

LOW ASH

PRIMARY SCHOOL

CONFIDENTIALITY PROTOCOL

MR TERRY WOOLLIN

October 2017

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.

This policy is intended to be used in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Data Protection
- Record Management
- Child Protection, Safeguarding (and related appendices)
- Anti-bullying
- Freedom of Information
- Whistleblowing
- E-Safety

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.

Definitions

- 1.1. For the purpose of this policy, '**confidentiality**' is an understanding that any information shared with someone in trust will only be passed on to a third party with the prior agreement of the person disclosing it.
- 1.2. Within this policy, a '**disclosure**' is the sharing of any private information; this term does not solely relate to child protection issues.
- 1.3. The term '**limited confidentiality**' refers to the disclosure of information with professional colleagues; however, the confider would not be identified except in pre-determined circumstances.

2. Confidentiality and child protection

- 2.1 Low Ash Primary School aims to strike a balance between confidentiality and trust, ensuring the safety, wellbeing and protection of our pupils.
 - 2.1.1 Staff members and volunteers alike will pass on information if they believe a child is at risk of harm, otherwise, staff are not obliged to break confidentiality.
 - 2.1.2 In almost all cases of disclosure, limited confidentiality is always on offer.
 - 2.1.3 Staff members and volunteers will use their own professional judgement when considering whether to inform a child that a disclosure may be made in confidence and whether such confidence could remain having heard the information, bearing in mind that staff can never guarantee absolute confidentiality to pupils.
 - 2.1.4 A Low Ash Primary, the named people for Child Protection (Headteacher, Senior Deputy Headteacher (DSL), Deputy Headteacher, Assistant Headteacher, Inclusion Leader) are to be informed of all incidents regarding child protection concerns which are highlighted by a volunteer, parent/carer or other external party to the school.
 - 2.1.5 Staff members are contractually obliged to immediately inform the named people for child protection of any concerns regarding a pupil's safety or welfare.
 - 2.1.6 Any concerns raised over a child's welfare and safety will be reported immediately to ensure that any intervention necessary to protect the child is accessed as early as possible.
 - 2.1.7 Staff members are not obliged to inform the police on most matters relating to illegal activity, such as illegal drugs or assaults. These will be assessed on a case-by-case basis with the support of the Senior Leadership Team.
 - 2.1.8 Staff are aware that effective sex and relationship education or discussion of PSHCE issues may result in the disclosure of a child protection issue.

3. 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.
4. 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. Parents are advised that the photos and recordings are for their personal use only and should not be posted on social media.
5. 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.
6. Special needs documentation, medical reports and minutes of social services meetings will be circulated in confidential envelopes and filed in a secure place.
7. Addresses and telephone numbers will not be passed on except in exceptional circumstances or to a receiving school.
8. 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.
9. 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.

The policy will be reviewed by the Full Governing Body – Resource Committee every two years, or earlier if deemed necessary.

Signed:

Chair of Full Governing Body

Review date: October 2019