

St Peter's Catholic Voluntary Academy

Confidentiality Policy

October 2023

Aim

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 pupils, parents/carers and staff.

Rationale

St Peter's Catholic Voluntary Academy seeks to put the child at the heart of the learning process and to provide a safe and secure learning environment. It seeks to address 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.

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 safeguarding issues then the correct procedure is 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

- All information about individual children is private and should only be shared with those staff that have a need to know.

- All social services 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.
- The school continues to actively promote a positive ethos and respect for the individual:

The school has appointed the Headteacher, Assistant Head, senior leaders and Family Support Worker as Safeguarding Leaders and they receive regular training.

- a) There is clear guidance for the handling of safeguarding incidents.
 - b) All staff have regular training on safeguarding issues.
 - c) There is clear LA guidance for procedures if a member of staff is accused of abuse.
 - d) Staff are aware that effective growth and development education which brings an understanding of what is and is not acceptable in a relationship, can lead to disclosure of a safeguarding issue.
 - e) Staff are aware of the need to handle all issues about different types of families in a sensitive manner.
 - f) Information collected for one purpose should not be used for another.
- Parents/carers and children need to be aware that the school cannot guarantee total confidentiality in all cases, for example issues involving safeguarding or criminal issues. Parents/carers and children should feel reassured that only in exceptional circumstances confidentiality will be broken.
 - 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.
 - 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.
 - Confidentiality is a whole school issue. Clear ground rules must be set for any classroom work such as circle time and other sessions dealing with sensitive issues such as growth development, internet safety 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 safeguarding 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.

- Health professionals have their own code of practice dealing with confidentiality. Staff should be aware of children with medical needs and the class information sheet should be accessible to staff who need that information.
- Photographs or videos of children should not be used outside of the school premises without parents/carers permission.
- Information about children will be shared with parents but only about their child. Parents should not have access to any other child's books, marks and progress at any time, especially at parents' evenings. However parents should be aware that information about their child will be shared with the receiving school when they change school.
- Where parents work in school on a voluntary basis, any information which they have access to whilst undertaking their role, must be kept confidential and not shared outside of the classroom, or with the Headteacher.
- 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.
- Any personal data will only be kept as long as necessary or for the length of time as stipulated by law.
- Staff laptops are password protected.
- Logs of administration of medication to children should be kept secure.
- Addresses and telephone numbers of parents and children will not be passed on except in exceptional circumstances or to a receiving school.
- Governors need to be mindful that from time to time issues are discussed or brought to their attention about staff and children. All such documents 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.

Please refer to the 'ICT acceptable use policy' for internet related confidentiality issues.