



THE RACKHAM
C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL

Confidentiality Policy

Policy Number: SCH 044

Date: September 2023

Aims

We aim to protect the child at all times and give all staff involved clear, unambiguous guidance as to their legal and professional roles and responsibilities. We also aim to ensure good practice throughout the school which is understood by pupils, parents, carers and staff. To this end we also ensure that personal data is protected in line with GDPR requirements.

Rationale

We seek 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. We are 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 inappropriately, or unnecessarily, is an erosion of trust.

We are mindful that staff 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.

This applies to:

- Pupil/parent relationships with the school
- Staff/school management team working relationships
- Staff/pupil relationships with the Governing Body
- Matters within the remit of the Governing Body

The school currently has existing policies which deal with specific issues of confidentiality and this policy is intended to supplement the following:

- School Privacy Policies (Data Protection)
- Child Protection Policy
- The requirements of the Freedom of Information Act
- Code of Conduct

Objectives

- To provide consistent messages in school about handling information about children.
- To foster an ethos of trust within the school.
- To ensure that staff, parents/carers and children are aware of the school's confidentiality policy and procedures and act upon them.
- To reassure pupils that their best interests will be maintained.
- To encourage children to talk to their parents and carers.
- To ensure that children 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 clear guidelines / 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 the school may hold on their child but not to any other child that they do not have parental responsibility for.

General Guidance

It is not possible to detail within this policy every potential situation which may be 'confidential'. The following are examples of situations where confidentiality is expected:

- All issues concerning the education, discipline, emotional/physical welfare of any child observed, reported or recorded.
- All issues arising from any of the above concerning that child's parent/carer.
- All issues of appointment/monitoring, discipline or welfare of any member of the school's staff.
- All issues subject to the legislation above (conduct of Governors and Governing Body meetings).

All information about individual children is confidential and is only shared with those staff/adults that have a need to know.

All safeguarding, medical and personal information about a child is held in a safe and secure place which can only be accessed by appropriate staff.

We pride ourselves on good communication with parents/carers and staff are available to talk to both children and parents/carers about issues that are causing concern. We encourage children to talk to parents/carers about issues causing them concern and may in some cases support the children in talking to them.

All children have a right to the same level of confidentiality irrespective of gender, race, religion, culture, class, medical concerns and special educational needs.

All children, parents/carers, staff members and governors must enjoy privacy from gossip. All matters are dealt with according to the school's procedures and out of the eye of the wider community.

It is vital to ensure:

- Confidentiality is a whole school issue.
- Staff do not discuss details of individual cases to any person without direct professional connection to and interest in the welfare and education of the individual concerned.
- No member of staff discusses an individual child's behaviour/situation etc in the presence of another child.
- Staff do not enter into detailed discussion about a child's behaviour with other children or their parents/carers.
- 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.
- Staff performance management is carried out confidentially.
- Matters of child protection are made known to staff on a need to know basis.
- Class teachers and support staff are aware of some confidential matters in order to support individual children and adults. These staff will respect the sensitivity of such cases and not divulge information to people unconnected professionally with the individual concerned.
- Volunteers, such as parents/carers and friends of the school do not discuss school matters in the wider community.
- Volunteers, students and supply teachers read this policy before working in school.
- Staff should be aware of children in their care with medical needs. This information is accessible to staff who need it but is not on general view to other parents/carers and children.

- Photographs of children are not used without parents/carers' permission, especially in the press and internet.
- All information about individual children is treated as private and only shared with those staff who need to know.
- 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.
- 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 appropriate school staff.
- Any information regarding Child Protection is managed in line with the school's Child Protection Policy.
- 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.
- 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 by these categories, but individual children are not able to be identified.
- Clear ground rules are set for any classroom work such as circle time and other PSHE sessions dealing with sensitive issues such as sex and relationships, and drugs.
- 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.
- Even when sensitive information appears to be widely known it is not 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.
- When children start at The Rackham Primary School parents are asked for their consent for the use of photographs and video recording on the website, newsletters, local press and internet. Full names are never given alongside photographs of children.
- All personal information about children including social services records are regarded as confidential.
- Information regarding health reports, SEND reports, SEND minutes of meetings, social care and Health Services will be kept securely.

Other Professionals

Multi-agency professionals are bound by their professional codes of conduct to maintain confidentiality

Governors

Governing Body meetings are not open to the public by right. The Governing Body may choose to invite those who are not Governors to a meeting, though they are likely to be asked to leave if confidential issues are discussed.

The way in which any individual Governor votes, expresses an opinion involving a named person, or partakes in any discussion concerning any critical or sensitive item, is always regarded as confidential.

The minutes of any parts of such a meeting which are deemed "Confidential" are kept separate and not made available for inspection with other minutes. (Subject to compliance with the Freedom of

Information Act).

Governors must observe complete confidentiality, especially in relation to matters concerning individual staff, children or parents/carers. Although decisions reached at governors' meetings are normally made public through the minutes or otherwise, the discussions on which decisions are based are regarded as confidential. Governors should exercise the highest degree of prudence when discussion of potentially contentious issues arises outside of the governing body.

Governors have a responsibility to keep any information that they discuss confidential.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The policy will be evaluated against the stated aims and objectives, as part of the review cycle every four years.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Headteacher has responsibility for monitoring this policy. All staff members, governors and adults working in the school are responsible for its implementation.

This policy will be reviewed and agreed in line with Government guidelines by the Governing Body.

Approved and signed by:

Headteacher



Signed:

Date: 7th September 2023

Chair of Governing body



Signed:

Date: 7th September 2023