

CONFIDENTIALITY AND INFORMATION SHARING POLICY

Aim

To protect the child at all times and to give all staff involved clear, unambiguous guidance as to their legal and professional roles and to ensure good practice throughout the school which is understood by learners, parents/carers and staff.

Rationale

Sandhill Primary School seeks to put the child at the heart of the learning process and to provide a safe and secure learning environment. It seeks to implement the underlying principles of the Every Child Matters Agenda and to address the issues, which may arise about confidentiality. 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.

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 the school about handling information about the children once it has been received.
2. To foster an ethos of trust within the school.
3. To ensure that staff, parents and children are aware of the school's confidentiality, policy and procedures.
4. To reassure children that their best interests will be maintained.
5. To encourage children to talk to their parents and carers.
6. To ensure that children and parents/carers know that school staff cannot 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 is a child protection issue 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 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 that 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 has a need to know.
2. All social services, medical and personal information about a child should be held in a safe and secure place which cannot be accessed by individuals other than centre staff. Any information related to social care is kept in a locked cupboard.
3. The school continues to actively promote a positive ethos and respect for the individual:
 - a) The school has appointed a senior lead teacher for child protection/ safeguarding who receives regular training(Mrs Hirst).
 - b) There is clear guidance for the handling of child protection/safeguarding 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 disclosure of a child protection issue.
 - e) Staff are aware of the need to handle all issues about different types of families in a sensitive manner.
 - f) Any intolerance about gender, faith, race, culture or sexuality is unacceptable and should follow the schools 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 we have a duty to report child protection issues.
5. We pride ourselves 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. The school encourages children to talk to parents/carers about issues causing them concern and may in some cases support the children to talk to their parents. We would share with parents any child protection disclosure before going on to inform the correct authorities.
6. Parents/carers and children 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 and special educational needs. A lot of data is generated in schools by these categories but individual children should not be able to be identified.
8. The school has appointed a senior member of staff as Child Protection Officer (Mrs Hirst). Child protection procedures are understood by staff and training is undertaken on an ongoing cycle.
9. Confidentiality is a whole school issue. Clear ground rules must be set for any classroom work such as restorative practice circle time and other PHSCE session dealing with sensitive issues such as sex and relationship and drugs. Strategies are in place and all children are aware of them for dealing with sensitive information which may fall outside the boundaries of child protection procedures. 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.
10. Health professionals have their own code of practice dealing with confidentiality. Staff should be aware of children with medical needs and a class information sheet should be accessible to staff who need that information but not on general view to other parents/carers and children.
11. Photographs of children should not be used without parents/carers permission especially in the press and internet. Parental permission is obtained on the child's entry to school. This is often a cultural issue that the school needs to be aware of. At no time should the child's name be used with a photograph so that they can be identified.
12. 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 at any time especially at parents evening. 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 regarded as confidential. It should be clearly understood who has access to the record, and whether those concerned have access to all, or only some of the information.

Information regarding health reports such as speech therapy, medical reports, SEN reports, SEN 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.

Logs of administration of medication to children should be kept secure and each child should have their own 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.

13. Governors need to be mindful that from time to time issues are discussed or brought to their attention about staff and children. All such papers should be marked as confidential and should be copied onto different coloured paper. These confidential papers should be destroyed. 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 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 arises outside the governing body.

Information Sharing

In some instances it is appropriate to share information:

- As part of early intervention and preventative services e.g. through Youth Inclusion Support Panels (YISP) and Common Assessment Framework to promote a more coordinated and person centred approach to the provision of care.
- Between adult and children's services
- To support transitions
- Where there are concerns about significant harm to a child
- Where there are concerns about significant harm or serious harm to third parties.
- Where there is a statutory duty or a court order.

Seven Golden Rules for Information Sharing

1. **Remember that the Data Protection Act is not a barrier to sharing information** but provides a framework to ensure that personal information about living persons is shared appropriately.
2. **Be open and honest** with the person (and/or their family where appropriate) from the outset about why, what, how and with whom information will, or could

be shared, and seek their agreement, unless it is unsafe or inappropriate to do so.

3. **Seek advice** if you are in any doubt, without disclosing the identity of the person where possible.
4. **Share with consent where appropriate** and, where possible, respect the wishes of those who do not consent to share confidential information. You may still share information without consent if, in your judgement, that lack of consent can be overridden in the public interest. You will need to base your judgement on the facts of the case.
5. **Consider safety and well-being:** Base your information sharing decisions on considerations of the safety and well-being of the person and others who may be affected by their actions.
6. **Necessary, proportionate, relevant, accurate, timely and secure:** Ensure that the information you share is necessary for the purpose for which you are sharing it, is shared only with those people who need to have it, is accurate and up-to-date, is shared in a timely fashion, and is shared securely.
7. **Keep a record** of your decision and the reasons for it- whether it is to share information or not. If you decide not to share, then record what you have shared, with whom and for what purpose.

Information Sharing Checklist

This may help practitioners to share information with confidence.

Is sharing the information in the best interests of the child and/or their parent?	
Have I gained informed consent to sharing the information?	
Have I considered and worked within legal boundaries?	
Have I considered and worked within local procedures?	
Have I shared adequate information to meet the needs of the child/young person?	
Is the information up to date and accurate?	
Is the information based on evidence?	
Is the information shared in a secure way?	
Have I recorded how, with who and why the information was shared?	
Have I checked if there are any organisations/people that information should not be shared with?	

Appendix 1 gives further examples of questions for information sharing.

Monitoring and Evaluation

1. The policy will be reviewed as part of the schools monitoring cycle.
2. The PHSCE scheme of work, Sex and Relationship policy and Drug Policy will enable identified opportunities to deliver aspects of this policy in specified year groups.
3. The Head teacher has responsibility for monitoring this policy. Following any curriculum monitoring a positional statement is written which contributes to the School Development Plan.

Conclusion

Sandhill Primary School has a duty of care and responsibility towards learners, 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.

Date of Review 18th June 2010

Review 21st March 2012

Consultation has taken place	Staff Date		Governors Date	
Date Formally Approved by Governors				
Date Policy became effective				
Review Date				
Person(s) Responsible for Implementation & Monitoring				
Other Relevant Policies	PSHCE	Sex & Relationships Policy	Marking Policy	Child Protection Policy
	Discipline Policy	Reporting of Racist Incidents		