used without parent/carers permission especially in the press and internet. A photograph consent form is sent out at the start of each academic year and is also completed by new starters.

### **Conclusion**

St Paul's Whitechapel CE 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.

### **Please refer to the following policies for further details:**

Middle manager (monitoring)

Health and safety (allergies, equipment, dangerous materials)

ICT (cross-curricular links, software)

Displays (types and methods)

SEN

Equal Opportunities

Race equality

EMA

Gifted and Talented

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