



## **Stonebow Primary School Confidentiality Policy**

Approved By	FGB November 2021
Date	November 2021
Review Date –	November 2024

## **Confidentiality Policy**

### **Aim**

To protect our pupils 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 that is understood by pupils, parents/carers, governors and staff.

### **Rationale**

Stonebow 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 The Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) 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 all stakeholders place it in a position of trust and there is a general expectation that a professional approach will be used in all matters of confidentiality.

### **Objectives:**

- To provide consistent messages in school about handling information about children once it has been received.
- To foster an ethos of trust within the school, where children and all staff feel safe to confide and share problems.
- To ensure that staff, parents and pupils are aware of the school's confidentiality, policy and procedures.
- To reassure pupils that their 'best interests' will be maintained.
- To ensure that pupils and parents/carers know that school staff cannot offer unconditional confidentiality.
- To ensure, that if there are child protection issues, that the correct procedures are followed, working with the guidelines set out in the policy.

- To ensure that confidentiality is a whole school issue and that in lessons ground rules are set for the protection of all.
- 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**

- a. All information about individual children is private and should only be shared with those staff that have a need to know.
- b. All social services, medical and personal information about a child should be held in a safe and secure place that cannot be accessed by individuals other than school staff.
- c. The school continues to actively promote a positive ethos and respect for the individual:
- d. The school has appointed the Headteacher, Deputy Head and Assistant Head as Safeguarding/Child Protection Leaders and they receive regular training.
- e. There is clear guidance for the handling of child protection incidents. All staff have regular training on child protection issues.
- f. There is clear guidance for procedures if a member of staff is accused of inappropriate conduct.
- g. 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.
- h. Staff are aware of the need to handle all issues about different types of families in a sensitive manner.

- i. Any intolerance about gender, faith, race, culture or sexuality is unacceptable and issues should follow the schools discipline policy.
- j. Information collected for one purpose should not be used for another.
- k. Parents/carers and children need to be aware that the school cannot guarantee total confidentiality in all cases, for example issues involving child protection or criminal issues.
- l. Parents/carers and children should feel reassured that only in exceptional circumstances confidentiality will be broken.
- m. The school prides itself on good communication with parents, carers and children. All staff make sure they are available to talk to all parties concerned 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.
- n. 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.
- o. Confidentiality is a whole school issue. Clear ground rules must be set for any class work and other sessions dealing with sensitive issues such as death, growth development or drug use. Strategies are in place and all children are aware of them for dealing with sensitive information that may fall outside the boundaries of child protection procedures. School needs to be proactive so that children feel supported but know that information is not unnecessarily revealed in a public arena. Those immediately involved should not assume that even when sensitive information appears to be widely known that it is appropriate to discuss or share this information further.

- p. Health professionals have their own code of practice dealing with confidentiality. Staff should be aware of children with medical needs and the child's medical information sheet, which will include details of emergency treatment, should be accessible to staff who need that information but not on general view to other parents/carers and children. (This is allowed under GDPR and is classed as public interest)
- q. Photographs of children should not be used outside of the school premises without parents/carers permission. Permission is asked for on first admission but can be withdrawn at any time. At no time should a child's name be used with a photograph so that they can be identified.
- r. Information about children can be shared with parents but only about their child. Parents should not have access to any other child's books, marks or progress records at any time, especially at parent's evenings. However, parents should be aware that information about their child will be shared with the receiving school when they change school.
- s. All personal information about children including social services records should be regarded as confidential. This 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 an envelope.
- t. Any personal data will only be kept as long as necessary or for the length of time as stipulated by law.
- u. Logs of administration of medication to children should be kept secure.

- v. Addresses and telephone numbers of parents and children will not be passed on except in exceptional circumstances or to a receiving school. Agencies such as the Police and Social Services Dept. may be able to get a court order to gain access to processed information, which the school deems confidential. This can also include the Local Authority's legal department and insurers, as well as other solicitors e.g. in custody cases.
- w. 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. 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.

## **Appendix**

Appendix 'Confidentiality' also refers to protecting the information we hold about the pupils in this school and their families. All staff will endeavour to maintain confidentiality when appropriate, for example by considering the conversations, they have about pupils and their families, the purpose of these conversations and where these take place. All students and helpers at the school will be made aware of this through our Confidentiality Statement (see below).

### **Confidentiality Statement:**

Teachers talk about their job constantly. Conversations at breaks and lunchtimes are often about school, individual children and their families.

We ask that such conversations be regarded as confidential.

Similarly, the work, progress and behavior of individual children is a matter of fact for the teacher, the child and the parents of the child. Any comments made by students about a child, or an incident at school may be misinterpreted and lead to misunderstandings.

Small incidents are dealt with in school and should end there. More serious incidents will be discussed, *in confidence*, with parents. We feel sure you will understand the need for such confidentiality on school matters. As an employee/helper in the school, we ask that you respect confidentiality on such matters to avoid misunderstandings and upset.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

This policy will be reviewed every three years unless there are changes to the regulations.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Data Protection Policy.



## Stonebow Primary School Confidentiality Agreement

All members of staff, regular visitors and volunteers are required to sign the following statement relating to confidentiality.

**I have read and understood the Confidentiality Policy and agree to adhere to this in my role at Stonebow Primary School, during my time at the school and after I have left.**

I recognise that I am in a position whereby, at certain times, I may have access to information concerning individual stakeholders.

I agree to only discuss information relating to Stonebow Primary School and its stakeholders on a 'need to know' basis, as defined in the policy.

I agree not to post or share information online through any means, including all areas of social media, eg Facebook, Twitter, which relates to any individual stakeholder or brings Stonebow Primary School into disrepute.

As a volunteer I understand school decides when and where I will be volunteering in school, that I am responsible to the teacher I am placed with and I should discuss with them any concerns or information that needs to be shared about stakeholders.

I agree to refer all requests for information by an outside agency or the media to the Headteacher.

Signed: .....

Date: .....

Name (please print):

.....

Role in school:

.....

Signature of school representative / Date:

.....

*Please sign and date and hand to the office*