



CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

(part of our Safeguarding Children policies)

Statement of intent

It is our intention to respect the privacy of children and their parents and carers, while ensuring that they access high quality care and education in our school.

Aim

We aim to ensure that all parents and carers can share their information in the confidence that it will only be used to enhance the welfare of their children.

Methods

We keep two kinds of records on children attending our school:

1. **Developmental records**

- a. **Foundation Stage:** Individual Pupil Record of Achievement (Green Files)
- b. **Years 1 – 6:** Pupil Record of Achievement file.

- These include observations of children attending the school, samples of their work, levelled assessments, summary developmental reports and records of achievement etc.
- They are usually kept in the school office and can be accessed, and contributed to, by staff, the child and the child's parents.

2. **Personal Pupil records**

- These include registration and admission forms, signed consents, and correspondence concerning the child or family, reports or minutes from meetings concerning the child from other agencies, an ongoing record of relevant contact with parents, and observations by staff on any confidential matter involving the child, such as developmental concerns. Child Protection records are kept in a separate confidential Child Protection file, accessible only to the Headteacher and Child Protection Officer (if different).
- These confidential records are stored in a lockable file or cabinet and are kept secure by the Headteacher in an office or other suitably safe place.
- Parents have access, in accordance with the access to records procedure, to the files and records of their own children but do not have access to information about any other child.
- Staff will not discuss personal information given by parents with other members of staff, except where it affects planning for the child's needs. Staff induction includes an awareness of the importance of confidentiality in the role of all staff.
- Breach of this confidentiality policy is considered as staff misconduct in the staff disciplinary procedures.

Other records

- Issues to do with the employment of staff, whether paid or unpaid, remain confidential to the people directly involved with making personnel decisions.
- Students on placement and volunteers (including parents) are advised of our confidentiality policy and required to respect it.

Access to personal records

Parents may request access to any records held on their child and family following the procedure below.

- Any request to see a child's personal file by a parent or person with parental responsibility must be made in writing to the Headteacher.
- The Headteacher informs the chairperson of the governors and sends a written acknowledgement.
- We commit to providing access within 14 days - although this may be extended.
- The Headteacher and where appropriate, another senior member of staff (eg the SENCO) prepare the file for viewing.
- All third parties are written to, stating that a request for disclosure has been received and asking for their permission to disclose to the person requesting it. Copies of these letters are retained on the file.
- 'Third parties' include all family members who may be referred to in the records.
- It also includes workers from any other agency, including social services, the health authority, etc. It is usual for agencies to refuse consent to disclose, preferring the individual to go directly to them.
- When all the consents/refusals to disclose have been received these are attached to the copy of the request letter.
- A photocopy of the complete file is taken.
- The Headteacher and where appropriate, another senior member of staff (eg the SENCO) go through the file and remove any information which a third party has refused consent to disclose. This is best done with a thick black marker, to score through every reference to the third party and information they have added to the file.
- What remains is the information recorded by the school, detailing the work initiated and followed by them in relation to confidential matters. This is called the 'clean copy'.
- The 'clean copy' is photocopied for the parents who are then invited in to discuss the contents. The file should never be given straight over, but should be gone through by the Headteacher (or suitable alternative eg the SENCO), so that it can be explained properly to the child's parents.
- Legal advice may be sought before sharing a file, especially where a parent has possible grounds for litigation against the setting or another (third party) agency.

All the undertakings above are subject to the paramount commitment of our school, which is to the safety and well-being of all the children. Please see also our policy on Child Protection.

Sara Harris (Headteacher) June 2007

Signed: Sara J. Harris (Headteacher) Eddy Breuer-Weil (Chair of Governors)