



# South Wonston Primary School

## Confidentiality Policy

**Approved by:** Jessica Lott

**Date approved:** September 2023

**Review date:** September 2024

## **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.

## **Rationale**

South Wonston 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 implement the underlying principles of the Every Child Matters Agenda and to address the issues that 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.

**This policy should be read in association with the school adoption of practices set out in Hampshire's Manual of Personnel Practice.**

## **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 are aware of the school's confidentiality policy and procedures.
4. To ensure that parents and pupils are aware that the school has a confidentiality policy.
5. To reassure pupils that their best interests will be maintained.
6. To encourage children to talk to their parents and carers.
7. To ensure that pupils and parents/carers know that school staff cannot offer unconditional confidentiality.
8. To ensure that there is equality of provision and access for all including rigorous monitoring of cultural, gender and special educational needs.
9. To ensure that if there are child protection issues then the correct procedure is followed.
10. To ensure that confidentiality is a whole school issue and that in all activities ground rules are set for the protection of all.
11. To understand that health professionals are bound by different code of conduct.
12. 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**

### **Staff**

1. All staff can normally expect that their personal situations and health will remain confidential unless

- it impinges on their terms of contract
  - endangers children or other members of staff
  - there is a legal obligation to disclose such information
  - it is necessary for legal proceedings
  - despite the duty of confidence, the staff member's interest or the wider public interest justifies disclosure.
2. All information about individual children is private and will only be shared with those staff that have a need to know.
  3. All social 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.
  4. 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.
  5. The school continues to actively promote a positive ethos and respect for the individual:
    - a) The school has appointed a senior member of staff as Designated Safeguarding Lead and appropriate training is undertaken every two years. At South Wonston Primary School the DSL is the Headteacher and in her absence the Deputy Headteacher/Assistant Headteacher.
    - b) There is clear guidance for the handling of child protection incidents. All staff have regular training on child protection issues.
    - c) Child Protection training is part of all new staff induction within the first week of appointment.
    - d) There is clear guidance for procedures if a member of staff is accused of abuse.
    - e) 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.
    - f) Staff are aware of the need to handle all issues about different types of families in a sensitive manner.
    - g) Any intolerance about gender, faith, race, culture or sexuality is unacceptable and should follow the schools discipline procedures.
    - h) Information collected for one purpose should not be used for another.

## Parents

1. Parents/carers need to be aware that the school cannot guarantee total confidentiality and the school has a duty to report child protection issues.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. The school recognise that sometimes there may be family issues which might affect a pupil and which the family will only disclose to us if they can be sure the information will be treated confidentially. We will respect the wishes of the family and where it is felt necessary to share the information given to us, this will be discussed with the parents/carers first unless a pupil is considered to be at immediate risk and/or there is an overriding child protection/safeguarding concern.
5. Parents/carers should feel reassured that only in exceptional circumstances will confidentiality be broken.

## Children

1. Children need to be aware that the school cannot guarantee total confidentiality and the school has a duty to report child protection issues.
2. 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 under these categories but individual children must not be able to be identified.
3. Confidentiality is a whole school issue. Clear ground rules must be set for any classroom work such as circle time and other PHSE 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.
4. The School needs to be proactive so children feel supported but information must not unnecessarily be revealed in a public arena even when sensitive information appears to be widely known it must not be assumed by those immediately involved that it is appropriate to discuss or share this information further.
5. Photographs of children should not be used without parents/carers permission especially in the press and internet. This is often a cultural issue of which the school needs to be aware. At no time should 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.

6. Information about children will be shared with parents but only about their child.
  - a) As far as reasonably possible children's individual books and marks should not be viewed by other parents. However, parents should be aware that information about their child will be shared with the receiving school when they change school.
  - b) All personal information about children including social services records should be regarded as confidential. 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 a confidential manner and once read should be returned for secure filing.
  - c) Logs of administration of medication to children should be kept secure in the medical room. Each child should have their own individual log.
  - d) In all other notes, briefing sheets, memos etc a child should not be able to be identified.
  - e) Addresses and telephone numbers of parents and children will not be passed on except in exceptional circumstances or with the permission of the parent/carer or to a receiving school.

## **Governors**

1. There is a designated Safeguarding Governor who regularly monitors systems and procedures
2. Governors need to be mindful that from time to time issues are discussed or brought confidential. These confidential papers should be destroyed.
3. 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.
4. 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 arises outside the governing body.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

1. The policy will be reviewed as part of the schools monitoring cycle.
2. The PHSE 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 and reporting annually to the Governing Body.

## **Conclusion**

South Wonston 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.