

## **Christ Church CofE (VA) Primary School** **Confidentiality Policy**

### **Rationale**

Christ Church CofE (VA) 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.

All schools are asked on occasions to keep information confidential. This can relate to a variety of issues including family matters, drugs use, abuse or other dangerous or illegal activities. Confidentiality is a whole school issue therefore it is important that all members of the school community follow the same clear and explicit policy. Pupils, parents and carers should be made aware of this and how it works in practice.

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.

### **Aims**

- To maintain an ethos of trust within the school
- To protect the child at all times
- To reassure the children that their best interests will be maintained
- To encourage pupils to talk to a trusted adult if they are having problems of any sort
- To give clear guidance to all members of the school about confidentiality
- To give staff confidence to deal with sensitive issues
- To ensure that pupils and parents/carers know that school staff cannot offer unconditional confidentiality
- To ensure that pupils and parents/carers are reassured that, if confidentiality has to be broken, they will be informed first and then supported appropriately
- To ensure that if there are child protection issues then the correct procedure is followed (see Child Protection policy)

### **Implementation**

- All information about individual children is private and is only shared with those staff that have a need to know.
- All social services, medical and personal information about a child is held in a safe and secure place which cannot be accessed by individuals other than school staff.
- 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.
- The school has a senior member of staff as Child Protection Officer.
- Child protection procedures are understood by staff and training is undertaken every year to refresh staff knowledge.

- It is important that class teachers and support staff are aware of some confidential matters in order 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 including behaviour issues outside the classroom.
- Information about children is shared with parents/carers but only about their child. Parents/carers do not have access to any other child's books, marks and progress grades at any time. However parents/carers are made aware that information about their child will be shared with the receiving school when they change school.
- Photographs of children are not used without parents/carers permission especially in the press and internet.
- 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.
- At full governing body meetings matters such as pupil exclusion, personnel issues and personal details of any member of the school community will be dealt with in the head teacher's Report. This is not for the knowledge of persons outside the Governing body meeting.
- Staff performance management will be carried out privately. Targets for individuals, named lesson observation sheets and other performance data will be in the head teacher's office and electronic records will only be available from the head teacher's computer.

### **In lessons**

- Ground rules and distancing techniques are used where sensitive issues are to be addressed.
- Staff will not put pressure on pupils to disclose personal information and will discourage fellow pupils from applying any such pressure.

### **Personal disclosures**

- If disclosures from pupils take place at an inappropriate place or time the member of staff will try to talk to the pupil concerned privately before the end of the day.
- The member of staff may talk to an appropriate colleague, to decide on a suitable action, without giving the name of the pupil.

### **Equal opportunities**

All children have a right to the same level of confidentiality irrespective of gender, race, religion, medical concerns and special educational needs. However staff may need to discuss an individual case with a class or group. For instance it can support the inclusion of a child with Asperger's Syndrome or Autism, if their peers are made aware of the condition and so have some idea of what to expect. Similarly a child with visual impairment can be supported if his/her friends know how to look out for them in the playground. In such cases permission will be sought from the child and his/her parents/carers.