

# Ilketshall St Lawrence Primary School



## Policy for Confidentiality

Date: April 2016

Review date: April 2019



### **Background Information**

This policy was developed by the Head teacher through a variety of consultation methods involving pupils, parents/carers, staff, governors and the school health adviser.

### **Aims and Objectives**

This policy provides guidance and information on confidentiality procedures in the school for staff, pupils, parents/carers and governors. To be accessible to all of these groups the document needs to be available on request and presented in a way that is easy to understand.

### **Moral and Values Framework**

The Confidentiality Policy at Ilketshall St Lawrence Primary school reflects the school ethos and demonstrates and encourages the following values:

Respect for self;

Respect for others;

Responsibility for their own actions;

Responsibility for their family, friends, schools and wider community.

### **Policy Statement**

This school always operates in a way that respects every individual and family's right to privacy. All our staff and visitors are therefore expected to work within the guidelines of this policy which conform to recent legislation and government guidelines and which protect confidentiality.

In practice this means:

- making it clear that gossip is discouraged
- keeping personal records of behaviour confidential
- not discussing pupil or family personal matters in a general way
- using teaching methods which protect confidentiality
- always encouraging pupils to talk to their parents or carers about any anxieties they may have, while at the same time offering support for individuals and families
- care and due consideration is taken over decisions to break confidentiality



Other related policies and documents include the Sex & Relationship Education (SRE) Policy, Behaviour and Discipline Policy, Anti-bullying Policy, Drug Education Policy, Safeguarding Policy including Child Protection, Data protection and the Equal Opportunities policy document.

### **Equal Opportunities Statement**

Our policy aims to respond to the diversity of children's cultures, faiths and family backgrounds.

### **Personal Disclosures**

Pupils will be made aware that some information cannot be held confidentially and made to understand that if certain disclosures are made, certain actions will ensure.

At the same time, pupils will be offered sensitive and appropriate support.

The following procedures will be adhered to by all adults:

1. Disclosures or suspicion of possible abuse, in particular sexual abuse – the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection procedures will be followed. (see relevant policy).
2. Any action that is taken as a result of a disclosure will always have considered the best interests of the child first and foremost.
3. Upon a child disclosing information, the adult will never offer complete confidentiality if he/she suspects anyone may be at risk from harm. The information must be passed on to the school's Designated Child Protection Officer.

Incidents where staff have to break confidentiality, because someone may be at risk from harm, actions include:

- Children are told when the information has been passed on.
- Children are kept informed about what will be done with the information.
- Children are told who the information is given to, to alleviate their fears about everyone knowing.

Giving information to parents/carers about their children

If the school feels disclosures are not of a Safeguarding/Child Protection issue, they may wish to discuss this with the parents/carers. Parents/carers will be informed if the school has health concerns, behaviour changes, accidents and injury, etc, concerning their child.



### **External visitors**

- Outside agencies are made aware of the confidentiality policy and work within its limits when delivering any part of the PSHE curriculum.
- Other professionals work within their own codes of confidentiality when they deliver their services to individual children.

### **Professional Codes of Conduct**

Teachers are bound by their terms of contract and cannot promise students absolute confidentiality for reasons of safeguarding. Other professionals – when working with individual students – are bound by the professional codes of conduct for their role. It would be unreasonable to expect a professional to act outside his/her professional code within a school setting.

Confidentiality, in these situations, should only be breached in exceptional cases and not without first informing the student. In a classroom situation, including small group work, the school's policies and procedures apply to teachers and other professionals alike. Passing on information indiscriminately

- All staff are aware that they should not pass on information about children or their parents/carers indiscriminately.
  - Provision has been made for keeping information held in the school office confidential. All school records are kept in a lockable cabinet and held securely on the schools computer management system (SIMS)
  - Staff have considered the suitability of the surroundings and the presence of other people when they have conversations with children, parents or carers that may need to be kept confidential.

### **Confidentiality in the classroom**

All teaching will be done in a way that reaffirms respect for everyone in the school and associated with it.

The following strategies for maintaining confidentiality in a class situation will be used: Setting ground rules Teaching staff will work with pupils to develop 'ground rules' for lessons and discussions and show why these need to be agreed and respected by everybody.

For example:

- no-one – teachers or pupils – will have to answer a personal question or disclose any personal details; explain that this is a basic way of protecting ourselves and is not negotiable
- everyone has the right to 'pass' on a question if they want to

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- no-one will be forced to take part in a discussion
- everyone has the right to be listened to and have their views respected
- no teasing, jeering or bullying of any kind
- no sexual harassment will be tolerated
- if you don't want anyone to know something either talk about it as though it was someone else or don't bring it up.

### **Depersonalising**

Teaching staff will protect pupils' privacy in the class by always depersonalising discussions. Pupils can then explore the issues being raised without having their personal lives or those of their families implicated or invaded and 'used' inappropriately by other pupils. For example:

- use the 'third person' to allow pupils to keep a distance ('If you were Jamie/Sara what would you do?' rather than 'What would you do?')
- collect answers anonymously on pieces of paper so that pupils can express their feelings without risking exposure
- collect 'group' ideas without identifying individuals
- use sensitive role play to help pupils 'act out' situations and people they can identify within a 'contained' and safe way (always 'de-role' afterwards)
- provide appropriate videos and written scenarios with invented characters to encourage pupils to imagine how the people would feel, and discuss what they would do in their shoes

### **Data Protection**

Confidentiality does not just relate to disclosures of information which could have legal implications such as abuse. Staff members should not handle any confidential information carelessly as pupils and other members of staff may regard this as the norm and respond in a similar manner if a confidence is passed to them. The following measures are in place to ensure confidential information is dealt with appropriately:

- Pupil records are kept in a locked filing cabinet in the School Office. Most pupil files are retained for 7 years and then destroyed. If the records contain SEN statements or exclusion details we follow Suffolk County Council's Retention Schedule guidance.
- Pupil records or reports relating to assessment may be kept in the classroom cupboards.
- Personal pupil information is not stored in the staffroom and is not displayed on notice boards, unless the child has a medical need.
- All school staff have access to a private space where personal telephone calls can be made or taken.

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- Discussing pupil, family or other staff members' personal matters in a general way is discouraged.
  - Please refer to the school Data Protection Policy

**Dissemination of the Policy**

- Parents/carers are made aware of the school's confidentiality policy through the school website and a copy is available for parents to read in the school office.
- Parents/carers are made aware that we can never offer complete confidentiality if we deem that someone is at risk from harm.