



## **School Confidentiality Policy**

### **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**

- Thames View Infants School seeks 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- The School has a duty of care and responsibility towards pupils, parents/carers and staff. It also needs to work with a range of outside agencies and share information on a professional basis. Striking an effective and professional balance between these two aims is crucial to the success of a confidentiality policy.

### **Objectives:**

1. To provide consistent messages in school about handling information about children once it has been received.
2. To foster an ethos of trust within the school.
3. To ensure that staff, parents and pupils are aware of the school's confidentiality, policy and procedures.
4. To reassure pupils that their best interests will be maintained.
5. To encourage children to talk to their parents and carers.
6. To ensure that pupils and parents/carers know that school staff cannot offer unconditional confidentiality.
7. To ensure that there is equality of provision and access for all including rigorous monitoring of cultural, gender and special educational needs.
8. To ensure that if there are child protection issues, then the correct procedure is followed.



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9. To ensure that confidentiality is a whole school issue and that in lessons ground rules are set for the protection of all.
10. To understand that health professionals are bound by a different code of conduct.
11. To ensure that parents have a right of access to any records that the school may hold on their child, but not to any other child for which they do not have parental responsibility.

### **Guidelines**

1. All information about individual children is private and should only be shared with those staff who have a need to know.
2. All social services, medical 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.
3. The school continues to actively promote a positive ethos and respect for the individual:
  - a) The Child Protection Officer receives regular training. The Headteacher has ultimate responsibility for child protection.
  - b) There is clear guidance for procedures for the handling of child protection incidents. All staff have regular training on child protection issues.
  - c) There are clear guidance procedures if a member of staff is accused of inappropriate conduct.
  - d) 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.
  - e) Staff are aware of the need to handle all issues about different types of families in a sensitive manner.
  - f) Any intolerance about gender, faith, race, culture or sexuality is unacceptable and should follow the schools discipline policy.
  - g) 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. The school prides itself on good communication with parents and carers and staff are always available to talk to both children and parents/carers 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. Discussing concerns with parents can help you decide whether abuse is taking place, but you should discuss this with the Child Protection Co-ordinator **BEFORE** taking this course of action. Concerns should **NOT** be discussed with parents if you consider that this will put the child at greater risk. The Child Protection Co-ordinator will seek the advice of Social Services when there is doubt.
6. Parents/carers and children should feel reassured that in exceptional circumstances confidentiality will be broken.



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7. 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 within these categories but individual children should not be identified.
8. The school has appointed a senior member of staff as Child Protection Officer. Child protection procedures are understood by staff and training is undertaken every two years for all staff.
9. 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 such as death etc. Strategies are in place, and all children are aware of them, for dealing with sensitive information which may fall outside the boundaries of child protection procedures. School needs to be proactive so that children feel supported but information is not necessarily 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.
10. 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 the information, but not on general view to other parents/carers and children.
11. Photographs of children should not be used without parents/carers permission especially in the press and on the internet and further details about this are clearly stated in the School's Acceptable (Internet) Use Policy.
12. 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. However, 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. It should be clearly understood by those who have access to it, and whether those concerned have access to all, or only some of the information.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

1. The policy will be reviewed as part of the school's monitoring cycle.