

**LOW ASH  
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**CONFIDENTIALITY PROTOCOL**

**MR TERRY WOOLLIN**

**JANUARY 2014**

## **Aim**

To protect the individual at all times and to give staff (including students and volunteers) clear, unambiguous guidance regarding their legal and professional roles to ensure good practice throughout school which is understood by pupils, parents/carers and staff.

## **Rationale**

Low Ash Primary School seeks to put the child at the heart of the learning process and to provide a safe and secure learning environment. In carrying out their duties, staff at the school will handle a range of information about children and their families. Information about members of staff is also held by the school.

Low Ash Primary School recognises its responsibility to use, hold and safeguard information appropriately and is committed to address issues that may arise about confidentiality. Sharing information unnecessarily is an erosion of trust. The school is mindful that it is placed in a position of trust by all stakeholders and there is an 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 and their families.
2. To foster an ethos of trust within the school.
3. To ensure that all staff, pupils and parents/carers are aware of the school's confidentiality protocol and procedures.
4. To ensure that pupils, parents and carers know that staff cannot offer unconditional confidentiality, particularly with regard to safeguarding children.
5. To acknowledge that school staff have a duty to work with other professional agencies in the interests of children, sharing information appropriately and acting within recognised procedures.
6. To ensure that parents and carers know that they have a right of access to school records held on their child, but not to any records for any child for whom they do not hold parental responsibility.

## **Guidelines**

1. All information about individuals is private and should only be shared on a need to know basis.
2. All social services, medical and personal information is held in a safe and secure place which cannot be accessed by individuals other than authorised school staff.
3. The school continues to actively promote a positive ethos and respect so that individuals feel they can approach staff who will act professionally.
4. Staff are aware of the need to handle all issues and information about the range of children and their families with sensitivity
5. Staff who are also a parent/carer of a child in school, and parent volunteers in school should be aware of their 'dual role' and take particular care to maintain confidentiality.
6. Staff, pupils and parents/carers need to be aware that the school cannot guarantee total confidentiality and that the school has a duty to report child protection issues.

7. With regard to safeguarding children:
  - The school has designated senior members of staff for safeguarding children (the Deputy Head, Assistant head and Inclusion manager)
  - There is clear guidance for the handling of child protection issues and staff receive regular training.
  - Staff are aware that effective sex and relationship education or discussion of PSHCE issues may result in the disclosure of a child protection issue.
8. All individuals have the same right to confidentiality, irrespective of their gender, race, religion, medical concerns or special needs. Any intolerance about gender, faith, race, culture or sexuality is unacceptable and will result in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy and procedures for reporting as appropriate.
9. Photographs of individuals should not be used without the permission of the adult individual or parents/carers. The use of cameras and videos during public school events is allowed so long as no objections are received.
10. Parents/carers have a right of access to records and information about their own child. Parents / carers should be aware that such records and information will be shared with receiving schools when their child changes school.
  - Special needs documentation, medical reports and minutes of social services meetings will be circulated in confidential envelopes and filed in a secure place.
  - Addresses and telephone numbers will not be passed on except in exceptional circumstances or to a receiving school.
11. Governors must observe complete confidentiality in relation to matters concerning the school, individual staff, pupils or parents/carers. Although minutes from Governing Body meetings are available for public access, prudent use of confidential minutes should be employed where individuals are identified. As a general rule, there should be few occasions where identification of an individual is necessary. Governors should exercise discretion when discussion of potentially contentious issues arises outside Governing Body meetings.
12. Breaches of confidentiality undermine trust and should be reported to the headteacher who will act in accordance with legal requirements and guidance from Human Resources.

**Conclusion**

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

**This Confidentiality Protocol was reviewed by the Full Governing Body on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2014**

**Signed: ..... Chair of Governors**

**Next review due: February 2017**