



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 good practice throughout the school which is understood by pupils, parents/carers and staff.

Rationale

Ravenscroft Primary School seeks to put the child at the heart of the learning process and to provide a safe and secure learning environment. It is 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 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 concerning children once it has been received.
- To foster an ethos of trust within the school.
- To ensure that staff, parents and pupils are aware of the school's confidentiality, policy and procedures.
- 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.
- To ensure that there is equality of provision and access for all including rigorous monitoring of cultural, gender and special educational needs.
- To ensure that if there is a child protection issue 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 educational records the school may hold on their child but not to 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 members of staff who have a need to know.
2. 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 school continues to actively promote a positive ethos and respect for the individual:
 - The school has appointed a Child Protection team who meet regularly.
 - There is clear guidance for the handling of child protection incidents and all staff members have on-going training on child protection or relevant issues when needed.
 - There is clear LA guidance for procedures if a member of staff is accused of abuse.
 - Staff members are aware that some lessons may bring an understanding of what is and is not acceptable and this can lead to disclosure of a child protection issue.
 - Staff members 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 schools 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 child protection issues.
5. The school prides itself on good communication with parents and carers and staff members 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. It is our policy to inform parents of Child Protection referrals in *all* cases unless this would:
 - increase the threat of 'considerable harm' to the child
 - impede any investigation, or
 - cause undue delay
6. Parents/carers and children should feel reassured that only in exceptional circumstances confidentiality will 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. Child protection procedures are understood by staff and training is regularly undertaken.
9. Confidentiality is a whole school issue. Clear ground rules must be set for any classroom work such as circle time and other sessions dealing with sensitive issues such as relationships. Strategies are in place and all children are aware of them 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 should not be used without parents/carers permission especially in the press and internet. There may be a cultural or safeguarding issue that the school needs to be aware of. 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 the Photograph Policy).
12. Information about children will be shared with parents/carers. Parents should not have access to any other child's books, marks and progress grades at any time including at parents evening. However parents should be aware that information about their child will be shared with the receiving school when they change school. 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.
13. Information regarding health reports such as speech therapy, medical reports, SEN reports, SEN minutes of meetings are kept in the central file; unless appropriate e.g. agency advice copies will be kept in pupils class file. 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.
14. 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. These confidential papers should be destroyed. 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 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.

Conclusion

Ravenscroft 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.

This policy was agreed on	December 2022
Policy to be reviewed by	December 2024