



ENJOY

BELIEVE

ACHIEVE

WINMARLEIGH C.E. SCHOOL

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY 2023

Review date November 2025

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, governors and staff.

Rationale

- Our school seeks to put the child at the heart of the learning process and to provide a safe and secure learning environment.
- Our school 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.
- Schools 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.
- Schools have a duty of care and responsibility towards pupils, parents, governors, staff and volunteers. They also need to work with a range of outside agencies and share information on a professional basis. Striking an effective and professional balance is crucial to the success of the confidentiality policy.

Objectives

- To ensure a consistent approach to handling information about children.
- To foster an ethos of trust within the school.
- To ensure staff, parents, governors and pupils are aware of the school's policy and procedures.
- To encourage children to talk to their parents / carers and staff.
- To ensure pupils and parents know that school staff cannot offer unconditional confidentiality.
- To ensure quality of provision and access for all, including monitoring of cultural, gender and special educational needs.
- To ensure the correct procedure is followed on any child protection issues.
- To ensure that confidentiality is a whole school issue and that ground rules are set for the protection of all.
- To ensure that parents have access to records the school may hold for their child but not of any other child for whom they do not have parental responsibility.

Guidelines

1. All information about individual children is private and should only be shared with those members of staff who have a need to know. Parent volunteers must also be mindful of this.
2. All social services, medical and personal information about a child should be held in a safe place which can only be accessed by school staff.
3. The school actively promotes a positive ethos and respect for the individual:

- The school DSL and back-up DSL receives regular training. The Headteacher has ultimate responsibility for child protection.
 - There is clear guidance for procedures for the handling of safeguarding concerns. All staff have regular training on child protection issues.
 - There is clear guidance for procedures if a member of staff is accused of inappropriate conduct.
 - 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.
 - Staff are aware of the need to handle all issues about different types of families in a sensitive manner.
 - Any intolerance about gender, faith, race, culture or sexuality is unacceptable and should be dealt with in line with the school's behaviour and equalities policies.
 - 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. Our school prides itself on good communication with parents and staff are always available to talk to both children and parents about issues that are causing concern.
 6. The school encourages children to talk to parents about issues causing them concern and may in some cases support the children to talk to their parents.
 7. The school would share with parents any child protection disclosure before going on to inform the correct authorities, unless in exceptional circumstances where it was deemed that this could put the child at further risk.
 8. 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 identified, e.g. in governor reports.
 9. The school has appointed a senior member of staff as DSL. Child protection procedures are understood by staff and training is undertaken every year for all staff. Induction is provided for all staff and volunteers.
 10. Confidentiality is a whole school issue. Clear ground rules must be set for any classroom work such as Circle Time and other PSHE sessions dealing with sensitive issues, e.g. bereavement. School needs to be proactive so children feel supported but information is not necessarily revealed in a public arena. (Note – 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).
 11. Health professionals have their own code of practice for dealing with confidentiality. Staff should be aware of children with medical needs and this information should be accessible to staff who need the information but not on general view to other parents/ carers and children.

12. Photographs of children should not be used without parents' / carers' permission especially in the press and on the internet. Permissions for this are updated annually.
13. 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' evening. Parents should be aware that information about their child will be shared with the receiving school when they change school. 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.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The policy will be reviewed as part of the school's monitoring cycle and will be reviewed on a two year cycle.