



**St Helens Primary School**

# **Confidentiality Policy**

Reviewed by: FGB

On: July 2021

Next review due: July 2022

Chair of Governors Gary Booth

Signature:



## ST HELENS PRIMARY SCHOOL

### CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

July 2021

#### **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**

St Helens Primary school seeks to put the child at the heart of the learning process and to provide a safe and secure learning environment. It seeks to address the issues which may arise about confidentiality. 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**

1. To provide consistent messages in the 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 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.
6. To ensure that pupils and parents/carers know that the school's staff cannot offer unconditional confidentiality.

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 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 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 those staff who have a need to know.
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.
3. The school continues to actively promote a positive ethos and respect for the individual.
  - The school has appointed a senior lead teacher for child protection 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 should follow the school's behaviour policy.
  - Information collected for one purpose should not be used for another.
  - Any parents or volunteers working in any part of the school will not report any incidents, for example poor behaviour, to any other parents, directly, or through social media. This allows

the teachers to deal with such matters in line with school policy or, in some cases, allows the child to put the matter right without parental involvement.

- Any parents, students or volunteers working in classrooms should not discuss matters outside of the classroom, directly, or through social media. If concerns need to be raised they should discuss matters with the Headteacher.
- At Governing Body meetings no child should be individually named. If it is likely that an individual pupil could be identified or they need to be named then the Headteacher will request that this section of the minutes be confidential. Confidential minutes are not made public like other minutes. Governors will be expected keep this confidentiality within the Governing Body and no discussion should take place outside of the meeting room. Please see the Governor's Code of Conduct (available on the school website).

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 including under the prevent guidelines

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. The school would share with parents any child protection disclosure before going on to inform the correct authorities.

6. Parents/carers and children should feel reassured that 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 great care should be taken to preserve the anonymity of individual children.

8. The school has appointed a senior member of staff as Child Protection Officer. Child protection procedures are understood by staff and training is undertaken every two 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 PHSE session dealing with sensitive issues such as sex and relationships, gender identity 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. Schools 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. That this is often a cultural issue, the school needs to be aware. The school gives clear guidance to parents about the use of cameras and videos during public school events.

12. Information about children will be shared with parents but only about their child. 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.

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. Prevent: information about children may be shared with third parties in compliance with Prevent guidelines.

14. 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, pupils or parents. Governors will be advised by the Clerk to Governors and about the appropriate disposal of confidential materials.

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 arise outside the governing body.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

1. The policy will be reviewed as part of the school's monitoring cycle.

2. The SEAL 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 Headteacher has responsibility for monitoring this policy. Following any curriculum monitoring a positional statement is written which contributes to the School Development Plan.

## **Conclusion**

St Helens 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.