

Lowton West Primary School



Confidentiality Policy

Policy reviewed by J. Westhead

Date policy reviewed: May 2023

Ratified by Governing Body:

Dr G. Merrett (Chair of Governors)
Mrs J. Westhead (Headteacher)

Review date: May 2024

Lowton West Primary School Confidentiality Policy

Aiming High Together



School Vision

To inspire, achieve and succeed, we will aim high and build dreams and futures together.

Mission Statement

Providing the highest quality education, care and support for the whole school community.

Our mission statement is based on RESPECT:

R = *Recognising the needs of the individual child*

E = *Ensuring a unique and engaging curriculum*

S = *Supporting each other to learn and achieve*

P = *Passionate about providing the highest quality education*

E = *Encouraging creativity, self – expression and imagination*

C = *Creating confident, resilient, life – long learners*

T = *The voice of everybody is heard*

All the above statements help us to understand how we can all make a positive contribution to the school and the wider community.

We will do this through our core values:

- Respect
- Resilience
- Kindness
- Confidence

We also, at Lowton West Primary School, strive to develop and uphold British Values. The five British values that the Government has identified for schools to focus on are: -

- Democracy
- The Rule of Law
- Individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
- Developing personal and social responsibility
- Respect for British Institutions

There are more details on how our school demonstrates and develops these British Values in our British Values Policy and on our website.

LOWTON WEST CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

STATEMENT OF INTENT

Lowton West Primary School understands that the safety, wellbeing and protection of pupils is of paramount importance. With this in mind, all pupils must be able to expect certain levels of trust when sharing personal information with school staff. Pupils need to know that they can seek help from the school in a safe and confidential manner. This policy guides school staff, volunteers and visitors on the policy and procedures surrounding confidentiality.

Staff members adopt a supportive and accepting attitude towards pupils as part of their general responsibility for pastoral care. It is our hope that pupils and parents/carers feel free to discuss any concerns and worries they have, that may affect educational progress with members of the school team.

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.

The Confidentiality Policy aims to:

- Promote a supportive and accepting ethos within the school.
- Safeguard the wellbeing of pupils.
- Build trust between pupils and staff.
- Empower pupils to exercise control over their situation and voice their concerns.
- Prevent the school dealing with each disclosure in isolation.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

This policy has due regard to legislation, including, but not limited to, the following:

The Education Act 2011

The Data Protection Act 1998

The Human Rights Act 1998

The Freedom of Information Act 2000

This policy will be implemented in conjunction with the following school policies:

GDPR - Data Protection Policy

Safeguarding, Child Protection and Early Help Policy

Anti-Bullying Policy

Whistleblowing Policy

Use of Images Policy

DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this policy, 'confidentiality' is an understanding that any information shared with someone in trust will only be passed on to a third party with the prior agreement of the person disclosing it. For the purpose of this policy, 'disclosure' is the sharing of any private information, but which is not solely in relation to child protection issues. Disclosure of the contents of a conversation may be discussed with professional colleagues, but the confider is not identified except in predetermined circumstances.

Lowton West Primary School seeks to put the child at the heart of the learning process and to provide a safe and secure learning 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 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 that 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.
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 different code of conduct.
11. 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. All information about individual children is private and should only be shared with those staff that 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 school has appointed Senior Leaders for child protection who receive regular training. The Head teacher has the ultimate responsibility for child protection.
 - b) There is clear guidance for the handling of child protection incidents and all staff have regular training on child protection issues.

- c) There is clear guidance for 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, gender identity, faith, race, culture or sexuality is unacceptable and should follow the school's 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. The school would share with parents any child protection disclosure before going on to inform the correct authorities.

6. Parents/carers and children should feel reassured that in exceptional circumstances confidentiality will be broken.

7. All children have a right to the same level of confidentiality irrespective of gender, gender identity, race, religion, medical concerns and special educational needs.

A lot of data is generated in school by these categories but individual children should not be able to be identified.

8. The school has an appointed senior member of staff, Mrs Westhead, and in her absence, Mrs Gould, as the Designated Person for Safeguarding. In the absence of both Mrs Westhead and Mrs Gould, the alternative Designated Person for Safeguarding is Mrs Brooks.

Child protection procedures are understood by staff and training is undertaken every three years for all staff. Annual training and updates are also provided throughout the school year.

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 loss and bereavement, sex and relationships and drugs. Strategies are in place and all children are aware of them for dealing with sensitive information which may fall outside of the boundaries for child protection procedures. School needs to be proactive so 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 that 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 internet. At no time should the child's full name be used with a photograph so they can be identified. The school gives clear guidance to parents about the use of cameras and videos during public school events. The press may request to publish the full names of pupils to go with photographs; if this is the case for a specific event receiving press coverage, then the school will seek parental permission first. Further details are provided in the school's Use of Images 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 grades 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.

Information regarding health reports such as speech therapy, medical reports, SEND reports, SEND minutes of meetings and reports will be circulated in envelopes and once read should be filed securely. Logs of administration of medication to children should be kept secure and each child should have their own individual log. In all other notes, briefing sheets, etc... a child should not be able to be identified.

13. 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 marked as confidential. 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 need to be 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 arise outside the governing body.

Students and Volunteer Helpers at Lowton West

'Confidentiality' also refers to protecting the information we hold about the pupils in this school and their families. All staff will endeavour to maintain confidentiality when appropriate, for example by considering the conversations they have about pupils and their families, the purpose of these conversations and where these take place. All students and Volunteers at the school will be made aware of this through our Confidentiality Statement (see below).

Confidentiality Statement for Students and Volunteer Helpers:

Staff conversations at breaks and lunchtimes are often about school, individual children and their families. We ask that such conversations are regarded as confidential. Similarly, the work, progress and behaviour of individual children is a matter of fact for the teacher, the child and the parents/carers of the child.

Any comments made by Students or Volunteers about a child, or an incident at school may be misinterpreted and lead to misunderstandings. Small incidents are dealt with in school

and should end there. More serious incidents will be discussed, in confidence, with parents. We feel sure you will understand the need for such confidentiality on school matters. As a Volunteer in the school we ask that you respect confidentiality on such matters to avoid misunderstandings and upset.

Monitoring and Evaluation

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