

St Christopher's The Hall School

Confidentiality Policy

This policy should be read in conjunction with the St Christopher's The Hall Safeguarding and Child Protection Policies and Whistleblowing policy.

Aims

St Christopher's School aims to protect the individual at all times and to give staff involved clear guidance as to their legal and professional roles. We aim to ensure good practice throughout the school which is understood by pupils, parents and staff. We seek to put the child at the heart of the learning process and to provide a safe and secure learning environment. We seek to implement the underlying principles of the Every Child Matters Agenda and to address the issues, which may arise about confidentiality. 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

- To provide consistent messages in school about handling information about children once it has been received.
- To foster an ethos of trust within the school.
- To ensure that staff, parents 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.
- To ensure that pupils and parents know that school staff cannot offer unconditional confidentiality.
- To ensure that there is equality of provision and access for all including monitoring of cultural, gender and special educational needs.
- To ensure that if there is a child protection issue then the correct procedure is followed.
- To ensure that confidentiality is a whole school issue and that in lessons ground rules are set for the protection of all.

Guidelines

- All personal information about individuals is regarded as confidential.
- All individuals have a right to the same level of confidentiality irrespective of gender, race, religion, medical concerns and special educational needs.
- Parents have ready access to the files and records of their own children but do not have access to information about any other child. Parents should not have access to any other child's books, marks and progress grades at any time. However parents should be aware that information about their child will be shared with the receiving school when they change school.
- Staff will not discuss personal information given by parents with other members of staff, except where it affects planning for and the wellbeing of the child's needs.
- Parents and children need to be aware that the school cannot guarantee total confidentiality and the school has a duty to report child protection issues.

- The school has appointed a senior member of staff as Child Protection Officer. Child protection procedures are reviewed regularly and readily available to staff. Any concerns /evidence relating to a child's personal safety are kept in a confidential file and are shared with as few people as possible on a "need-to-know" basis.
- The school prides itself on good communication with parents and staff are always available to talk to both children and parents about issues that are causing concern.
- The school encourages children to talk to parents about issues causing them concern and may in some cases support the children to talk to their parents.
- Clear ground rules must be set for any classroom work such as circle time and other PHSE session dealing with sensitive issues.
- The school needs to be proactive so children feel supported but information is not unnecessarily 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.
- Staff should be aware of children with medical needs and the class information sheet should be accessible to staff who need that information but not on general view to other parents and children.
- All parents are asked to sign a permission slip for using pupil photographs when their child joins the school. The school currently allows parents to photograph / film school public events (e.g. performances / sports events). However the school supports the policies of outside agencies and venues not to take photographs (e.g. the local swimming pool etc).
- Information regarding health reports such as speech therapy, medical reports, SEN reports, SEN minutes of meetings and social services minutes of meetings and reports should be filed with the appropriate members of staff.
- Health professionals have their own code of practice dealing with confidentiality.
- Issues to do with the employment of staff, whether paid or unpaid, remain confidential to the people directly involved with making personnel decisions.

The Role of the Governing Body

Governors need to be mindful that from time to time issues are discussed or brought to their attention about staff and children. 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. Although decisions reached at governors' meetings are normally made public, the discussions on which decisions are based should be regarded as confidential. Governors should exercise the highest degree of prudence when discussion of potentially contentious issues arises outside the governing body.

Dissemination

- The policy is available to all parents on the school website.
- Staff induction includes awareness of the importance of confidentiality in the role of the key person. The Staff have ongoing access to the policy which is in the Policy folder.
- The Governors have access to the policy which is in the Policy Folder.
- Students on training, when they are observing in the school, are advised of our confidentiality policy and required to respect it.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The named Safe Guarding Officer has responsibility for monitoring this policy and it will be reviewed as part of the schools monitoring cycle. The named Safe Guarding Officer is responsible for reporting the outcome of the monitoring to the headmaster and governing body. The named Safe Guarding Officer must also report to the governing body any breaches of confidentiality. The headmaster and governors will then decide on the consequences for the individual of the breach of policy.

Created: Michaelmas 2012

Last reviewed date: Lent 2017

Next review: Summer 2019