

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

Introduction

All staff, external agencies / visitors working with pupils as part of the curriculum or the school's pastoral support procedures, pupils and parents should be made aware of this policy.

It is of particular importance to staff involved with the personal, social, health and education (PSHE), including sex and relationships education (SRE) and drug education. It sets out guidelines for all staff about pupil information that they can regard as confidential and that which they cannot. Any external agencies / visitors to the school who are teaching or working with groups of pupils must also abide by this policy.

Information sharing

As a School, we share information with parents, carers and the child. We also make sure that parents, carers and children can share information with us and be confident that information shared will only be used for the benefit of the child. Any information shared will always be respectful of the privacy of the children and their parents / carers.

Procedures for Confidentiality within the School

1. Any information that a pupil discloses to a member of staff or visitor should not be passed on to other colleagues indiscriminately but should only be passed on a "need to know basis".
2. Members of staff should not offer pupils or their parents, blanket or unconditional confidentiality.
3. Any information concerning a pupil's behaviour or conduct that is likely to cause harm to themselves or to others should be passed on to the Headteacher and / or other agencies as determined by the Headteacher.
4. As a school we should make it known to every parent and child our confidentiality policy (at age appropriate level). It should be made clear when and with whom information will be shared.

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5. When embarking on a lesson, or a programme of lessons, that may well touch on sensitive and/or controversial issues, teachers should clarify with pupils the issue of confidentiality. An unrealistic confidentiality agreement should not be offered to pupils. Teaching staff should establish ground rules in order to avoid inappropriate questions and answers which may lead to personal disclosures.
6. Teachers need to be aware that effective sex and relationships education, which brings an understanding of what is and is not acceptable in a relationship, can lead to disclosure of a child protection issue. If a personal disclosure is made, the member of staff should explain that such information can, and should, be kept confidential within the class, but that some information may need to be passed on to colleagues. Where a pupil discloses information about physical or sexual abuse, neglect or emotional abuse, the member of staff or visitor must follow the London Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) procedures and pass this information on to the designated teacher
7. LSCB guidelines should be followed in respect of cases concerning child protection. If someone believes that a child may be suffering, or may be at risk of suffering, significant harm, then he/she should always refer his/her concerns to the Designated Child Protection Officer (DCPO) who will contact the Social Services department. The school will generally seek to discuss any concerns with the family and, where possible, seek their agreement to making referrals to Social Services. However, this should only be done where such discussion and agreement-seeking will not place a child at increased risk of significant harm.
8. If such disclosed information is to be passed on the pupil should be told of this, know who the information will be passed on to and why and who else in the school, or externally, will have access to the information. The pupils should also be reassured that they will be offered appropriate, ongoing support. However, if this will prejudice the welfare of the child, or hamper an investigation under Section 43 or 47 of the Children's Act, the situation should be discussed with Social Services.

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9. In the case of illegal activity of a non-child protection nature, any action that the school takes will always be in the best interests of the pupil. This does not mean that the police will be informed; but contact with the school's DCPO may be made to discuss situations.
10. Some external agencies may be working in the school offering specific advice and support directly to individual pupils. If this is the case, their professional code of confidentiality must be shared with the school and any deviation from the school's policy must be agreed formally with the school and shared with the pupils concerned. Confidentiality must not be permitted where there are child protection concerns. Parents must also be informed that such agencies are working in the school to support pupils on a range of issues.
11. If such a visitor is working in the school and following a different code of confidentiality in line with their professional protocols, members of staff may wish to refer pupils to them before they disclose information in order to maintain pupil confidentiality. Pupils and parents need to be aware of and understand any referral procedures related to this within the school.
12. Members of staff are not obliged to pass on information about pupils to their parents. However, it is only in the most exceptional circumstances that a school would be in the position of having to handle information without parental knowledge. The reasons for not informing parents should be recorded in writing. If a teacher believes a pupil to be in moral or physical risk, or in breach of the law, they must ensure that the pupil is aware of the risks and encourage her/him to tell her/his parents and seek support from them. The Headteacher should always be informed before parents are contacted.
13. All staff and volunteers are expected to sign a confidentiality statement.

Volunteers in School

At Osmani School we value the help of parents, students and others. Everything that volunteers see and hear (particularly in relation to children's, welfare or levels of work) must be held in confidence and not shared with others outside of the school. If volunteers have any questions regarding anything they see or hear in school, or they have concerns about the well-being of a child, they should speak to the class teacher or the Headteacher. Students taking part in recognised qualifications & training will be advised of our confidentiality policy & required to respect it.

Record Keeping

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Every child has a personal record with their learning records etc and settling in information. These records are kept in the classroom and are only accessible to the child's key person or class teacher.

Each child in the Foundation Stage has their own Learning Journal (Wow book). These contain samples of work and observations and are kept at the setting.

Staff records and details are kept locked in the school office.

Staff are aware that when they are discussing a child confidentiality should take priority. This will always be the case regardless of talking with parents or other staff in the setting.

Key Points

- Staff / volunteers will not discuss individual children, other than for the purposes of curriculum planning / group management, with people other than the parents, carers or key person of that child.
- Information given by parents / carers will not be passed on to other adults without permission.
- Issues to do with the employment of staff, whether paid or unpaid, will remain confidential to the people directly involved with making personnel decisions.
- The use of social network internet sites should not be used to discuss any school issues.

Links to Other Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with Child Protection, Behaviour and Inclusion policies.

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