



# Hayesdown First School

## Confidentiality Policy

### Rationale

At Hayesdown First School we seek to provide a safe and secure learning environment for children and to place them at the heart of the learning process. We are committed to developing positive ways for the child's voice to be heard, whilst recognising the professional responsibility we have, to use, hold and safeguard information received.

The school is aware that it is placed in a position of trust by all stakeholders and there is an expectation that a professional approach will be adopted in all matters of confidentiality; sharing information unnecessarily is an erosion of trust.

### Aim

The aim of our Confidentiality Policy is to protect the child at all times and to give staff clear, unambiguous guidance as to their professional roles in relation to confidentiality. The policy ensures that there is consistent practice across the school and that this practice is understood by staff, governors, adult volunteers, pupils and parents/carers.

### Objectives

- To foster an ethos of trust within the school
- To provide consistent messages in school about handling information about children once it has been received
- To ensure that staff, adult volunteers, parents/carers and pupils are aware of the school's confidentiality policy and procedures
- To reassure pupils that their best interests will be maintained
- To encourage children to talk to their parents/carers
- To ensure that pupils and parents/carers know that staff cannot offer unconditional confidentiality and that the school has a duty to report child protection issues
- To ensure that where there are child protection issues, correct procedures are followed
- To ensure that confidentiality is a whole school issue and that during teaching time, ground rules are set for the protection of all
- To ensure that parents/carers have a right of access to any records that the school may hold on their child, but not to any child that they do not have parental responsibility for.

### Guidelines

To ensure that all those using and working in the school can do so with confidence, we will respect confidentiality in the following ways:

- All information about individual children is private and must only be shared with those staff that have a need to know.
- The school continues to promote actively a positive ethos and respect for the individual:
  - The school has appointed Designated Safeguarding Leads who have responsibility for safeguarding/child protection and receive regular training; there is clear guidance for the handling of child protection issues and all staff undertake regular training in accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2018;

- 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 child protection issues;
- 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 all incidents will be dealt with and reported using Local Authority reporting arrangements;
- Information collected for one purpose will not be used for another.
- All records of a 'protected' nature are stored in a secure area, with safeguards in place to minimise loss, unauthorised access and use, modification or misuse.
- Parents/carers and children need to be aware that the school has a duty to report child protection issues.
- The school prides itself on its good links and 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 such issues and may in some cases, support children in talking to their parents. The school will share with parents/carers any child protection disclosure before informing an appropriate authority, **unless this is deemed to put the child at greater risk.**
- We will endeavour to conduct meetings/interviews in a private place. Matters of a confidential nature should never take place in a public area or in front of pupils.
- Any expressed concerns or evidence relating to a child's personal safety will be kept in a 'protected' file (please see the school's Safeguarding Policy).
- Information given by a parent/carer to the Head/classteacher will not be passed to other adults without permission. All information concerning pupils is entrusted to the school in confidence. All personal information about the pupil is regarded as private, and staff will not pass it on indiscriminately.
- All children have the right to the same level of confidentiality irrespective of gender, race, religion, medical concerns and special educational needs.
- Confidentiality is a whole school issue; ground rules must be set for any teaching time that deals with sensitive issues such as sex and relationships or drugs education. Children must be aware of the strategies in place for dealing with sensitive information, which may fall outside the boundaries of child protection procedures. Children need to feel supported so that information is not unnecessarily revealed in a public arena.
- Staff need to be aware of children with medical needs; an information sheet is kept in the class information file and High Needs Medical folders.
- Photographs and digital images of children will not be used without parent/carer permission. A permission letter is sent home each academic year for parents/carers to complete.
- Information about children will be shared with parents/carers, but only about their child. Parents/carers should not have access to, or information about, another child's learning or behaviour, unless they are volunteers in school. If this is the case, they must adhere to this policy and not share any information with other parents under any circumstances.
- 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 Children's Social Care records, should be regarded as 'protected' and will be kept in a secure filing cabinet in the main school office.
- Unless there are exceptional circumstances, contact details of parents/carers will only be passed on to a receiving school or in response to information that can legally be requested under the Freedom Of Information Act.
- 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 in the public domain, discussions on which these decisions are made should be regarded as confidential.

- All adults working in school in a paid or voluntary capacity will have an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau check, will be advised of our Confidentiality Policy and will be expected to respect it.
- Visitors to school should be made aware of this policy and the importance of maintaining a professional approach to confidentiality. Supply teachers, students, work experience students and adult volunteers receive guidelines for working in the school and the issue of confidentiality is mentioned specifically.

### **Conclusion**

Hayesdown First School has a duty of care and responsibility towards pupils, parents/carers and staff. It also works with a range of outside agencies and shares information on a professional basis. The care and safety of the individual is the key issue behind this policy.

This policy needs to be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Anti Bullying Policy
- Equalities Policy
- Sex and Relationships Education Policy
- Data Protection and Freedom of Information Policy
- Information Sharing Protocol and Guidance for Agencies Working with Children and Young People

Date agreed by Full Governing Body: **06.07.22**

Review by Local Governing Body: **06.07.22**

Signed (Chair of Governors):



Review due: July 2025