

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

Aims

The aims of this policy is to ensure that every member of the Oldfield Primary School community understands how the school deals with confidential information and the varying levels of confidentiality which might be offered in different circumstances.

Oldfield Primary School is mindful that it is placed in a position of trust and that sharing information unnecessarily is an erosion of that trust. Even when sensitive information appears to be widely known, it will not be assumed by those immediately involved that it is appropriate to discuss or share this information further.

By developing a proper understanding of confidentiality, we will foster an ethos of trust within the school, where children feel able to confide in members of staff, as well as being encouraged to talk to their parents and carers. We are committed to developing creative and positive ways for the child's voice to be heard, whilst recognising the responsibility of use, hold and safeguard information received.

We aim to reassure parents and pupils that their best interests will be maintained and that all issues arising will be handled in a sensitive manner. Please refer to our Data Protection (GDPR) Policy and RBWM's Freedom of Information Policy for further details about how information is handled.

Confidentiality – Sharing Information

In a confidential relationship there is openness and agreement about what will happen to information disclosed between two, or more, people. It may not have to take the form of total secrecy. In practice there are few situations where absolute confidentiality is possible and, in many cases, only limited confidentiality can be offered. The boundaries of confidentiality must be made clear at the beginning of the conversation. If it is felt that there is a possibility of children being harmed or put in danger, the necessity to inform the Designated Lead responsible for child protection within the school will be explained. If confidentiality has to be broken, the child must be informed first and reasons given. The child must be reassured that confidential information will only be shared on a strictly need-to-know basis and only in their own best interests. If a member of the school community receives information where they believe there is a child protection issue, they should refer the case to the Mrs Catherine Pagge, the Designated Lead responsible for child protection within the school. Where any information is shared with another professional, in the interests of the child, then a record of the information and with whom it was shared will be kept in school.

Pupils

The school prides itself on good communication and staff are always available to talk to both children and parents/carers about issues that are causing concern – whatever they might be. The school encourages children to confide in parents/carers and may, in some cases support the children in this. 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 individual children should not be able to be identified and information collected for one purpose should not be used for another.

Confidentiality is a whole school issue and staff are aware that classroom work, such as circle-time and other PSHE sessions dealing with sensitive issues such as sex, relationships and drugs, can lead to disclosure of a child protection issue. If a child did begin to talk about something personal and sensitive, teaching staff would protect them from sharing such information with the group, and later encourage the child to talk about their issue in private and advise and support them accordingly.

However, 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. The school would share with parents any child protection disclosure before going on to inform the correct authorities, except where this was not in the best interests and safety of the child. The school has appointed the Headteacher, Mrs Catherine Page as Designated Lead for child protection, assisted by two deputy designated leads, Mrs Louise Greene and Mr Jamie Foreshew. There is clear guidance for the handling of child protection incidents and all staff have regular training on child protection issues. Please refer to our Safeguarding Children Policy for more detail on this. All information about individual children is private and will only be shared with those staff that have a need to know. All social services, medical and personal information about a child, including Special Education Needs paperwork, will be held in a safe and secure place which cannot be accessed by individuals other than school staff. Professionals visiting the school, such as school nurses, counsellors or advisors, for example, are bound by professional codes of conduct which uphold confidentiality, but in classroom situations they will work within the school policy. More information on this is available in the school's Data Protection (GDPR) Policy.

Parents/carers have a right of access to any records the school may hold on their child, but not to those of any other child they do not have parental responsibility for. Parents/carers should not have access to any other child's books, marks and progress grades at any time, especially at parents evening. However, parents/carers should be aware that information about their child will be shared with the receiving school when they leave. Addresses and telephone numbers of parents and children will not be passed on except in exceptional circumstances or to a receiving school.

Staff

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. Staff performance management will be carried out privately. Targets for individuals, named lesson observation sheets and other performance data will be securely stored in the Headteacher's office. A copy will also be held by the person to whom the information pertains.

All staff undertake Safeguarding and Child Protection Training on-line annually with 'The Key' at the beginning of the academic year. Staff also undertake GDPR on-line training with Data Protection Education (DPE).

Governors

Governors need to be mindful that confidential issues, about staff and children and their families, may be discussed or brought to their attention. Any sensitive correspondence should be clearly marked as 'confidential' and minuted separately. Once read, these confidential papers should be destroyed, or returned to the Chair for secure filing.

Governors serving on committees where sensitive or contentious issues about staff, children or families are discussed, should not share this information with the wider body of governors, particularly as, in the case of an Appeal or Complaint, a group of governors without any prior knowledge of the case would need to convene to hear details of it and form an unbiased opinion.

Governors must observe complete confidentiality in dealing with issues concerning individual staff, pupils and families and whenever they have been asked to do so by

the governing body. They should not share information with their family members and, with this in mind, care should be taken when making phone calls and using email.

Any governor known to have committed a breach of confidentiality may be asked to stand down. 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, and names of individuals need not be mentioned. Governors should exercise the highest degree of prudence when discussion of potentially contentious issues arises outside the governing body, being careful not to appear to give opinions on behalf of the Governing Body.

Families

We 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 and not be shared unnecessarily. We will respect the wishes of the family wherever possible, but, where it is felt necessary to share the information given to us, this will be discussed with the parent first, unless a pupil is considered to be at immediate risk and/or there is an overriding child protection concern.

Visitors to School

A 'Visitor' in this context is any person who works in school either in a paid or a voluntary capacity, for example, parent readers or music tutors. In some instances, a visitor may become privy to personal information regarding pupils, parents and staff that is of a sensitive or confidential nature.

All regular visitors to school receive Safeguarding advice through an information leaflet. This advice makes it explicit that any personal information they may come across should remain confidential and not be shared outside of school. It also gives clear guidance about what to do in the event of 'disclosure' by a child and that in these circumstances they do not guarantee confidentiality to the child and who they should speak to in these circumstances.

Parents /carers in school working as volunteers in the office, classrooms, or as part of the OSA will not report cases of poor behaviour or pupil discipline to other parents/carers. This allows the teachers to deal with such matters in line with school policy and on occasions to allow children to put the matter right without the direct involvement of their parents.

Safeguarding and Child Protection

Children cannot learn effectively if they are concerned or frightened about being abused or being the victims of violence in the home. They have a right to expect schools to provide a safe and secure environment. Any fears or worries they bring into the classroom should not go unnoticed by staff.

All child protection issues need to be referred to Mrs Page (The Safeguarding and Child Protection Lead), in accordance with the schools safeguarding and child protection policy. The school endeavors to regularly update school staff every year, via staff meetings, e-bulletins and e-mails in child protection procedures. Designated staff require formal training every year and new members of staff will be trained as a component of their induction period, either to attend offsite training or on-line as recommended by the LA.

If Mrs Page is absent then it is the staffs' direct responsibility to handle the disclosure appropriately and in accordance to the safeguarding and child protection policy. It is strongly recommended that in the absence of Mrs Catherine Page, Mrs Louise

Greene or Mr Jamie Foreshew will oversee the procedures, however it is important that the member of staff who received the disclosure understands that it is their responsibility by law to report this incident.

For all safeguarding and child protection issues please refer to the Oldfield safeguarding and child protection policy.

Fair Processing

Schools, local education authorities and the Department for Education hold information on pupils in order to run the education system, and in doing so have to follow the Data Protection Act 2018 (GDPR). This means, among other things that the data held about pupils must only be used for specific purposes allowed by law.

The **school** holds information on pupils in order to support their teaching and learning, to monitor and report on their progress, to provide appropriate pastoral care, and to assess how well the school as a whole is doing. This information includes contact details, National Curriculum assessment results, attendance information, characteristics such as ethnic group, special educational needs and any relevant medical information.

From time to time the school is required to pass on some of this data to the Local Authority (LA), to another school to which the pupil is transferring, and to the Department of Education which is responsible for the National Curriculum and associated assessment arrangements.

The **Local Authority** uses information about pupils to carry out specific functions for which it is responsible, such as the assessment of any special educational needs the pupil may have. It also uses the information to derive statistics to inform decisions on (for example) the funding of schools, and to assess the performance of schools and set targets for them. The statistics are used in such a way that individual pupils cannot be identified from them.

The Department of Education uses information about pupils for statistical purposes, to evaluate and develop education policy and to monitor the performance of the education service as a whole. The statistics are used in such a way that individual pupils cannot be identified from them. The DfE will feed back to LA's and schools with information about their pupils where they are lacking this information, because a former school did not pass it on. On occasion information may be shared with other Government departments or agencies strictly for statistical or research purposes only.

Pupils, as data subjects, have certain rights under the Data Protection Act (GDPR), including a general right of access to personal data held on them, with parents exercising this right on their behalf if they are too young to do so themselves. If a parent or guardian wishes to access the personal data held about your child, then it can be requested in writing:

- the school: Oldfield Primary School, Bray Road, Maidenhead Berks, SL6 1UE
- the school's Data Protection Officer: Satswana Limited, Suite G12, Ferneberga House, Alexandra Road, Farnborough, Hampshire GU14 6DQ: 01252 759177 : admin@satswana.com
- the DfE's Public Communications Unit at Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street London SW1P 3BT

Please note that all rights under the Data Protection Act (GDPR) to do with information about your child rest with them until they are old enough to understand these rights. This will vary from one child to another and you will wish to consider the

position for your child, but, as a broad guide, it is reckoned that most children will have a sufficient understanding by the age of 12.

Separately from the Data Protection Act (GDPR), DfE regulations provide a pupil's parent (regardless of the age of the pupil) with the right to view, or to have a copy of, their child's educational record at the school. If you wish to exercise this right you should write to the school.

Related Policies

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Drug Education Policy

Staff Code of Conduct

This policy is to be reviewed bi-annually.