Freeman Community Primary School

Confidentiality Policy

Adopted: November 2015

Signed: S Hayter

Position: Chair of Governors

Reviewed date: June 2026

Next review: June 2028

Introduction
All staff, external agencies / visitors working with pupils as part of the curriculum or the school's pastoral support procedures, pupils and parents should be made aware of this policy. It is of particular importance to staff involved with the personal, social, health and education (PSHE), including sex and relationships education (SRE) and drug education. It sets out guidelines for all staff about pupil information that they can regard as confidential and that which they cannot. Any external agencies / visitors to the school who are teaching or working with groups of pupils must also abide by this policy.

Information sharing
As a School, we share information with parents, carers and the child. We also make sure that parents, carers and children can share information with us and be confident that information shared will only be used for the benefit of the child. Any information shared will always be respectful of the privacy of the children and their parents / carers in line with our privacy notices and our data protection policy.

Procedures for Confidentiality within the School
1. Any information that a pupil discloses to a member of staff or visitor should not be passed on to other colleagues indiscriminately but should only be passed on to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or alternate who may share the information on a "need to know basis".

2. Members of staff should not offer pupils or their parents, blanket or unconditional confidentiality.

3. Any information concerning a pupil's behaviour or conduct that is likely to cause harm to themselves or to others should be passed on to the Headteacher and / or other agencies as determined by the Headteacher.

4. As a school we should make it known to every parent and child our confidentiality policy (at age appropriate level). It should be made clear when and with whom information will be shared. For more information on who we share information with see our privacy notices and data protection policy which can be found on the school website.

5. When embarking on a lesson, or a programme of lessons, that may well touch on sensitive and/or controversial issues, teachers should clarify with pupils the issue of confidentiality. An unrealistic confidentiality agreement should not be offered to pupils. Teaching staff should establish ground rules in order to avoid inappropriate questions and answers which may lead to personal disclosures.

6. Teachers need to be aware that effective sex and relationships education, which brings an understanding of what is and is not acceptable in a relationship, can lead to disclosure of a child protection issue. If a personal disclosure is made, the member of staff should explain that such information can, and should, be kept confidential within the class, but that some information may need to be passed on to colleagues (DSL or Alternate).

7. Where a pupil discloses information about physical or sexual abuse, neglect or emotional abuse, the member of staff or visitor must follow the schools child protection and safeguarding policy and pass this information on to the DSL or alternate without delay.

8. The Trust's child protection and safeguarding policy, in conjunction with Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership guidelines should be followed in respect of cases concerning child protection. If someone believes that a child may be suffering, or may be at risk of suffering, significant harm, then he/she should always refer his/her concerns to the DSL who will contact the Social Services department. The school will generally seek to discuss any concerns with the family and, where possible, seek their agreement to making referrals to Social Services. However, this should only be done where such discussion and agreement-seeking will not place a child at increased risk of significant harm.

9. If such disclosed information is to be passed on the pupil should be informed of:

- the information disclosed;
- the reasons for the disclosure; and
- the details of the persons or organisations who will be made aware of the disclosure including anyone who will be able to access this information.

The pupils should also be reassured that they will be offered appropriate, ongoing support. However, if this will prejudice the welfare of the child, or hamper an investigation under Section 43 or 47 of the Children's Act 1989, the situation should be discussed with Social Services and/or the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub team.

10. In the case of illegal activity of a non-child protection nature, any action that the school takes will always be in the best interests of the pupil. This does not mean that the police will be informed; but contact with the school's DSL or alternate may be made to discuss situations.

11. Some external agencies may be working in the school offering specific advice and support directly to individual pupils. If this is the case, their professional code of confidentiality must be shared with the school and any deviation from the school's policy must be agreed formally with the school and shared with the pupils concerned. Confidentiality must not be permitted where there are child protection concerns. Parents must also be informed that such agencies are working in the school to support pupils on a range of issues.

12. If such a visitor is working in the school and following a different code of confidentiality in line with their professional protocols, members of staff may wish to refer pupils to them before they disclose information in order to maintain pupil confidentiality. Pupils and parents need to be aware of and understand any referral procedures related to this within the school.

13. Members of staff are not obliged to pass on information about pupils to their parents. However, it is only in the most exceptional circumstances that a school would be in the position of having to handle information without parental knowledge. The reasons for not informing parents should be recorded in writing. If a teacher believes a pupil to be in moral or physical risk, or in breach of the law, they must ensure that the pupil is aware of the risks and encourage her/him to tell her/his parents and seek support from them. The Headteacher should always be informed before parents are contacted.

14. All staff and volunteers are expected to sign a confidentiality statement.

Volunteers in School

At Freeman we value the help of parents, students and others. Everything that volunteers see and hear (particularly in relation to children's, welfare or levels of work) must be held in confidence and not shared with others outside of the school. If volunteers have any questions regarding anything they see or hear in school, or they have concerns about the well-being of a child, they should speak to the class teacher, Headteacher, DSL or alternate. Students taking part in recognised qualifications & training will be advised of our confidentiality policy and are required to respect it. All volunteers are given an induction that includes the importance of confidentiality before they begin.

Record Keeping

Every child has a personal record with their contact details, Pathway Plans, medical information and settling in information. These records are kept in a locked cabinet and are only accessible to the Headteacher, SENCo, admin staff or class teacher. Personal files for all children, including Safeguarding and Special Educational Needs folders follow the child when they move school. If posted these will be sent recorded/signed for delivery. When a child leaves the school we do not retain a paper copy of the child's information unless we have no forwarding address for the information e.g. moving abroad or a child missing in education. In this case we will securely store their folders until they are located or have turned 25.

Each child in the Foundation Stage has their own online Learning Journey using Tapestry. This contains samples of work and observations which are kept securely online and are only accessible by our Early Years Staff and individual parents for their own child's information.

Staff records and details are kept locked in the Headteacher's office.

Staff are aware that when they are discussing a child confidentiality should take priority. This will always be the case regardless of talking with parents or other staff in the setting.

Key Points

- Staff / volunteers will not discuss individual children, other than for the purposes of curriculum planning / group management, with people other than the parents, carers or key person of that child.
- Information given by parents / carers will not be passed on to other adults without permission.
- Issues to do with the employment of staff, whether paid or unpaid, will remain confidential to the people directly involved with making personnel decisions.
- The use of social network internet sites should not be used to discuss any children, staff, parents or school issues.

Links to Other Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy; Behaviour Policy; SEND Policy; Staff and Volunteer Code of Conduct; Staff Induction Pack; Volunteer, Parent Helper, Coaches and Work Experience Induction Pack; Governors Induction Pack and our Data Protection policy.

CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT

Confidentiality, whether personal, financial or of any other category must be respected at all times. Information on the personal history of all children will be kept securely. It will only be accessed when necessary and only then by authorised personnel, who will ensure that none of the information is revealed to any unauthorised third party.

To meet the needs of all the children in our care it is important to share information with parents and one another in order to support the child's development. It may also be necessary, in some circumstances, for the School to seek help and advice from outside professionals. If this action is taken the parents' permission will be obtained first.

All members of staff will agree to support and respect the School Confidentiality Policy and will sign a statement to indicate their agreement.

Confidentiality Agreement:

During the course of your work you will be privy to confidential information about staff members, children in our care and their families. You may need to discuss confidential issues with other staff members, or professionals from outside agencies, in order to effectively carry out your work. Any information and knowledge will be on a need to know basis and will be kept confidential.

At no time are you to disclose confidential information to any unauthorised third party, either verbally, by email or by the use of social internet networks.

Failure to comply with the Confidentiality Policy and this statement will result in disciplinary action.

Signed: ……..

Name: (please print) …….

Date: ……