

Cotgrave Church of England Primary School



CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

Reviewed	Spring 2011	Spring 2021		
	Spring 2013	Spring 2023		
	Spring 2017	Autumn		
	Spring 2018			
	Spring 2019			

Cotgrave Church of England Primary School

Confidentiality Policy

Introduction

At Cotgrave Church of England Primary we endeavour, through our confidentiality policy, to protect the child at all times and to give 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. This policy is written as an expression of the school's Christian ethos, duty of care and responsibility towards children, parents/carers and staff.

Objectives

- To provide consistent messages in school about handling information about children.
- 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 the school cannot offer unconditional confidentiality.
- To ensure that there is equality of provision and access for all.
- To ensure that confidentiality is a whole school issue and that in lessons ground rules are set for the protection of all.
- To ensure that parents have a right of access to any records the school may hold on their own child but not to any other child that they do not have parental responsibility for.

Guidelines

1. The school actively promotes a distinctive, positive, Christian, family ethos: recognising that each individual is unique, important, of immeasurable value and is made in the image of God.
2. All information about individuals is private and should only be shared with those staff that have a need to know.
3. 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 relevant school staff.
4. The school has appointed designated safeguarding leads for child protection who receive regular training.
5. There is clear guidance for the handling of child protection incidents, with all staff receiving regular training.
6. There is clear guidance for procedures if a member of staff is accused of abuse.
7. Staff are aware that programmes of work for Relationships and Sex Education may bring an understanding of what is and what is not acceptable in a relationship, and can lead to disclosure of a child protection issue.
8. Staff are aware of the need to handle issues about different types of families in a highly sensitive manner.
9. Any intolerance regarding gender, faith, race, culture or sexuality is unacceptable and should be dealt with through the school's discipline policy.
10. Information collected for one purpose should not be used for another.
11. Parents/carers and children need to be aware that school cannot guarantee total confidentiality and that the school has a duty to report child protection issues.

12. Parents/carers and children should feel reassured that in exceptional circumstances confidentiality will be broken.
13. The school prides itself on good communication with parents/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 child to talk to their parents.
14. All children have a right to the same level of confidentiality irrespective of gender, race, religion, medical concerns, financial circumstances or special educational needs/disabilities. A lot of data is generated in schools by these categories but individual children should not be able to be identified.
15. Confidentiality is a whole school issue. Clear ground rules must be set for any classroom work such as circle time or other PSHCE work dealing with sensitive issues, such as Relationships and Sex Education or Drug Education work. 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 issues. School needs to be proactive so that children feel supported but information is not unnecessarily revealed in a public arena.
16. 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.
17. Health professionals have their own code of practice for dealing with confidentiality, but as with all outside agencies, information should be shared on a professional basis.
18. Staff should be aware of children with medical needs and that any class information sheets should be accessible only to staff who need that information but not on general view to other parents/carers or children.
19. Photographs of children should not be used without the permission of the child's parent/carer, especially in the press and on the internet. At no time should any child's name be associated with that child's photograph so that they could be identified. The school gives clear guidance to parents about the use of cameras and videos during public school events.
20. Children's photographs should not be used in 'public' areas such as the staff room or any other area of school to identify a child's medical need.
21. Information about children will be shared with parents but only about their child. Parents should never have access to any other child's books, marks and progress grades at any time. On parents' evenings each child's books will be available in their named trays, with staff present maintaining oversight of the books. Reminders as to the confidentiality of other children's books will be given where appropriate. Parents need to be aware that information about their child will be shared with the receiving school when they change schools.
22. All personal information about children, including social services records, should be regarded as confidential. This 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.
23. Information regarding health reports such as speech therapy, medical reports, SEND reports, minutes of SEND meetings and social services minutes/reports should be circulated in envelopes and once read should be returned for secure filing.
24. Parents must be made aware, prior to discussion about an individual child at Family Springboard Meetings, that when they give consent for discussion they are giving consent for the school to discuss their child with staff from the Education, Standards & Inclusion group of services, including teachers, teaching assistants and educational psychologists. Parents should be informed that where their child is to be discussed within the context of Springboard meetings, other relevant professionals, including SENCOs from other schools in the Family of Schools may also be involved in the discussion.

25. Logs of administration of medication to children should be kept secure and each child should have their own individual log.
26. In all other notes, briefing sheets, staff meeting minutes, etc, a child should not be able to be directly identified.
27. Addresses, email addresses and telephone numbers of parents and children will not be passed on except in exceptional circumstances or to a receiving school.
28. Governors need to be mindful that from time to time issues are discussed or brought to their attention about staff and children. Any relevant papers should be marked as confidential (and where possible copied on paper of a different colour). These confidential papers should be destroyed after use, with Governors observing complete confidentiality when asked to do so by the Governing Body, especially in matters concerning individual staff, children or parents/carers.
29. Although decisions reached at Governing Body meetings are normally made public through the minutes or otherwise, the discussion on which decisions are based should be regarded as confidential - with Governors exercising the highest degree of prudence when discussion of potentially contentious issues arises outside of the Governing Body.

Review

All policies are subject to periodic evaluation and update.

Reviewed Autumn Term 2023