

Chapel Street Primary School



Confidentiality Policy

Prepared by: One Education
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Signed by:

Headteacher:

Chair of Governors:

This policy and procedure has been produced by One Education’s HR and People service. The HR and People team provides management and HR support and advice to schools and academies purchasing their services under an agreed Service Agreement. For further information please contact the HR and People team via the HROne Helpline: 0844 967 1112 (local rate from landline) or HROne Helpline Email: hrpeople@oneeducation.co.uk Website: www.oneeducation.co.uk

This document is recommended for adoption by all maintained schools including community, voluntary controlled, community special, maintained nursery, foundation, foundation special and voluntary aided schools. This document is also recommended for adoption by academies and free schools (modified as appropriate and taking into account the particular circumstances of the relevant academy or free school). References in this document to schools include a reference to academies and free schools unless otherwise stated, references to the Headteacher include a reference to an academy or free school Principal and reference to the Governing Body include a reference to the Trust-Board of an academy, multi-academy trust or a free school as appropriate.

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Under the public sector equality duty, all schools/academies must have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010; to advance equality of opportunity between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it and to foster good relations across all protected characteristics. This means schools/academies must take into account equality considerations when policies are being developed, adopted and implemented. The HR and People team regularly reviews all policies and procedures which are recommended to schools/academies to ensure compliance with education and employment legislation including the Equality Act 2010. Consultation with schools/academies is an important part of this review process. Headteachers, Principals and Governing Bodies are asked to contact the HR and People team via the HROne Helpline if they believe there are any negative equality impacts in their school/academy in relation to the application of this policy/procedure.

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1. Aims

- 1.1 The aim of this policy is to provide every member of the school community with clear guidance in regards to how the school deals with confidential information and the varying levels of confidentiality which might be offered in different circumstances.
- 1.2 The school is mindful that it is placed in a position of trust and that sharing information unnecessarily is an erosion of that trust. Even when sensitive information appears to be widely known, it will not be assumed by those immediately involved that it is appropriate to discuss or share this information further.
- 1.3 By developing a proper understanding of confidentiality we will foster an ethos of trust within the school, where pupils feel able to confide in members of staff, as well as being encouraged to talk to their parents and carers. We are committed to developing creative and positive ways for the pupil's voice to be heard, whilst recognising the responsibility to use, hold and safeguard information received.
- 1.4 We aim to reassure every member of the school community that their best interests will be maintained and that all issues arising will be handled in a sensitive manner.
- 1.5 This Confidentiality Policy impacts upon every other school policy.

2. Moral and values framework

- 2.1 The moral and values framework within which confidentiality is addressed are consistent with the overarching aims and ethos of the school and should be easily translated into practice in terms of:
 - The curriculum content
 - The teaching methods
 - The relationships within the school

3. Types of confidential information

- 3.1 Information that is regarded as confidential can relate to:-

1. A variety of people, e.g.

- Pupils;
- Parents;
- Staff/colleagues;
- Governors;
- Job applicants;
- Contractors;
- Visitors.

2. A variety of matters, e.g.

- Home addresses and telephone numbers
- Conduct and performance
- Performance & development review/appraisals
- Health/medical
- Pay and contracts
- References
- Internal minutes, memo's etc.
- Confidential budgetary or policy information
- Other personal information;

3.2 These lists are not exhaustive but will extend to cover any other information of a sensitive nature relating to employees, pupils and others connected with the school community and to the work of the school itself.

4. Potential recipients of information

4.1 Within the course of daily operation, information related to the school, or those connected to the school, may be requested by, or supplied by, or passed to a range of people. This might include:

- internal colleagues (teachers, support staff, governors);
- colleagues in other schools;
- management teams;
- pupils;
- governors;
- trade unions/professional associations;

- parents;
- partner organisations (LA, DfE, Teachers' Pensions);
- other external organisations;
- the public;
- the press;
- contractors/potential contractors;
- service providers.

4.2 Therefore great care must be taken by both the recipient and the supplier of information to ensure that it is dealt with in a sensitive manner.

5. The form confidential information can take

5.1 Confidential information can take various forms and may be held and transmitted in a variety of ways, e.g.

- manual records (files);
- computerised records, disks and memory sticks;
- written reports/minutes/agendas/file notes etc.;
- letters, memos, messages;
- telephone calls;
- face-to-face;
- fax;
- Email;
- Intranet/internet

6. Particular responsibilities of staff members

6.1 If someone requesting information is not known to staff, particularly in the case of telephone calls, his/her identity and the legitimacy of his/her request should be verified by calling them back. A person with genuine reasons for seeking information will never mind this safety measure.

6.2 Wherever possible, a response to requests for information should only be given when the request has been made in writing e.g. employee references.

6.3 The same principle applies when sending e-mails, faxes or other electronic communications. Staff should always check that the information is going to the correct person and is marked confidential where appropriate.

- 6.4 Being known as an employee of the school may mean being asked for information, for instance, by parents about a member of staff who is off sick. Although this can be awkward, parents must be informed that employees are unable to discuss confidential school matters. Persistent enquiries should be referred to the Headteacher.
- 6.5 The Data Protection Act refers to the principle of third party confidentiality. Information relating to, or provided by, a third party should not be released without the written consent of the third party or unless an order for disclosure is made by a court of competent jurisdiction.
- 6.6 Where they are unsure what to do, staff must refer the matter to the Headteacher or, in the absence of the Headteacher, the Deputy Headteacher, for guidance. Where necessary the Headteacher will seek advice from the school's HR provider.

7. Consequences of revealing confidential information without authority

- 7.1 Staff should ensure that they are familiar with this Confidentiality Policy and related Policies. While there is an expectation that staff will use their professional discretion in applying the Policy, they should always seek advice from the Headteacher where they are unsure.
- 7.2 Staff should be aware that breaches of the Policy may result in disciplinary action being taken. The severity of the sanction will be assessed with regard to the potential harm the disclosure could have caused to the individual concerned. Some breaches of confidentiality could be regarded as potential serious or gross misconduct that could result in dismissal.

8. Confidentiality and pupils

- 8.1 The school prides itself on good communication and staff are always available to talk to both pupils and parents/carers about issues that are causing concern – whatever they might be. The school encourages pupils to confide in parents/carers and may in some cases support the children in this.
- 8.2 All pupils 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 pupils should not be able to be identified and information collected for one purpose must not be used for another.

- 8.3 Confidentiality is a whole school issue and staff are aware that classroom work, such as circle-time and other PSHCE sessions dealing with sensitive issues such as sex, relationships and drugs, can lead to disclosure of a safeguarding issue.
- 8.4 If a pupil begins to talk about something personal and sensitive, teaching staff should protect them from sharing such information with the group, and later encourage the child to talk about their issue in private with appropriate advice and support.
- 8.5 However, parents/carers and pupils need to be aware that the school cannot guarantee total confidentiality and the school has a duty to report safeguarding issues. The school would share with parents any safeguarding disclosure before going on to inform the correct authorities, except where this is not in the best interests in the safety of the child. The school has appointed a senior member of staff as Designated Lead for safeguarding. There is clear guidance for the handling of safeguarding incidents and all staff have regular training on safeguarding issues. Please refer to our Safeguarding Children Policy for more detail on this.
- 8.6 **All** information about individual pupils is private and will only be shared with those staff that have a need to know. All social services, medical and personal information about a pupil, including Special Education Needs paperwork, will be held in a safe and secure place which cannot be accessed by individuals other than school staff. Professionals visiting the school, such as school nurses, counsellors or advisors for example, are bound by professional codes of conduct which uphold confidentiality, but in classroom situations will work within the school policy.
- 8.7 Parents have a right of access to any records the school may hold on their child, but not to those of any other child they do not have parental responsibility for. Parents should not have access to any other pupil's books, marks or progress grades at any time, especially at parents evening. However, parents should be aware that information about their child will be shared with the receiving school when they move from one school to another. Addresses and telephone numbers of parents and children will not be passed on except in exceptional circumstances or to a receiving school.
- 8.8 Full names of pupils will never be publicised alongside photographs of pupils in the press or on the web-site/internet unless prior, written express consent has been obtained from the parent/carer.

9. Confidentiality – sharing information

- 9.1 In a confidential relationship there is openness and agreement about what will happen to information disclosed between two, or more, people. It may not have to take the form of total secrecy. In practice there are few situations where absolute confidentiality is possible and, in many cases, only limited confidentiality can be offered. The boundaries of confidentiality must be made clear at the beginning of the conversation
- 9.2 If it is felt that there is a possibility of a child or children being harmed or put in danger, the necessity to inform the Designated Lead responsible for safeguarding within the school will be explained
- 9.3 If confidentiality has to be broken, the pupil must be informed first and reasons given. The pupil must be reassured that confidential information will only be shared on a strictly need-to-know basis and only in their own best interests.
- 9.4 If a member of the school community receives information where they believe there is a safeguarding issue, they **must** refer the case to the Designated Lead responsible for safeguarding within the school.
- 9.5 Where any information is shared with another professional, in the interests of the pupil, then a record of the information and with whom it was shared will be kept in school

10. Confidentiality - social media and public forums

- 10.1 The school recognises that the Internet provides a unique opportunity to participate in interactive discussions and share information using a wide variety of social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, and blogs. However, the use of social media can present risks to our confidential information, reputation, and can jeopardise our compliance with legal obligations.
- 10.2 Therefore it is not permitted for any member of the school community to publish, post or release any information that is considered confidential or not public about the school on social media without the express authority to do so from the Headteacher.
- 10.3 Members of the school community should also be mindful that comments/conversations made/had outside of the school grounds (in public arenas) do not remain private and so can have an effect on or have school related

implications. Therefore comments made in a public setting, which may have been intended to be 'private' may still be in contravention of this policy.

11. Confidentiality and staff

- 11.1 All staff can expect that their personal situations and health will remain confidential, unless it impinges on their terms of contract or endangers pupils or other members of staff.
- 11.2 Staff appraisal will be carried out privately. Objectives for individuals, named lesson observation sheets and other appraisal data will be securely stored.. A copy will also be held by the person to whom the information pertains.

12. Confidentiality and governors

- 12.1 Governors need to be mindful that confidential issues, about staff and pupils and their families, may be discussed or brought to their attention. Any sensitive correspondence should be clearly marked as 'confidential' and minuted separately. Once read, these confidential papers should be destroyed, or returned to the Chair/Clerk for secure filing.
- 12.2 Governors serving on committees where sensitive or contentious issues about staff, pupils or families are discussed, must not share this information with the wider body of governors, particularly as, in the case of an Appeal or Complaint, a group of governors without any prior knowledge of the case would need to convene to hear details of it and form an unbiased opinion.
- 12.3 Governors must observe complete confidentiality in dealing with issues concerning individual staff, pupils and families and whenever they have been asked to do so by the governing body. They should not share information with their family members and, with this in mind, care should be taken when making phone calls and using email or other electronic communications.
- 12.4 Any governor known to have committed a breach of confidentiality may be asked to stand down.
- 12.5 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, and names of individuals need not be mentioned.
- 12.6 Governors should exercise the highest degree of prudence when discussion of potentially contentious issues arises outside the governing body, being careful not to appear to give opinions on behalf of the Governing Body.

13. Confidentiality and families

- 13.1 It is recognised that sometimes there may be family issues which might affect a pupil and which the family will only disclose if they can be sure the information will be treated confidentially and not be shared unnecessarily. The wishes of the family will be respected wherever possible, but, where it is felt necessary to share the information given, this will be discussed with the parent first, unless a pupil is considered to be at immediate risk and/or there is an overriding safeguarding concern.

14. Confidentiality and visitors

- 14.1 A 'Visitor' in this context includes any person who works in school either in a paid or a voluntary capacity, for example, parent readers or music tutors. In some instances, a visitor may become privy to personal information regarding pupils, parents and staff that is of a sensitive or confidential nature.
- 14.2 All regular visitors to school will receive Safeguarding Advice from the office. This advice makes it explicit that any personal information they may come across should remain confidential and not be shared outside of school. It also gives clear guidance about what to do in the event of 'disclosure' by a pupil and that in these circumstances they do not guarantee confidentiality to the child and who they should speak to in these circumstances.
- 14.3 Parents in school working as volunteers in the office, classrooms, or as part of the School Association will not report cases of poor behaviour or pupil discipline to other parents. This allows the teachers to deal with such matters in line with school policy and on occasions to allow pupil to put the matter right without the direct involvement of their parents.
- 14.4 All visitors are made aware of our Visitor and Volunteer Agreement (See Appendix 1)

Visitor and Volunteer Agreement

Chapel Street Primary School welcomes visitors and volunteers to our school and we hope you will enjoy your experience here. The school expects visitors and volunteers to support us in delivering our ethos, aims and values and ensuring a safe learning environment for our pupils by adhering to the terms of this Visitor and Volunteer Agreement.

Ethos, aims and values

Our mission is to create and sustain a caring and supportive community, dedicated to providing education of a very high standard where all children, staff, parents and governors work together and feel valued.

We Aim for All of Our Children to:

- enjoy coming to school, on time, every day
- feel safe and secure, both in their physical environment and in the relationships they build
- respect and value themselves, other people and the environment, through developing personal attributes such as friendliness, kindness, generosity and empathy
- develop in mind, body and spirit, becoming resilient, optimistic and self-motivated
- develop a lifelong enthusiasm and desire for learning, achieving the highest possible attainment through high quality teaching
- experience a curriculum which is:
 - rich in content; rooted in first-hand experiences; very responsive to individual need; creative; supportive of all learning styles; sharply focused; challenging; progressive; genuinely cross-curricular
- grow into strong, independent and collaborative learners
- develop their capacity to learn and to take risks in an environment in which they are not afraid to make mistakes
- understand their own and others' strengths and their personal and academic targets

- take responsibility for their own actions, their impact upon others and to make informed choices
- make a positive contribution as citizens of the wider world
- be proud of themselves, their peers and their school

We value:

- support, encouragement and guidance for every child, nurturing confidence, self-esteem and self-worth
- meeting the needs of our staff as well as those of our children
- diversity, achievement, teamwork and aspiration
- strong community links and working partnerships
- healthy lifestyle choices
- a dynamic, consultative approach towards change and development, always seeking to improve and evolve for the benefit of our children and to meet the needs of today's society
- the need to monitor and evaluate all aspects of our work as a means to future improvement

We expect that visitors and volunteers respect the school, its staff and our pupils and that they ensure they demonstrate behaviours in line with our ethos, aims and values at all times.

Safeguarding our pupils, whilst creating an environment that is conducive to effective learning, is our priority and we expect all visitors and volunteers to contribute and adhere to this.

Safeguarding

In line with the 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' statutory guidance (September 2018), all adults who come into contact with our pupils have a duty to safeguard them from physical, sexual and emotional abuse or neglect.

Visitors and volunteers to our school must be aware of the signs of abuse and neglect and escalate any concerns to the School's Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Visitors and volunteers have a duty to escalate any concerns relating to pupils being at risk of radicalisation to the School's Designated Safeguarding Lead.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for the school is Sally Lowe and the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads are Suzanne Powell (DDSL) and Ella Hughes (DDSL). If a child reports a concern to a visitor or volunteer in confidence, they must report the concern to the DSL or DDSL

All visitors and volunteers in school must wear an identification badge in a green or red lanyard whilst on the premises and ensure they have followed the school's signing in procedures.

Health and safety

Visitors and volunteers must report any health and safety concerns to the Facilities Manager – Fran Maguire or Business Manager – Michelle Cartledge.

Confidentiality

Visitors and volunteers may become party to sensitive information when attending our school. Visitors and volunteers must not disclose any confidential information unless in circumstances that necessitate this disclosure to an appropriate member of school staff. Confidential information must not be disclosed to parties outside of school.

Should visitors or volunteers have any concerns, they must escalate these to a Senior Leader or the Designated Safeguarding Lead if appropriate.

Internet usage/ social media

Visitors and volunteers must be aware that they are accountable for any information or views expressed on social media or other internet sites. This includes views expressed directly and through affiliation with internet pages, such as 'liking' a page.

Visitors and volunteers must not engage in any internet or social media usage that may potentially bring the school into disrepute or bring in to question their professionalism and suitability for them to be associated with the school.

Visitors and volunteers must not communicate or become 'friends' or 'followers' of pupils via personal accounts online.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

In line with the Keeping Children Safe in Education document 2018, all individuals engaging in regulated activity with children must complete a satisfactory enhanced Disclosure **Barring** Service check prior to commencing with the school.

Visitors and volunteers engaging in unsupervised activities with access to pupils will be asked to provide confirmation of their DBS disclosure number when signing in.

Anyone visiting or volunteering on a regular basis and who has substantial access to pupils must have a full, up to date enhanced DBS check.

Please read and sign this Agreement and return this to the school office. By signing this agreement you are confirming the following:

- I have received and read the Visitors and Volunteer Agreement**
- I confirm that I understand and will adhere to the terms of the Visitors and Volunteer Agreement**

Signed.....

Name.....

Date.....

Please read the following policies which can be found on our website:

- **Safeguarding**
- **Social Media**
- **Health & Safety**
- **Whistleblowing Policy**