



# FARNWORTH CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

## CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

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Legal Status	Non-statutory

Farnworth Church of England Primary School believes that all children, regardless of ability and behaviour are valued equally. Groups of pupils (eg. SEND pupils, children in care, EAL pupils etc) are not viewed as separate but are part of the whole school approach. Different children's needs are recognised and met through varied and flexible provision and the use of different styles of teaching & learning throughout the curriculum. This policy therefore applies to all our children, regardless of their gender, faith, race, culture, family circumstances or sexuality.

### **Our Ethos**

'At Farnworth, we all grow together and we all have a voice. As a faith community, we are inspired by God to be our best - to be good people who see and celebrate the goodness in others too. Our gifts and talents are nurtured and we are valued and cared for in a community filled with love and the hope that as followers of Jesus, we can bring his light to the world. Here we learn, laugh and love as our lives are shaped by our values, our faith and our experiences together - ready for the journey ahead.'

Farnworth Church of England Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare and safety of all children and expects all staff to share in this commitment.



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**AIMS**

The primary aim of this policy is 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.

This policy also aims to:

- ensure that the school’s attitude to confidentiality is easily understood and that there is trust in the boundaries of confidentiality operating within the school.
- allow children and adults in school to enjoy privacy from gossip.
- enable the school to be fair to all its community.



## **RATIONALE**

At Farnworth Church of England Primary School we believe that:

- The safety, well-being and protection of our pupils are the paramount considerations in all decisions staff make about confidentiality. The appropriate sharing of information between school staff is an essential element in ensuring our pupils' well-being and safety.
- Pupils, parents/carers and staff need to know the boundaries of confidentiality in order to feel safe and comfortable discussing personal issues and concerns. They need to have an awareness of how the policy works in practice.
- Everyone in the school community needs to know that no-one can offer absolute confidentiality.
- Everyone in the school community needs to know the limits of confidentiality that can be offered by individuals within the school community so they can make informed decisions about the most appropriate person to talk to.
- Farnworth Church of England Primary 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.

## **PURPOSES**

- To foster an ethos of trust within the school.
- To provide consistent messages in school about handling information about children once it has been received.
- That there is a need to safeguard confidentiality and preserve information security.
- That information about an individual belongs to him/her, therefore individuals have a right to expect that their personal information is kept confidential. This principle acknowledges that individuals have the choice regarding what, if any information they wish to share, unless it is detrimental to the individual, another person or the school community.
- 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.
- To encourage children to talk to their parents and carers.
- That guidelines relating to confidentiality operate within the school.
- That the policy and guidance applies to all individuals concerned with the school – children, parents/carers, staff, governors, volunteers, visitors or members of other organisations.
- To ensure that there is equality of provision and access for all including rigorous monitoring of cultural, gender and special educational needs.

## **GUIDELINES**

In practice there are few circumstances where absolute confidentiality can be offered in a school. We strive to strike a balance between ensuring the safety, well-being and



protection of our pupils and staff, ensuring there is an ethos of trust where pupils and staff can ask for help when they need it and ensuring that when it is essential to share personal information, child protection procedures and good practice are followed. Against this background, we adhere to the following guidelines:

- Standards of confidentiality apply to everyone
- Staff will not discuss details of individual cases to any person without a direct professional connection to and interest in the welfare and education of the individual concerned.
- If a disclosure of information is made which is sensitive and not known to a member of staff and a request is made that that information is not passed on, this request is honoured unless this is unavoidable in order for staff to fulfil their professional responsibilities in relation to Child Protection or part of a police investigation.
- Where the child discloses to an adult any information which could be considered to be a Child Protection issue (for example, disclosure of abuse, the use of illegal drugs, participation in sexual activity or contemplating activity), then the adult makes it clear to the child that he / she can offer no guarantee of the confidentiality given the serious nature of the situation.
- When a Child Protection incident is suspected then advice is sought by referral to the Senior Designated Officer; relevant policies (for example, Child Protection, Drug Incident); Social Services duty team and / or Safeguarding Officer.
- In light of the Children's Act 1989 a child is always told that the concern is being shared, what information will be passed on and to whom. Information passed on is on the basis of "need to know" and the child is reassured that his / her best interest will be maintained.
- Parents / carers are informed, if appropriate (refer to Child Protection Policy), and support is offered to them and the child.
- 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.
- The school continues to actively promote a positive ethos and respect for the individual:
  - 1) The school has appointed a senior lead teacher for child protection who receives regular training.
  - 2) There is clear guidance for the handling of child protection incidents. And all staff have regular training on child protection issues.
  - 3) There is clear guidance for procedures if a member of staff is accused of abuse.
  - 4) Any intolerance about gender, faith, race, culture or sexuality is unacceptable and should follow the schools discipline policy.
- 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 child protection disclosure before going on to inform the correct authorities if appropriate.



- When sensitive aspects of the curriculum are being taught / discussed in the classroom situation (for example, relationship and sex education, drug education) then staff set ground rules to protect privacy and prevent inappropriate personal disclosures in a classroom setting. It is appreciated that effective teaching which develops an understanding of what is and what is not acceptable, can lead to a disclosure of a child protection nature.
- Staff will not enter into detailed discussions about a particular child's behaviour with other children or their parents/carers.
- 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. The information should be clearly understood by those who have access to it, and whether others concerned have access to all, or only some of the information.
- Matters of Child Protection are made known to staff on a need to know basis.
- Information regarding health reports such as speech therapy, medical reports, SEN reports, SEN minutes of meetings and social services minutes of meetings and reports should be securely filed. 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. Addresses and telephone numbers of parents and children will not be passed on except in exceptional circumstances or to a receiving school.
- At full Governing Body meetings matters such as pupil exclusion, personnel issues and personal details of any member of the school community will be dealt with in the Head teacher's report under Part 2, confidential business. This is not for the knowledge of persons outside the Governing Body meeting. Matters in Part 2 are generally anonymised minuted separately and minutes are not published in the public domain.
- Governors, in particular those sitting on Discipline Committees, will not divulge details about individuals (be they staff, families or individual children) to any person outside of the meeting.
- Parents in school working as volunteers in the office, classrooms, or as part of the Parents and Teachers Association will not report cases of poor behaviour or pupil discipline to other parents. This allows the teachers to deal with such matters in line with school policy and on occasions to allow children to put the matter right without the direct involvement of their parents.
- Visitors working in classrooms (including health professionals who operate within professional codes of conduct) are bound by the relevant School policies. The member of staff responsible for inviting the visitor makes him / her aware of the policies.
- When volunteers such as parents and friends of the school are working in classes they do not discuss matters outside of the classroom.
- Volunteers, students and supply teachers are asked to read this policy before



working in school.

- 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.
- Photographs of children should not be used without parents/carers permission especially in the press and internet. The school gives clear guidance to parents about the use of cameras/phones and videos during public school events.
- Staff performance management will be carried out privately. Targets for individuals, named lesson observation sheets and other performance data will be securely stored in the Head teacher's office. A copy will also be held by the person to whom the information pertains.
- It is important that 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.
- If information is strictly confidential, then a breach of such confidences may be regarded as misconduct, which may result in disciplinary action.

## **Inclusion**

Where it is deemed that discussing an individual case with a class or group will support the inclusion of that child, permission will be sought from the child and his/her parents or carers prior to any such discussions taking place.

## **Implementation**

Farnworth Church of England Primary School ensures that this Policy is implemented in the following ways:

- The full Policy is given to staff, governors and volunteers and made available to children, parents / carers on request. The policy is also published on the school's website.
- The practice of confidentiality and awareness of the Policy is incorporated in all staff induction and volunteer training.

## **Breaches**

Breaches of confidentiality will be treated as a serious matter. Procedures for addressing perceived breaches are found in the following documents:

Complaints Procedure  
Grievance Procedure (for staff).  
Disciplinary Procedure

## **Halton Borough Council Confidentiality Reporting Code**

Halton Borough Council is committed to openness, probity and accountability. Employees who have concerns are expected to voice those concerns, including



issues relating to gender, race, bullying, malpractice, improper conduct, conduct which is a criminal offence or a breach of the law, fraud, unauthorised use of public funds or other unethical conduct. The overriding concern for the employer or employee should be that it would be in the public interest for the malpractice to be corrected and appropriate sanctions adopted.

The Council does not tolerate any harassment or victimisation (including informal pressures) and takes appropriate action to protect an individual when a concern is raised in good faith.

All concerns are treated in confidence and every effort is made not to reveal the identity of the individual, if this is desired. However, at an appropriate time, the person may need to give evidence as a witness.

Generally, initially a concern should be raised with an immediate manager, the Headteacher or Chair of Governors. This depends upon the seriousness and sensitivity of the issues and who is suspected of the malpractice. Further advice is available on <http://hbcweb.halton-borough.gov.uk> in Halton Borough Council Confidential Reporting Code. There is a copy of the Code in the School's Whistleblowing Policy.

### **Policy Review**

The Confidentiality Policy will be reviewed in the light of an incident, training, changes in legislation or at the request of a member of the School Community. Any amendments will be agreed by the staff and Governing Body.