



Confidentiality Policy

Status	Guidance
Policy Updated	January 2017 Checked by JE
Policy Adopted	30 th January 2017
Panel Responsible:	MAT Board
Origin:	Babcock LDP
Date Full Review:	January 2020 or as appropriate
Policy Management:	CEO

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 pupils, parents/carers and staff.

Rationale

St Christopher's Multi Academy Trust 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 former 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. **Schools are mindful that they 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.**

Last Review January 2017

Objectives

- To provide consistent messages in schools about handling information about children once it has been received.
- To foster an ethos of trust within schools.
- To ensure that staff, parents and pupils are aware of confidentiality policy and procedures.
- To reassure pupils that their best interests will be maintained.
- To encourage children to talk to their parents and carers.
- To ensure that pupils and parents/carers know that school staff cannot offer unconditional confidentiality.
- To ensure that there is equality of provision and access for all including rigorous monitoring of cultural, gender and special educational needs.
- To ensure that if there are child protection issues 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.
- To understand that health professionals are bound by a different code of conduct.
- To ensure that parents have a right of access to any records that schools may hold on their child but not to 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 that have a need to know.
- 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 school staff.
- To actively promote a positive ethos and respect for the individual;
 - Schools have appointed a designated safeguarding officer for child protection who receives regular training.
 - There is clear guidance for the handling of child protection incidents. And all staff have regular training on child protection issues.
 - There is clear guidance for procedures if a member of staff is accused of abuse.
 - 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.
 - Staff are aware of the need to handle all issues about different types of families in a sensitive manner.
 - Any intolerance about gender, faith, race, culture or sexuality is unacceptable and should follow the school's discipline policy.
 - Information collected for one purpose should not be used for another.
- Parents/carers and children need to be aware that schools cannot guarantee total confidentiality and that schools have a duty to report child protection issues.
- Schools encourage good communication with parents and carers and staff are available to talk to both children and parents/carers about issues that are causing concern. Schools also encourage children to talk to parents/carers about issues causing them concern and may in some cases support the children to talk to their parents. Schools would share with parents any child protection disclosure before going on to inform the correct authorities.

- Parents/carers and children should feel reassured that only in exceptional circumstances confidentiality will be broken.
- 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.
- All schools have a designated safeguarding officer. Child protection procedures are understood by staff and training is undertaken at least every two years for all staff.
- Confidentiality is a whole school issue. Clear ground rules must be set for any classroom work 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. Schools need 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.
- Photographs of children should not be used without parents'/carers' permission especially in the press and internet. This is often a cultural issue that schools need to be aware of. At no time, should the child's name be used with a photograph so that they can be identified. Children's photographs should not be used in a medical room identifying their medical need. Schools give clear guidance to parents about the use of cameras and videos during public school events.
- 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 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 by those who have access to it, 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.
- Directors and 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. Directors and Governors must observe complete confidentiality when asked to do so, especially in relation to matters concerning individual staff, pupils or parents. Although decisions reached at Board and LGB meetings are normally made public through the minutes or otherwise, the discussions on which decisions are based should be regarded as confidential. Directors and Governors should exercise the highest degree of prudence when discussion of potentially contentious issues arises outside of meetings.