

Longhoughton C of E Primary School
Confidentiality Policy and Information Sharing

Rationale

At Longhoughton C of E Primary School we seek to put the child at the heart of the learning process and to provide a safe and secure learning environment. We seek 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 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 we are placed in a position of trust by all stakeholders and there is a professional approach used in all matters of confidentiality.

Aim

We 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 children and adults.

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, parents, volunteers and pupils are aware of the school's confidentiality policy and procedures
4. To reassure children that their best interests will be maintained
5. To encourage children to talk to their parents and carers
6. To ensure that children and parents/carers know that school staff cannot offer unconditional confidentiality
7. To ensure that there is equality of provision and access for all
8. To ensure that if there are child protection issues then the correct procedure is followed
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 a different code of conduct
11. To ensure that parents have a right of access to any records the school may hold on their child but not records of any other child for whom they do not have parental responsibility

Guidelines

1. All information about individual children is private and should only be shared with those staff that have a need to know. This includes electronic data.
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, on a need to know basis
3. We continue to actively promote a positive ethos and respect for the individual:
 - a) We have appointed a senior lead teacher for child protection who receives regular training. (Tracey Critchlow)

- b) There is clear guidance for the handling of child protection incidents and all staff have regular training on child protection issues.
 - c) There is clear guidance for procedures if a member of staff is accused of abuse.
 - d) Staff are aware that effective Relationship Education (SRE) which brings an understanding of what is and is not acceptable in a relationship, can lead to disclosure of a child protection issue.
 - e) Staff are aware of the need to handle all issues about different types of families in a sensitive manner.
 - f) Any intolerance towards any of the protected characteristics is unacceptable and should follow the school's discipline policy.
 - g) 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. We pride ourselves 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. We 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. We would endeavour to share with parents any child protection disclosure before going on to inform the correct Authorities however the safety of a child is paramount.
 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 protected characteristics, 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. We have appointed a senior member of staff as Child Protection Officer. (Tracey Critchlow) Child Protection procedures are understood by staff and training is undertaken every three years for all staff.
 9. Confidentiality is a whole school issue. Clear ground rules must be set for any classroom work such as circle time and other PSHE session 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. We need 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. (Medical information is available to staff in the First Aid cupboard and in confidential class packs. Information linked to life threatening needs is on display in the staffroom.)
 11. Photographs of children should not be used without parents/carers permission especially in the press and internet. This could be a cultural 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. We give parents a form to complete where they can give instructions regarding photographs and videos.
 12. Adults will only be given information about children for whom they have parental responsibility. Parents should not have access to any other child's books, marks and progress grades at any time especially at parents evening. However parents should be aware that information about their child will be shared with the receiving school when they change school.

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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.

Information regarding health reports such as speech therapy, medical reports, SEN reports, SEN minutes of meetings and social services 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.

13. Governors are mindful that from time to time issues are discussed or brought to their attention about staff and children. All such papers are marked as confidential. These confidential papers are stored safely and destroyed after use. 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.

Although decisions reached at Governors' meetings are normally made public through the minutes or otherwise, the discussions on which decisions are based will be regarded as confidential. Governors will exercise the highest degree of prudence when discussion of potentially contentious issues arises outside the governing body. Some decisions will be recorded in part 2 of Governor Minutes and not reported publicly.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The policy will be reviewed as part of the schools monitoring cycle.

The PSHE scheme of work, Sex and Relationship Policy and Drug Policy will identify opportunities to deliver aspects of this policy in specified year groups.

The Headteacher has responsibility for monitoring this policy.

Conclusion

Longhoughton C of E Primary School has a duty of care and responsibility towards children, 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.

Name of Head Teacher: Tracey Critchlow

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