



# Shawlands Primary School Policy

**Confidentiality Policy  
REVIEWED EVERY 3 YEARS**

**Revised Summer 2023**

**Approved by the Governing Body on:**

**Aim**

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.

**Rationale**

Shawlands Primary School seeks to put the child at the heart of the learning process and to provide a safe and secure learning environment. It seeks to implement GDPR principles and requirements as well as all relevant Code of Conduct and Safeguarding policies.

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 in school about handling information about children once it has been received.

- To ensure that staff, parents and pupils are aware of the school's confidentiality policy and procedures.
- To foster an ethos of trust within the school and to ensure that confidentiality is a whole school issue.
- To ensure that pupils and parents/carers know that school staff cannot offer unconditional confidentiality.
- To ensure that if there are child protection issues then the correct procedure is followed.
- 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 for whom they do not have parental responsibility.

**Guidelines**

- Good communication is key to effective safeguarding but certain information about individual children is private and should only be shared with those staff who need to know.
- All social services, medical and personal information about a child should be held in a safe and secure manner which cannot be accessed by individuals other than the appropriate school staff.
- The school continues to actively promote a positive ethos and respect for the individual.
- The school has appointed a designated lead for child protection who receives regular training.
- There is a clear and separate policy for the handling of child protection incidents. All staff members have regular training on child protection issues. New staff receive an appropriate induction around these procedures.
- There is clear guidance for procedures if a member of staff is accused of abuse (allegations against staff).
- Staff members 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.
- Staff are aware of the need to handle all issues about different types of families in a sensitive manner.
- 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.
- The school will contact a parent about any concerns relating to Child Protection before making any appropriate referral. Sexual exploitation information can be shared without the prior permission or approval of a parent.

- The school prides itself on good communication with parents and carers and staff members are available to talk to both children and parents/carers about issues that are causing concern.
- All children have a right to the same level of confidentiality irrespective of gender, race, religion, medical concerns and special educational needs.
- Clear ground rules are set for any classroom work such as circle time and other PHSE / SRE 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. School needs to be proactive so children feel supported, and 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.
- Health professionals have their own code of practice dealing with confidentiality. Staff should be aware of children with medical needs and this information should be accessible to staff who need it 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. At no time should the child's full name be used with a photograph so that they can be identified. The school gives clear guidance to parents about the use of camera phones during public school events (see related policy on use of photography).
- Information about children will be shared with parents but only about their child. Parents should have access to any other child's information at any time. However, parents should be aware that information about their child will be shared with the receiving school when they transfer.
- Information regarding health report, SEN reports, SEN minutes of meetings and social services minutes of meetings and reports will be circulated in envelopes and once read should be kept in a safe place for example in the SEN room in locked cupboards or files.
- Only secure email addresses should be used for internal information sharing between staff and leaders.
- Care plans, for pupils with a medical need, are created to make all staff aware of any problems that may arise. These may be displayed in areas accessed by staff regularly.
- All key documents that are no longer required should be shredded immediately.
- All confidential records relating to finance or special educational needs should be stored centrally in locked cupboards or files.
- In the case of emergency, or to effectively safeguard children, personal information may be shared with other services including social care, police officers, health professionals, etc.
- Logs of administration of medication to children should be kept securely in the Medical Room. 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.
- Governors need to be mindful that from time to time issues are discussed or brought to their attention about staff and children, and must observe complete confidentiality in relation to such matters. All papers should be marked as confidential and should be securely stored or shredded after meetings. Although decisions reached at governors' meetings are normally made public through the minutes, the discussions on which decisions are based should be regarded as confidential. Governors should exercise the highest degree of prudence when discussions of potentially contentious issues arise outside the governing body.

## **Conclusion**

Shawlands 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.