

Lockington CE VC Primary School



Confidentiality Policy

Date Policy Formally Agreed By Governors:	20 th April 2023
Date Policy Becomes Effective:	20 th April 2023
Review Date:	Summer 2026
Person Responsible for Implementation and Monitoring:	Headteacher

Introduction

We aim to protect all children at all times and to give all staff and volunteers clear, unambiguous guidance as to their legal and professional roles and responsibilities and to ensure good practice throughout the school which is understood by children, parents/carers and staff.

We put the child at the heart of the learning process and provide a safe and secure learning environment. We are committed to developing creative and positive ways for the child's voice to be heard whilst recognising our responsibility to use, hold and safeguard information.

Sharing information inappropriately, or unnecessarily, is an erosion of trust.

We are mindful that staff and volunteers are 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.

This policy is written in the context of our school mission statement:

"Our school is committed to working together to develop lively, enquiring minds and to promoting outstanding standards for all in a happy, safe and caring environment. Our Christian values encourage all to show respect, acceptance and understanding of others."

It is also written in the context of our school's Christian vision, rooted in the teachings of Jesus: *"Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven," (Matthew 5:16).*

Legal Requirements include: the Human Rights Act 1988, Data Protection Act 1998 & 2018, Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Children's Act 2004.

Objectives

- To provide consistent messages in school about handling information about children
- To foster an ethos of trust within the school.
- To ensure that staff, parents/carers and children are aware of the school's confidentiality policy and procedures and act upon them.
- To encourage children to be aware of confidentiality issues relating to their peers.
- To reassure children that their best interests will be maintained.
- To encourage children to talk to their parents/carers.
- To ensure that children and parents/carers know that school staff cannot offer unconditional confidentiality.
- To ensure that parents/carers have a right of access to any records the school may hold on their child but not to those of any other child that they do not have parental responsibility for.

Guidelines

- All information about individual children is private and should only be shared with those staff who need to know.
- All social services, medical and personal information about a child will be held in a safe and secure place which cannot be accessed by individuals other than school staff.
- Parents/carers and children need to be aware that the school cannot guarantee total confidence and the school in exceptional circumstances has a duty to report child protection issues.

- The school prides itself on good communication with parents and carers and staff are always available to talk to both children and parents/carers about issues that are causing concern.
- All children have a right to the same level of confidentiality irrespective of gender, race, religion, medical concerns and special educational needs.
- Confidentiality is a whole school issue. Clear ground rules must be set for any classroom work such as circle time and other PSHE sessions. 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.
- Health professionals have their own code of practice dealing with confidentiality. 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/carers and children.
- On the school website, photographs of children will only be identified by their first names.
- Information about children will be shared with parents but only about their child. Parents should not have access to any other child's books, marks and progress grades at any time.
- Parents should be aware that information about their child will be shared with the receiving school when they change school. Information regarding health reports such as speech therapy, medical reports, SEND reports, SEND minutes of meetings and social services minutes of meetings and reports will be circulated in envelopes and once read should be returned for secure filing, or kept in a secure space on the school server. Logs of administration of medication to children should be kept secure and each child should have their individual log. In all other notes, briefing sheets, etc., a child should not be able to be identified.
- Addresses and telephone numbers of parents and children will not be passed on except in exceptional circumstances or to a receiving school.
- Any personal information should be regarded as confidential and not passed on indiscriminately (for example, in the staff room).
- Governors should be aware that any information they become aware of regarding members of staff or pupils at the school is confidential. 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. Governors should exercise the highest degree of prudence when discussion of potentially contentious issues arise outside the governing body.

Further guidance

For all children, staff members and governors to enjoy privacy from gossip, for the school to be fair to all its community, and for children and adults to have disciplinary matters dealt with according to the school's own procedures and out of the eye of the wider school community, it is important that:

- Staff do not discuss details of individual cases arising in staff meetings with any person without direct professional connection to and interest in the welfare and education of the individual concerned.

- No member of staff to discuss an individual child's behaviour in the presence of another child in school.
- Staff do not enter into detailed discussion about a child's behaviour with other children or their parents.
- Parents/carers have access to the records of their own children, but do not have access to information about other children.
- Personal information about other children, families and staff is kept securely, whilst remaining as accessible as necessary.
- Parents/carers in school, working as volunteers, or as part of the Friends' Committee, do not report cases of poor behaviour or pupil discipline to other parents in the school. This allows teachers to deal with such matters in line with school policy.
- Parent/carer permission with regards to taking photographs of their children is sought on entry to the school and staff are kept informed.
- Staff performance management will be carried out privately. Targets for individuals, names lesson observation sheets and other performance data will be in the Headteacher's office and electronic records are only available to the senior leadership team.
- Matters of child protection are only made know to staff on a need-to-know basis.
- It is important that class teachers and support staff are aware of some confidential matters to support individuals. These staff will respect the sensitivity of such cases and not divulge information to people unconnected professionally with the individual concerned.
- When volunteers, such as parents and Friends of the School are working in classes, they do not discuss educational matters outside the classroom.
- Governors must observe complete confidentiality, especially in relation to matters concerning individual staff, children or parents/carers. Although decisions reached at governors' meetings are normally made public through the minutes or otherwise, the discussions on which decisions are based are regarded as confidential. Governors should exercise the highest degree of prudence when discussion of potentially contentious issues arises outside of the governing body.
- Governors, in particular those sitting on Discipline Committees, do not divulge details about individuals (be they staff, families or individual children) to any person outside of the meeting.

Other Professionals

Multi-agency professionals are bound by their professional codes of conduct to maintain confidentiality.

Conclusion

All personal information about children is confidential and should only be accessed by staff on a need to know basis.


Lockington CE VC Primary School has a duty of care and responsibility towards children, parents/carers and staff. The care and safety of the individual is always paramount.

Dissemination of the Policy

All staff members, governors and adults working in the school (including voluntary helpers) will receive a copy of this Policy. Copies are available to view at the school office upon request.

Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years or earlier if required.

Signed:  Headteacher Date: 20th April 2023

Signed:  Chair of Governors Date: 20th April 2023

This policy is intended to be used in conjunction with our:

RSE Policy

Strategic Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Equality Policy

Behaviour & Discipline Policy

Whistle-Blowing Policy

Looked-After Children policies

Acceptable Use Policy

E-Safety Policy

Staff & Volunteer Code of Conduct