



## Mordiford CE Primary School Confidentiality Policy

### **Aim**

To protect the child at all times and to give all staff 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, staff and volunteers.

### **Rationale**

Mordiford CE Primary School 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 and not sharing necessary information is a breach of safeguarding procedure. 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.

### **Objectives**

1. To provide consistent messages in school about handling information about children once it has been received
2. To foster an ethos of trust within the school
3. To ensure that staff, parents, carers, pupils and volunteers are aware of the school's confidentiality policy and procedures
4. To reassure pupils that their best interests will be maintained
5. To encourage children to talk to their parents and carers
6. To ensure that pupils and parents/carers can not offer unconditional confidentiality
7. To ensure that there is equality of provision and access for all including rigorous monitoring of cultural, gender and special educational needs
8. To ensure that if there are child protection issues then the correct procedure is followed
9. To ensure that confidentiality is a whole school issue and that in lessons ground rules are set for the protection of all
10. To understand that health professionals are bound by a different code of conduct
11. To ensure that parents have a right of access to any records the school may hold on their child but not to any other child they do not have parental responsibility for

## Guidelines

1. All information about individual children is private and should only be shared with those staff that have a need to know
2. All social services, medical and personal information about a child should be held in a safe place which cannot be accessed by individuals other than relevant school staff. Files are kept in locked cabinets in the school office, the SEN filing cabinet in the Severn Room and the Head teacher's office
3. The school strives to actively promote a positive ethos and respect for the individual:
  - a. The school has an appointed senior teacher for Child Protection, Mr Richard Foster, who along with the Head teacher receives regular training in accordance with Government legislation.
  - b. There is clear guidance for the handling of child protection incidents. All staff have regular training on child protection issues
  - c. There is clear guidance for procedures if a member of staff is accused of abuse
  - d. 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 a disclosure of a child protection issue
  - e. Staff are aware of the need to handle all issues about different family types in a sensitive manner
  - f. Any intolerance about gender, faith, race, culture or sexuality is unacceptable and should follow the school's discipline policy.
  - g. Information collected for one purpose should not be used for another
4. 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

5. The school prides itself on good communication with parents and carers. Staff are readily available to talk to both children and parents/carers about issues that are causing concern. The school encourages children to talk to their parents and carers about issues that are 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
6. Parents/carers and pupils should feel reassured that in exceptional circumstances confidentiality will be broken
7. All children have a right to the same level of confidentiality irrespective of gender, race, religion, medical concerns, children of service personnel and special educational needs. Data is generated in schools by these descriptors but individual children should not be able to be identified
8. Confidentiality is a whole school issue. Clear ground rules must be set for classroom work such as circle time and Personal, Health, Social and Citizenship Education (PHSCE) (particularly sensitive sessions may involve sex and relationship or drug education) Sensitive information which falls outside the boundaries of child protection procedures must be handled responsibly. Staff must be proactive so that the children feel supported. Information is not necessarily 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
9. Health professionals have their own code of conduct when dealing with confidentiality. Staff should be aware of children with medical needs and class information sheets should be available to staff who need that information. However this information should not be displayed in general view of other parents/carers/children
10. Photographs of children should not be used without parental consent, especially in the press or on websites. If consent has been withdrawn due to cultural reasons the school should be informed. Consent lists are reviewed annually and kept in the school office
11. Information about children will only be shared with the person/people with parental responsibility for that child. Parents should not have access to any other child's books, marks, reports or progress at any time, especially at parents meetings. 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 treated as confidential; this should be clearly

understood by all those who have access to it, and whether those concerned require access to all, or only some of the information. Information regarding health reports such as speech therapy, medical Reports, SEN reports, SEN minutes, social services meeting minutes or reports are circulated in envelopes and then securely filed. Logs of administering medicine to children should be kept secure, each child has their own separate record for First Aid. In all cases of school administration individual identification of children should be avoided. Addresses and telephone numbers of parents and children will not be passed on without consent, except in exceptional circumstances or to a receiving school

12. Governors need to be mindful that from time to time issues are discussed or brought to their attention about staff and children. All such discussions are confidential and paper work concerning this must be destroyed. Although decisions reached at Governor's meetings are normally made public through the minutes or otherwise, the discussions on which they are based should be regarded as confidential. Governors should exercise the highest degree of prudence when discussing potentially contentious issues outside of the Governing Body. In this situation they should refer the discussion to the Chair of Governors, Mr David Watkins, or Head teacher Miss Kerri Finney

13. Staff Meetings and INSET days are governed by the same professional code of conduct towards confidentiality

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The policy will be reviewed annually as part of the school's monitoring cycle. The PHSCE scheme of work, Sex and Relationship and drug policies will enable identified opportunities to deliver aspects of this Confidentiality Policy to the pupils. The head teacher along with the Governing Body has responsibility for monitoring this policy.

### **Conclusion**

Mordiford CE Primary School has a duty of care and responsibility towards its pupils, parents/carers and staff. It also needs to work with a range of outside agencies, sharing information on a professional basis. The health and safety of the individual is the key issue behind this document.