



Confidentiality Policy

‘Learning, Enjoying, Succeeding Together.’

Aims

- The aim of this policy is to protect children 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

Bearwood Primary and Nursery School seek to provide a safe and secure learning environment. The safety, well-being and protection of children are the paramount considerations in all decisions staff make about confidentiality. The school is committed to developing creative and positive ways for the child’s voice to be heard whilst recognising the responsibility to use and safeguard information received.

The appropriate sharing of information between school staff is an essential element in ensuring our pupils well-being. 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 concerning the handling of information regarding children once it has been received.
- To foster and uphold an ethos of trust within the school.
- To ensure that staff, supply staff, and parents are aware of the school’s Confidentiality Policy and Procedures.
- To reassure pupils that their best interests will be maintained in the context of the class and/or school.
- 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, special educational needs and disabilities.
- To ensure that if there are safeguarding issues then the correct procedure is followed (see safeguarding policy).
- To ensure that confidentiality is a whole school issue and that in lessons ground rules are set for the protection of all (see PSHE policy).
- To ensure that parents have a right of access to any records the school may hold relating to their child.

Bearwood Primary and Nursery School actively promote a positive ethos and respect for individuals. The schools pride themselves 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. Staff encourage 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.

Confidentiality is a whole school issue. Clear ground rules are set for any classroom work such as circle time and other PSHE session dealing with sensitive issues such as sex and relationship and drugs. Staff ensure that children feel supported but information is not unnecessarily revealed in a public arena. Children are reminded of listening ear box to express concerns or worries to a trusted adult. Staff will ensure they never put pressure on child/ren to disclose personal information and should be discouraged from applying any such pressure. All adults will remind children that some information they share in the classroom may need to be shared with other adults for their protection. Children will be reassured that, if information has to be shared, they will be informed first and then supported appropriately. If a child and his/her parent/carer wish to highlight an issue to a peer group then this will be carried out sensitively by the class teacher/Headteacher/Deputy Head Teacher eg bereavement.

Students and Parent Helpers

Work experience pupils, students, teaching students and parent helpers are inducted prior to starting by the Work experience and Student co-ordinator. They are made aware of the confidentiality policy and the importance of being clear to pupils that they cannot be offered unconditional confidentiality when a pupil first begins to talk about something where confidentiality may become an issue.

Work experience pupils, students, teaching students and parent helpers sign to say they have been given and will read a policy handout prior to them helping within a classroom, this includes the confidentiality policy.

In the case that a child does disclose to a parent helper or student they would be asked to inform the class teacher of the conversation, and they would then seek advice from the DSL.

Staff and Governors

All adults working in our school:

- Implement the Safeguarding Policy.
- Encourage children to be open with their parents/carers.
- Must maintain professional standards of confidentiality about anything seen or heard within the school.
- Who has a concern about a child, but does not feel they know the child's circumstances well enough to make a judgement about procedure, that adult should discuss their concerns with the child's class teacher who will have greater knowledge of the child, at an appropriate place and time.
- Should adhere to and enforce the school's procedures for the taking of and use of photographs and video recording in school.
- No child's personal details will be given out over the telephone until the validity of the request has been ascertained via a returned call.
- Unconditional confidentiality should never be given.
- If an adult receives external information that leads them to believe there is a child protection issue, they could refer the information to the child protection team.
- Adults should be sensitive when discussing an individual child's behaviour in the

presence of another child.

- No adult should enter into detailed discussion about a child's behaviour or academic progress with other children or their parents.
- Must adhere to all school policies and procedures with regards to e-safety, use of computers and social networking.
- Staff should have regard to potential difficulties which may arise as a result of discussions outside work. While it is natural (and indeed can be therapeutic) to talk about work at home or socially, staff should be cautious about discussing specific and sensitive matters and should take steps to ensure that information is not passed on. Staff should be particularly aware that many people have a direct interest in education and schools and even close friends may inadvertently use information gleaned through casual discussion.

Governors' Meetings:

- Governors, in particular those sitting on discipline committees, will not divulge details about individuals (be they staff, families or individual children) to any person outside of the meeting.
- Governors need to be mindful that from time to time issues are discussed or brought to their attention about staff and children.
- Governors must observe complete confidentiality when asked to do so by the governing body, especially in relation to matters concerning individual staff, children or parents/carers.
- Although decisions reached at governors' meetings are normally made public through the minutes or otherwise, the discussions on which decisions are based should be confidential.

All staff can expect that their personal situations and health will remain confidential unless it impinges on their terms of contract or endangers pupils or other members of staff. Governors will not divulge details about individuals (be they staff, families or children) to any person outside of the meeting.

Staff can expect their Personal information (e.g. home addresses and telephone numbers) and work-related information (e.g. salary details, medical details) relating to individuals, should not be disclosed to third parties except where the individual has given their express permission (e.g. where they are key holders) or where this is necessary to the particular work being undertaken, e.g. it is necessary for an individual to be written to.

Outside Agencies

All social services and personal information about a child is held safe and secure which cannot be accessed by individuals other than the named DSL and deputies. Health professionals have their own code of practice dealing with confidentiality. Staff should be aware of children with medical needs and information should be accessible to staff. Parent consent will always be sought when contacting an outside agency unless deemed to be on the at risk RAG level of safeguarding concern or disclosure.

Information and record keeping

All information about individual children and families is private and should only be shared with staff and outside agencies that have a need to know. Staff should take care when sharing and discussing matters relating to pupils to ensure that the environment is appropriate. All children have a right to the same level of confidentiality irrespective of gender, race, religion, medical concerns, special educational needs and disabilities.

Social services, medical and personal information about a child is held in a safe and secure place which can

only be accessed by school staff i.e School Office. Class Teachers who hold information regarding children in their own class must ensure safekeeping and must never be left about the school environment.

Parents are able to see records relating to their own child, and know that this is confidential. Permission is asked and a signature obtained before information is passed by the school to outside agencies such as Educational Psychology Service. Parents/carers are made aware that information about their child will be shared with the receiving school when they change schools.

Parents/carers are fully informed about their children, e.g. health concerns, behaviour changes, accidents and injuries etc.

Data

Personal data is kept securely and the school is clear of the need for the data and the purposes it will be used for. When collecting data the school makes clear to parents the purposes of the data. This infrastructure is further secured by good network practice by all users. Network user permissions ensure data is only accessed by the appropriate people and is secure. When data needs to be sent to an external agency it is done so securely in line with the data protection policy.

Images

Photographs and video of children should not be used without parents/carers permission, especially in the press and internet. Parents are asked to confirm their consent via a tick list to photographs and film on their child's registration form. At no time should the child's name be used with a photograph so that they can be identified. Staff should ensure that they are aware of any children whose parents have requested that images are not published within the school, on the website or in school publications. The school gives clear guidance to parents about the use of cameras and videos during public school events. Parents confirm by signing the school registration form that;

- Images taken will be for family or family use only
- Images will not be taken of other children outside of the performance area
- No image will be used for display publicly
- No images or film will be posted on the internet or on social networking sites
- No photographs or film will be distributed through social networking sites This is a matter of safeguarding and must be strictly adhered to in order to protect all children. Parents are given a verbal reminder of our policies before public school events.

Safeguarding

Parents/carers and children are aware that the school cannot guarantee total confidentiality and the school has a duty to report safeguarding issues. Parents/carers and children should feel reassured that only in exceptional circumstances will confidentiality be broken. Refer to Child Protection Policy.

Governors need to be mindful that from time to time issues are discussed or brought to their attention about staff and children. Each Governor will be given their own school email account on which all conversations of a sensitive nature should take place. This should be kept separate from personal email addresses. 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. Discussions on which decisions are based should be regarded as confidential. Governors should exercise the highest degree of prudence when discussing potentially contentious issues.

This policy should be read alongside:-

Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

PSHE Policy Anti-Bullying Policy

E-Safety Policy

Acceptable Use Policy

All school staff, outside agencies, and volunteers are made aware of this policy which is included in the School's Induction Pack. Parents/Carers are informed of this policy and it is available to read on the school website.

Monitoring of this policy is the duty of the Head Teacher, Deputy Head, DSL and Governor with responsibility for Safeguarding.

This policy is subject to regular review.

Notes

Data Protection Act 2018: Applies to personal data of living, identifiable individuals, not anonymised data; manual and electronic records. Schools need to be clear, when collecting personal data, what purposes it will be used for and schools should have policies to clarify this to staff, pupils and parents.

Freedom of Information Act 2000: Amends the Data Protection Act - Gives everyone the right to request any records a public body, including schools, holds about them. A school may withhold information it has if it is considered the information may damage the recipient, if disclosed. Schools data or record keeping policy should also cover the requirements of this Act.

DSL: Designated Safeguarding Lead

Legal Requirements Human Rights Act 1998 Gives everyone the right to "respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence", unless this is overridden: by the pupil interest, for reasons of child protection, for the protection of public safety, pupil order, health or morals or for the rights and freedoms of others.

- Children's Act 2004 The Children's Act, 2004, sets out the following objectives under the every child matters agenda:
- Children and Young People are mentally and emotionally healthy
- Children and Young People are sexually healthy
- Children and Young People choose not to take illegal drugs
- Children and Young People are safe from maltreatment, neglect, violence and sexual exploitation
- Children and Young People have security, stability and be cared for