

# Confidentiality

Hatch Warren Infant 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.

## **Aim**

To protect the child at all times and to give all staff, governors and volunteers 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, staff and governors.

Hatch Warren Infant 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.

The school is mindful that it is placed in a position of trust by all stakeholders and there is a strong expectation that a professional approach will be used in all matters of confidentiality.

## **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, governors, parents and pupils are aware of the school's confidentiality policy and procedures.
4. To reassure pupils that their best interests will be maintained.
5. To encourage children to talk to their parents and carers about issues causing them concern.
6. To ensure that pupils and parents/carers know that there are legal guidelines advising of mitigating circumstances where school staff and volunteers can breach confidentiality to protect a child.
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 is a child protection issue then the correct procedure is followed, and that staff, Governors and volunteers are aware what this procedure entails
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 codes of conduct.
11. To ensure that parents/carers 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 will only be shared with those staff that have a need to know.
2. All Children's Services, medical and personal information about a child will 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 Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSL) who receives regular training.
  - There is clear guidance for the handling of child protection 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 child protection 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 the school's behaviour policy will be followed.
  - Information collected for one purpose will 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. They should feel reassured that only in exceptional circumstances will confidentiality be broken.
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. 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/carers. In the case of a child protection issue the school would work closely with parents/carers, sharing information and disclosures and involving them in the reporting process. The only exception would be if the child was considered to be in immediate danger from a parent/carer.
6. 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 will not be able to be identified.
7. Confidentiality is a whole school issue. Clear ground rules are set for any classroom work such as circle time and other PSHE sessions 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 which may fall outside the boundaries of child protection procedures. The school needs to be proactive so children feel supported but also ensure information is not unnecessarily revealed in a public arena. Even when sensitive information appears to be widely known, it will not be assumed by those immediately involved that it is appropriate to discuss or share this information further.
8. Parents/carers will be notified of all requests to work with individual children from Health professionals and Children's Services and will be asked to give permission for

- these services accessing records on the individual child and to observe/work with them in school (unless there is a safeguarding concern).
9. Health professionals have their own code of practice dealing with confidentiality. Staff will be aware of children with medical needs and the class information sheet will be accessible to staff who need that information but not on general view to other parents/carers and children.
  10. Information regarding health reports such as speech therapy, medical reports, SEN reports, SEN minutes of meetings and Children's Services minutes of meetings and reports will be circulated in envelopes and once read will be returned for secure shredding. Logs of administration of medication to children will be kept secure and each child will have their own individual log. In all other notes, briefing sheets etc a child will 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.
  11. Photographs of children will not be used without parents/carers permission especially in the press and internet. At no time will 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.
  12. Volunteers receive information about confidentiality before they start helping in school.
  13. Information about children will be shared only with their own parent/carer. Parents will not have access to any other child's books, marks and progress at any time. However, parents/carers will be aware that information about their child will be shared with the receiving school when they change school. All personal information about children including Children's Services records will be regarded as confidential. This will be clearly understood by those who have access to it.
  14. In accordance with the law, records of meetings of the governing body are made freely available for inspection. However, any information relating to a named person or any other matter considered confidential by the GB will not be made available in this way. Although decisions reached at governors meetings are made public through the minutes or otherwise, the discussions on which decisions are based are not recorded and are regarded as confidential. When issues are discussed or brought to the attention of governors about individual staff members or children these individuals are not usually named. However, it may sometimes be necessary to do so, especially in a case involving a pupil or staff discipline committee. Governors must observe complete confidentiality at these times. Any governing body records naming individuals are marked as confidential and stored in sealed envelopes. Individual governors will not keep copies of papers naming individuals: these are collected after use by the clerk and destroyed. Such papers are only made available for inspection by request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.  
Governors will exercise the highest degree of prudence when discussing school issues and governing body business outside the GB. A governor may be suspended from the Governing Body for a breach in his or her duty or confidentiality to the school or to individuals.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

1. The policy will be reviewed as part of the schools monitoring cycle on an bi-annual basis.

2. The PSHE scheme of work, Sex and Relationship policy and Drug Policy will enable identified opportunities to deliver aspects of this policy in specified year groups.
3. The Governing Body has responsibility for monitoring this policy.