



Confidentiality Policy

Aim

To protect children 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 establishment which is understood by pupils, parents/carers and staff.

Rationale

St Paul's seeks to put the child at the heart of the learning process and to provide a safe and secure environment. 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 at St Paul's about handling information about children once it has been received
- To foster an ethos of trust within the establishment.
- To ensure that staff, parents and pupils are aware of the confidentiality, policy and procedures.
- To reassure children that their best interests will be maintained.
- To encourage children to talk to their parents and carers.
- To ensure that children and parents/carers know that school staff cannot offer unconditional confidentiality.
- To ensure that there is equality of provision and access for all.
- To ensure that if there are child protection issues then the correct procedure is followed.
- To ensure that confidentiality is a whole establishment issue and that in lessons ground rules are set for the protection of all.

Guidelines

- All information about individual children and parents is private and will only be shared with those staff that have a need to know
- All social services, medical and personal information about a child will be held in a safe and secure place which cannot be accessed by individuals other than appropriate staff.
- St Paul's continues to actively promote a positive ethos and respect for the individual by:-
 - a) Having a Dedicated Safeguarding Lead and deputies who receive regular training.
 - b) Having a clear safeguarding policy
 - c) Having clear guidance and procedures if a member of staff is accused of abuse. (See safeguarding policy and Surrey guidance)
 - d) Developing staff awareness 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 safeguarding issue.
 - e) Staff being aware of the need to handle all issues about different types of families in a sensitive manner.

f) Staff and all stakeholders understanding that intolerance about gender, faith, race, culture or sexuality is unacceptable.

- Parents/carers and children need to be aware that St Paul's cannot guarantee total confidentiality and that the establishment has a duty to report safeguarding issues.
- St Paul's 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.
- 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 and Sure Start centres by these categories but individual children should not be able to be identified.
- Confidentiality is a whole establishment issue. Clear ground rules must be set for any classroom work such as circle time and other PHSCE session dealing with sensitive issues such as sex and relationship and drugs. Strategies are in place for dealing with sensitive information which may fall outside the boundaries of child protection procedures. We need 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.
- We have a policy on using photographic images and parents are asked to sign a consent form (See Safeguarding Policy)
- Information about children will be shared with parents but only about their own child(ren). Parents should not have access to any other child's books, marks and progress grades at any time. However parents should be aware that information about their child will be shared with the receiving school when they change 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 papers should be considered. 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.