



St. Martin's Primary School Confidentiality Policy

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, parents/carers and staff.

Rationale

- St. Martin's 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 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

- To provide consistent messages in school about handling information about children once it has been received.
- To foster an ethos of trust within the school.
- To ensure that staff, parents and children are aware of the school's confidentiality policy and procedures.
- To reassure children that their best interests will be maintained.
- To encourage children to talk to their parents and carers.
- To ensure that children and parents/carers know that school staff cannot offer unconditional confidentiality.
- To ensure that there is equality of provision and access for all.
- To ensure that if there are child protection issues then the correct procedures are followed.
- To ensure that confidentiality is a whole school issue and that in lessons ground rules are set for the protection of all.
- To understand that health professionals are bound by different code of conduct.
- 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

- All information about individual children is private and is only shared with those staff that have a need to know.
- All social services, medical and personal information about a child is held in a safe and secure place which cannot be accessed by individuals other than school staff. Information collected for one purpose is not used for another.
- The Headteacher is the Child Protection Officer and she receives regular training.
- Child protection procedures are understood by staff and training is undertaken regularly for all staff.
- There is clear guidance for the handling of child protection incidents. And all staff have regular training on child protection issues.
- 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 schools discipline policy.
- There is clear guidance for procedures if a member of staff is accused of abuse or inappropriate conduct.
- 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 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.
- Parents/carers and children should feel reassured that in exceptional circumstances confidentiality will be broken.
- 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.
- Confidentiality is a whole school issue. Clear ground rules are set for any classroom work such as circle time and other PHSCE session dealing with sensitive issues such as sex and relationship and drugs.
- The school is proactive in ensuring that children feel supported and know that 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.
- 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

Children's photographs should not be used in a medical room identifying their medical need without parental consent

- Photographs of children should not be used without parents/carers permission especially in the press and internet. 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.
- Information about children will be shared with parents but only about their child. Parents do not have access to any other child's books, marks and progress grades at any time. 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 is 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 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.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- This policy will be reviewed as part of the schools monitoring cycle.
- The PHSCE scheme of work, Sex and Relationship policy and Drug Policy will enable identified opportunities to deliver aspects of this policy in specified year groups.
- The Head teacher has responsibility for monitoring this policy.

Conclusion

St Martin's 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.

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