

LETHBRIDGE PRIMARY SCHOOL

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

Context

Lethbridge Primary School recognises its legal duty under section 175 *Education Act 2002* to work with other agencies in safeguarding children and protecting them from “significant harm”. It also recognises that a clear confidentiality policy will support the school in meeting the Every Child Matters outcomes of “*be healthy*” and “*stay safe*”.

We seek to adopt an open and accepting attitude towards children as part of our responsibility for pastoral care. We hope that parents and children will be able to talk about any concerns which may affect progress, and that they will see school as a safe place.

The benefits of working to a confidentiality policy are:

- it highlights the importance of pupils being able to talk to adults in school, sharing their problems in a safe and supportive environment
- it safeguards the well being of those involved in the disclosure of confidential information

A definition of confidentiality

Confidentiality is an understanding that any information shared with someone in trust can only be passed onto a third party with the agreement of the person disclosing it. A disclosure is the sharing of any private or personal information; it does not just relate to child protection issues.

The limits of confidentiality

- Staff, pupils and parents will be informed about the limits of confidentiality in school. Some issues have to be shared with other people/agencies e.g. Child Protection
- Pupils will be advised (wherever possible prior to a disclosure) what requires to be shared, what will be done with the information and who else will have access to it.
- Members of staff will be made aware who (if anyone) to inform in the event of different types of disclosures of a personal nature
- Confidential discussions need to take place in a confidential environment. The staffroom, the classroom or the playground are not always appropriate.
- Parents have the right to view educational records upon written request. It is therefore not possible to guarantee the confidentiality of recorded information. A period of 15 days is allowed in which to respond to an access request.
- **Staff are required to pass on confidential information in all Child Protection issues**

Responsibilities to parents/carers

- Members of staff are not legally obliged to inform parents in many instances when personal information has been disclosed.
- In most cases information provided by the pupil will only be passed onto parents with the pupil’s consent
- When the school chooses to inform parents it will only be done if it is in the best interests of the child

Staff roles and responsibilities

- All staff will be made aware of the confidentiality policy and their entitlement to training and support its implementation
- All members of staff are under a contractual obligation to uphold the policy as with all other school policies
- Members of staff can seek advice for themselves when dealing with a disclosure whilst keeping the individual's identity anonymous. The school will keep an up-to-date list of appropriate contacts for staff so they can seek support. This will include the following members of staff:
 - Headteacher
 - Deputy Head and Child Protection coordinator
- The following external agencies will support the school
 - Child Protection service
 - Health –school nurse
 - Social Services
- Any external agencies working with pupils from the school, particularly in sensitive areas, need to be aware of the school's confidentiality policy

Recording information

- Pupils and parents have the right to gain access to processed information upon written request
- Agencies such as the Police and Social Services may be able to get a court order to gain access to processed information which the school deems confidential. This may include the LEA's legal department and insurers, as well as other solicitors e.g. in custody cases
- **Any information recorded about a pupil will be written in a way that assumes it will be read by either the subject or their parents/carers**

Monitoring and Evaluation

- The policy will be reviewed after each significant disclosure to ensure that the policy and procedures work appropriately
- It will reviewed bi-annually in line with PSHE documents

Communicating the policy

- The policy will be communicated to all school staff, governors, parents and relevant visitors
- The policy will be included in the Staff Policy File
- The policy will be on the school's publication scheme
- The flow chart for how to deal with confidential disclosures will be communicated to all staff and will be displayed by the sign-in book in the office

Governors

Governors are made aware that all discussions are confidential. A confidentiality briefing is given at the beginning of every governor meeting.

Approved by Governors February 2017
Review Date: February 2019