



Sir Alexander Fleming Primary School and Nursery

Confidentiality Policy for all Staff and Governors at Sir Alexander Fleming Primary School

Reviewed September 2021
Next Review September 2023

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

Sir Alexander Fleming Primary School and Nursery seeks to put the child at the heart of the learning process and to provide a safe and secure learning environment. 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 by all members of our school community.

All colleagues and Governors of Sir Alexander Fleming Primary School and Nursery are in a position where information about families and children may be shared with them and it must be made absolutely clear that this is confidential and is not to be discussed with anyone outside of our workplace.

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 between all stakeholders.
- To ensure that staff, including Governors are aware of the impact of posting confidential material / information on Social Media sites (see Social Media Policy)
- To ensure that staff, including Governors, parents and pupils are aware of the school's confidentiality policy and procedures.

- To ensure that all staff, including Governors, develop effective professional relationships with colleagues; all staff are expected to demonstrate consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct. Teachers uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by treating everyone with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher's professional position.
- To reassure pupils that their best interests will be maintained.
- To encourage children to talk to their parents and carers.
- To ensure that pupils and parents/carers know that school staff cannot offer unconditional confidentiality.
- To ensure that there is equality of provision and access for all including rigorous monitoring of cultural, gender and special educational needs.
- To ensure that if there are child protection issues then the correct procedure is 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 a different code of conduct.
- To ensure that parents with parental responsibility 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. (Parents request records through the Headteacher in writing)

Guidelines

All information about individual children is **private** and should only be shared with those staff that need to know (SLT, Inclusion, Teacher, TA). In our different remits in school, we will have access to different levels of information, however at any level this information should be kept private.

It is our school policy that all adults that work closely with vulnerable children should have access to information in order to help safeguard them to the highest standard. The Headteacher, Deputy DSLs, class teachers, nurture leaders and pastoral support will have access to the highest level of information relating to children that they work alongside.

Teaching Assistants, who work at a class level, will have basic information shared with them by their class teachers.

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.

The school continues to actively promote a positive ethos and respect for the individual:

- The school has appointed **1** Lead Designated Safeguarding Lead and **6** Deputy Safeguarding Leads who are designated staff for child protection who receive regular training.
- There is clear guidance for the handling of child protection incidents, and all staff have regular training on child protection issues – 'Raising Awareness' and updates from the Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs).
- There is clear guidance for procedures if a member of staff is accused of abuse.
- 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.
- Information collected for one purpose should not be used for another.

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 unless discussion with parents will be deemed to put the child at further risk.

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. Much 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 must be set for any classroom work such as circle time and other PHSE/SMSC session 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. School needs 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 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 but not on general view to other parents/carers and children.

Photographs of children should not be used without parents/carers permission especially in the press and internet. This is often a cultural issue that 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. Children's photographs should not be used in a medical room identifying their medical need without consent from parents. 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 should not have access to any other child's books, marks and progress grades at any time especially at parent consultations. 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 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, SEND reports, SEND 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.

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 handed back in at the meeting or 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.

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.

Staff are aware of their duty of care and confidentiality out of school and if they cease employment at the school. No member of our school team should discuss any child, family or member of staff out of school with anyone, even if that person is an employee of this school – this would be a breach of trust and therefore disciplinary procedures will be followed.

Documents (letters, writing stimuli, photographs, examples of work, samples of teachers work) that are deemed to be the property of the school should not be taken out of the school building unless the permission of the Headteacher has been sought.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The policy will be reviewed as part of the schools monitoring cycle. The Head teacher has responsibility for monitoring this policy and ensures that all staff sign a confidentiality statement when they join the staff team.

Conclusion

Sir Alexander Fleming Primary School & Nursery along with the Governors have 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.