

The Penk Valley Federation



Confidentiality Policy

Agreed at Full Governing Body Meeting

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Frequency of Review: 3 years

Policy based on adopted policy of Marshbrook First School

Amendments

2016 – NF/DS/HJ/JA

Confidentiality Policy

September 2016

1. INTRODUCTION

- It is a primary aim of our school that every member of the Penk Valley Federation community feels valued and respected, and that each person is treated fairly and well. We are a caring community, whose values are built on mutual trust and respect for all.
- The school's Confidentiality Policy is therefore designed to support the way in which all members of the school can live and work together in a supportive way. It aims to promote an environment where everyone feels safe and secure and every individual's and family's right to privacy is respected.
- A copy of this policy will be issued to existing staff when it is reviewed and new staff or volunteers on starting.
- We recognise our responsibilities relating to holding, using and safeguarding information received. In practice this means:
 - Making it clear that information is shared on a 'need to know' basis.
 - Not discussing personal information relating to any of our stakeholders, ie those who are connected to the school, in a general way or where it may be overheard.
 - Keeping all personal records confidential.
 - Using teaching methods which protect confidentiality.

2. RELATED POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS

- See Anti-bullying, Behaviour and Discipline, Care and Control, Child Protection, Equality, Privacy Agreement, Parental Consent forms, Use of video and Photographic Images, Safeguarding, Whistleblowing

3. RELATED LEGISLATION

- Human Rights Act 1998 Gives everyone the right to "respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence", unless this is overridden by 'public interest', eg for reasons of Child Protection, for the protection of public safety, public order, health or morals or for the rights and freedoms of others.
- Data Protection Act 1998 Applies to: personal data of living, identifiable individuals (not anonymised data); manual and electronic records. Schools need to be clear, when collecting personal data, of the purposes for which it will be used and should have policies to clarify this to staff, pupils and parents/carers.
- Freedom of Information Act 2000 Amends the Data Protection Act. Gives everyone the right to request any records a public body, including schools, holds about them. A school may withhold information it has if it is considered the information may damage the recipient if disclosed. Schools' data or record keeping policy should also cover the requirements of this Act.

4. PROCEDURES

- Information about individuals (pupils, parents, staff), however obtained, is private and will only be shared with those who have a need to know, ie those who need the information in their professional capacity.
- Information which relates to any individual stakeholder or brings our school into disrepute will never be posted or shared online, through any means including all areas of social media, eg Facebook, Twitter.
- Even when information appears to be widely known, it will not be assumed by those immediately involved that it is appropriate to discuss or share this information further.
- All social services, medical and personal information will be held in a safe and secure place which cannot be accessed by individuals other than nominated school staff. It will be considered whether staff concerned have access to all, or only some, of the information.
- Parents/carers and children will be made aware that our school cannot guarantee total confidentiality and that we have a duty to report child protection issues. Any child protection disclosure will be shared with parents/carers before we inform the appropriate authorities unless we believe that this puts the child at greater risk.
- Photographs or video of children will not be used without parent/carer's permission and our policy on the use of images of children will be adhered to at all times.
- We ensure that parents/carers have a right of access to any records the school may hold on their child, within legislative requirements. Parents/carers will not have access to any other child's books or assessment data at any time.
- All requests for information, about our school or stakeholders, by an outside agency or the media will not be commented on by the person to whom the request was made, but will be referred immediately to the headteacher.
- Concerns about colleagues should only be discussed with the headteacher or Assistant Head or, in the case of the headteacher, the chair of governors.
- Any issue which staff have been asked to keep confidential, must remain confidential.
- Clear ground rules will be set for any classroom work such as circle time and other PSHE sessions dealing with sensitive issues such as sex and relationship education and drug education. Staff are aware of how to deal with disclosures of child protection issues.
- The important role of the Governing body ensures it has to be informed of highly personal and confidential matters at each meeting. The Governors' Guide to the law states: 'how individual governors vote, and opinions by governors involving a named person which are in a way sensitive or critical, should always be regarded as confidential'. Although decisions reached at governors' meetings are normally made public through the minutes and otherwise, the discussions on which decisions are based will be regarded as confidential.

POLICY REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years, or before if necessary, by the Governing Body.