



Highbury Primary School

‘Valued as Individuals, Inspired and Nurtured as Learners’

Respect, Resilience, Confidence, Kindness, Inclusive, Aspiration

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 pupils, parents/carers and staff.

Rationale

Highbury 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 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 school 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 SEND.

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.
12. To ensure that anyone who works in the school, either paid or as a volunteer does not repeat knowledge about a child to anyone outside the school.
13. To ensure that anyone who works in the school, either paid or as a volunteer knows when to pass information on and to whom.

Guidelines

1. All information about individual children is private and should only be shared with those members of staff that 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.
 - a) The school has four named Designated Safeguarding Leads who receive regular training.
 - b) There is clear guidance for the handling of child protection/safeguarding incidents and all staff have regular training on child protection issues.
 - c) There is clear guidance for procedures if a member of staff is accused of abuse.
 - d) Staff are aware that effective Relationship and Sex Education which brings an understanding of what is and is not acceptable in a relationship, can lead to disclosure of a child protection issue.
 - e) Staff are aware of the need to handle all issues about different types of families in a sensitive manner.
 - f) Any intolerance about gender, faith, race, culture, special educational needs or sexuality is unacceptable and should follow the school's discipline policy.
 - g) Information collected for one purpose should not be used for another.
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.
5. The school prides itself on good communication with parents and carers and members of staff are 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 unless they were specifically implicated before going on to inform the correct authorities.
6. Parents/carers and children should feel reassured that only 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 individual children should not be able to be identified.
8. Confidentiality is a whole school issue. Clear ground rules must be set for any classroom work such as circle time and other PHSCE sessions dealing with sensitive issues such as Relationships and Sex 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. The school needs to be able 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 be assumed by those immediately involved that it is appropriate to discuss or share this information further.
9. 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 in the classroom or corridor areas.
10. 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 unless permission has been sought from the parent. The school gives clear guidance to parents about the use of cameras and videos during public school events.
11. Information about children will be shared with parents and carers **but only about their child**. Parents and carers should not have access to any other child's books, marks and progress grades at any time especially at parents and carers evening. However, parents should be aware that information about their child will be shared with the receiving school or academy 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**.

In all other notes, briefing sheets etc a child should not be able to be identified. Addresses and telephone numbers of parents/carers and children will not be passed on except in exceptional circumstances or to a receiving school or academy. All parents who work in the school are bound by the confidentiality policy. Any knowledge about a child should be kept in the school and not repeated to any other parent/carer, even if a parent /carer asks for this information. For example, Parents in school, working as volunteers do not report cases of poor behaviour or pupil discipline to other parents in the school. This allows teachers to deal with such matters in line with school policy.

When volunteers, such as parents and friends of the school, are working in classes they do not discuss educational matters outside the classroom. For example, the specific use of teaching assistant time for particular pupils or groups of pupils. Teaching assistants have different roles within a class, including the support of children with special educational needs. The provision and work with these children is for the teacher to discuss with the relevant parents or carers.

12. Governors need to be mindful that from time to time issues are discussed or brought to their attention about staff and children. All such papers should be marked as confidential. These confidential papers should be collected and destroyed. 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/carers.

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. Matters such as pupil exclusion, personnel issues and personal details of any member of the school community will be dealt with in the headteacher's Report anonymously. This is not for the knowledge of persons outside the Governing Body meeting. Governors should exercise the highest degree of prudence when discussion of potentially contentious issues arises outside the governing body.

13. At all times confidentiality needs to be respected. Discussions about children or parents/carers should not be taking place in an unprofessional way in an unprofessional setting eg. Outside the school, in thoroughfares within the school. This may result in action brought against an individual or the school. (i.e. liable).

Members of staff do not discuss details of individual cases arising in staff meetings to any person without direct professional connection to and interest in the welfare and education of the individual concerned.

No member of staff discusses an individual child's behaviour in the presence of another child in school.

Members of staff do not enter into detailed discussion about a child's behaviour with other children or their parents.

Staff performance management will be carried out privately. Targets for individuals, named lesson observation sheets and other performance data will be in the headteacher's office.

Monitoring and Evaluation

1. The policy will be reviewed as part of the schools monitoring cycle (annually).
2. The PSHCE topics and opportunities and the skills progression, Relationship and Sex Policy and Drug Policy will enable identified opportunities to deliver aspects of this policy in specified year groups.
3. The Head teacher has responsibility for monitoring this policy.

Conclusion

Highbury 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.

November 2023

Review: November 2024