



# Confidentiality Policy

## Aims

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 staff, governors, children and parents/carers.

## Rationale

Cullercoats 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.

All staff have a statutory obligation to safeguard the confidentiality of personal information. The relevant legislation includes the Data Protection Act 1998, the Human Rights Act 1998, common law and employment law.

A school confidentiality policy is now a requirement for the Enhanced Healthy School Status.

## Objectives

1. To provide guidance on handling information about children, staff and any student or other person who may work in school on a training programme, to ensure confidentiality.
2. To foster an ethos of trust within the school.
3. To ensure that staff, governors, parents, persons working in school in a voluntary or training capacity, 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 ensure that parents 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.

11. To ensure that staff have a right of access to any records about themselves that the school may hold but not to those of another member of staff to whom they are not a line manager.

## Guidelines

1. All information about individual children is private and should only be shared with staff on a need to know basis.
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 school staff.
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 who receives regular training.
  - b. There is clear guidance for the handling of child protection incidents and 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 the school has a duty to report child protection issues.
5. The school prides itself on good communication with parents/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 in talking to their parents. The school would share with parents any child protection disclosure before going on to inform the correct authorities.
6. 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.
7. Confidentiality is a whole school issue. Clear ground rules must be set for any classroom work such as 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.
8. 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.

9. Photographs may be taken of children, or they may be involved in filming whilst involved in school activities. These may be used for displays, publications and on the school web-site, by the Local Authority, or by the local newspapers. All parents will be asked, when their child is admitted to the school, to give their permission in writing for their child to be involved in such photography or filming. When filming or photography is carried out by the local news media, children will only be named if there is a particular reason to do so (e.g. they have won a prize), and a home address will never be given.
10. The safety of a child is paramount and it may be necessary to display a child's photograph for medical reasons. The written permission of the parent will be sought before the photograph is displayed.
11. The school gives clear guidance to parents about the use of cameras and videos during public school events.
12. Information about a child's progress and access to his/her work will be shared with parents by a member of the teaching staff. Parents should not have access to the personal information about another child. However parents should be aware that information about their child will be shared with the receiving school when they change school.
13. 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. 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.
14. Logs of administration of medication to children should be kept secure and each child should have their own individual log.
15. Parents working in school as volunteers and students or work experience persons should not discuss, out of school, matters of confidentiality about children, staff or educational matters. Such persons will be given a copy of this policy to read before working in school.
16. 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 returned, after being read, to the Clerk to the Governors who will shred them. Governors must observe complete confidentiality when asked to do so by the governing body, especially in relation to matters concerning individual staff, children 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.
17. Matters discussed at a Governing Body Meeting about a child's exclusion or personal issues and personal details of any member of the school staff will be minuted separately and these minutes will not be published.
18. Teachers may wish to discuss an individual child with a class or group in order to support a child with a special educational need. Permission will be first sought from the child and/or his/her parents or carers.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

1. This 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 specific 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**

Cullercoats Primary School has a duty of care and responsibility towards children, 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.