



# Rushton CE (VC) Primary School

Happy Learning Together

## Confidentiality Policy

### Aim

To protect members of the school community: children, staff and parents, 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

Rushton Primary School seeks to put the child at the heart of the learning process and to provide a safe and secure learning environment. We seek to implement the underlying principles of the Every Child Matters Agenda and to address issues which may arise about confidentiality. We are 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:

1. To provide consistent messages in school about handling information about school issues and the school community.
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 encourage children to be aware of confidentiality issues relating to their peers.
5. To reassure pupils that their best interests will be maintained.
6. To encourage children to talk to their parents and carers.
7. To ensure that pupils and parents/carers know that school staff cannot offer unconditional confidentiality.
8. 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

1. Staff must understand that issues relating to the school should not be discussed outside of school. If staff have concerns about issues, there are proper protocols to follow. Gossip and breaches of confidence will be treated as disciplinary matters.
2. Volunteer helpers in school must sign to say they have read the Adult Helpers Policy which outlines expectations in confidentiality. Breaches of confidence may result in adults not being allowed to work in school.
3. All information about individual children is private and should only be shared with those staff that have a need to know.
4. All social services, medical and personal information about individuals should be held in a safe and secure place which cannot be accessed by individuals other than school staff. Information on staff can only be accessed by the Head and Office Staff, some information can only be accessed by the Headteacher.
5. Good communication with parents and carers is paramount and staff are 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.
6. All individuals 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 individuals should not be able to be identified.
7. Confidentiality is a whole school issue. Clear ground rules must be set for any classroom work such as circle time and other PHSE session dealing with sensitive issues such as sex and relationships and drugs.
8. All children, parents, staff members and governors must enjoy privacy from gossip. All matters are dealt with according to the school's procedures and are out of the eye of the wider community. It is important that:-
  - a. Staff do not discuss details of school issues to any person without direct professional connection to and interest in the welfare and education of the individual concerned.
  - b. Adults should avoid discussing an individual child's behaviour within hearing of another child in school.
  - c. Staff do not enter into detailed discussion about a child's behaviour with other children or their parents.
  - d. Governors do not divulge details about issues or individuals (be they staff, families or individual children) to any person outside of the meeting. This also applies to governor visits to the school. Adults in school working as volunteers do not report cases of poor behaviour or pupil discipline to other parents in the school. This allows teachers to deal with such matters in line with school policy.
  - e. At Governing Body meetings matters such as pupil exclusion, personnel issues and personal details where any member of the school community is identified, will be considered confidential minutes which are filed separately and are not published.
  - f. Staff performance management will be carried out privately. Targets for individuals, named lesson observation sheets and other performance data will be kept in the office.
  - g. Matters of Child Protection are made known to staff on a need to know basis.
  - h. Class teachers and support staff are aware of some confidential matters in order to support individuals. These staff will respect the sensitivity of such cases and not divulge information to people unconnected professionally with the individual concerned.

i. When adult volunteers are working in classes, they do not discuss educational matters outside the classroom. For example the specific use of teaching assistant time for particular pupils or groups of pupils.

9. Health professionals are bound by their professional codes of conduct to maintain confidentiality when working in a one to one situation. When working in a classroom, they are bound by relevant school policies. In line with best practice guidance, like other school staff, they will seek to protect privacy and prevent inappropriate personal disclosures in a classroom setting, by negotiating ground rules and using distancing techniques.

10. Staff should be aware of children with medical needs. This information should be accessible to staff who need it 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 internet. This is often a cultural issue of which the school needs to be aware. Children's names may be used unless parents have requested otherwise.

12. Information about children will be shared with parents but only about their child. However parents should be aware that information about their child will be shared with the receiving school when they change school.

13. All personal information about children and staff including social services records should be regarded as confidential. It should be clearly understood by those who have access to it, whether those concerned have access to all, or only some of the information.

14. Information regarding health reports such as speech therapy, medical reports, SEN reports, SEN minutes of meetings and social services minutes of meetings and reports will be circulated in envelopes and once read should be returned for secure filing.

15. Logs of administration of medication to children should be kept secure and each child should have their own individual log.

16. In all other notes, briefing sheets etc a child should not be able to be identified.

17. Addresses and telephone numbers of staff, parents and children will not be passed on except in exceptional circumstances or to a receiving school.

18. 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.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

1. The policy will be reviewed as part of the schools monitoring cycle.

2. The Head teacher has responsibility for monitoring this policy. Following any curriculum monitoring a positional statement is written which contributes to the School Development Plan.

### **Conclusion**

Rushton Primary 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. The care and safety of the individual is the key issue behind this document.

Signed on behalf of the Governor's Curriculum Committee

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