

# Sunning Hill Primary School



## Confidentiality Policy

**February 2022**

**Governing Body Review date:** February 2025

**Previous review date(s):** March 10, September 2013, September 2016, September 2019,

**Linked Policies include:** - Child Protection & Safeguarding, PSHE, Sex and Relationships, Transgender Policy, Drug Education, Anti – Bullying.

## CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

### **Rationale**

At Sunning Hill School we believe that:

- The safety, well-being and protection of our pupils are the paramount consideration in all decisions staff at this school make about confidentiality. The appropriate sharing of information between school staff is an essential element in ensuring our pupils well-being and safety.
- It is an essential part of the ethos of our school that trust is established to enable pupils, staff and parents/carers to seek help both within and outside the school in order to minimise the number of situations where personal information is shared to ensure pupils and staff are supported and safe.
- Pupils, parents/carers and staff need to know the boundaries of confidentiality in order to feel safe and comfortable discussing personal issues and concerns.
- The school's attitude to confidentiality is easily understood and everyone should be able to trust the boundaries of confidentiality operating within the school.
- Issues concerning personal information can arise at any time.
- 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 about any issues/concerns they want to discuss.

### **Definition of Confidentiality**

Confidentiality is defined as 'something which is spoken or given in private, entrusted with another's secret affairs where the confider is asking for the content of the conversation to be kept secret.' Anyone offering absolute confidentiality to someone else would be offering to keep the content of his or her conversation completely secret and discuss it with no-one.

In practise there are few circumstances where absolute confidentiality is offered in our 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 and child protection issues.

This means that in most cases what is offered is limited confidentiality. Disclosure of the content of a conversation could be discussed with professional colleagues, but the confider would not be identified except in certain circumstances.

Staff should make it clear that there are limits to confidentiality at the beginning of the conversation. These limits relate to ensuring children's safety and well-being. The pupil will be informed when a confidence has to be broken for this reason and be involved in the information sharing.

### **Levels of Confidentiality**

#### **In the Classroom**

Careful thought needs to be given to the content of certain lessons to set the appropriate climate and establish ground rules to avoid confidential disclosures being made. It should be made clear to pupils that this is not the time or place to disclose confidential personal information. When a professional visitor is delivering workshops/sessions, they should work within the same boundaries of confidentiality as a teacher.

#### **One-to-one Disclosures to Members of Staff**

It is essential all members of staff know the limits of the confidentiality they can offer to both pupils and parents/carers. Staff should be aware of the required actions and sources of further support available both for

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the pupil or parent/carer, within the school and from other agencies where appropriate. All staff at this school encourage pupils to discuss different issues with their parents or carers and vice versa. However, the needs of the pupil are paramount and the school staff will not automatically share information about the pupil with his/her parents unless it is considered to be in the child's best interests or they are instructed to by an outside agency (e.g. police, social care).

### **Disclosures to Other Professionals**

Health professionals such as school nurses can give confidential medical advice to pupils provided they are competent to do so and follow the Fraser Guidelines (guidelines for doctors and other health professionals on giving medical advice to under 16's). School nurses are skilled in discussing issues and possible actions with young people and always have in mind the need to encourage pupils to discuss issues with their parents or carers. However, the needs of the pupil are paramount and the school nurse will not insist that a pupil's parents or carers are informed about any advice or treatment they give.

### **The Legal Position for School Staff**

All school staff should not promise confidentiality. Pupils do not have the right to expect they will not be reported to their parents/carers and may not assume that information conveyed to staff is private. The safety, well-being and protection of the child is the paramount consideration in all decisions staff at this school make about confidentiality.

School staff are NOT obliged to break confidentiality except where child protection is or may be an issue; however as a school, we believe it is important staff are able to share their concerns about pupils' safety and well-being. All teachers at this school receive training in child protection as part of their induction to this school and are expected to follow the school's child protection policy and procedures. Face to face Level 1 training is delivered every 3 years.

### **Visitors and Non-teaching Staff**

At Sunning Hill School, we expect all non-teaching staff to report any disclosures by pupils or parents/carers of a concerning nature to the designated safeguarding lead as soon as possible after the disclosure and in an appropriate setting, so others cannot over hear.

The designated Safeguarding Lead will decide what, if any, further action needs to be taken.

### **Parents/Carers**

Sunning Hill School believes that it is essential to work in partnership with parents and carers and we endeavour to keep parents/carers abreast of their child's progress at school, including any concerns about their progress or behaviour. However, we also need to maintain a balance so that our pupils can share any concerns and ask for help when they need it. Where a pupil does discuss a difficult personal issue to staff at school, they will be encouraged to also discuss the matter with their parents or carers and may be supported to do so where it is appropriate.

The safety, well-being and protection of our pupils is the paramount consideration in all decisions staff at this school make about confidentiality.

### **Complex Cases**

Where there are areas of doubt about the sharing of information, Sunning Hill School will consult with Referral and Assessment.

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### **Support for Staff**

Staff may have support needs themselves in dealing with some of the personal issues of our pupils. We would always prefer staff to seek advice or guidance when dealing with sensitive issues to ensure the most appropriate decisions are made. Staff should discuss any concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead or a member of SLT.

### **Sharing the Policy**

All new staff are made aware of the policy when they join the school and the policy is made available to all teaching and non-teaching staff as part of whole school training on Child Protection/Safeguarding. A copy of the policy can always be found the school website.

**Sunning Hill is a Rights Respecting School and this policy relates to the following articles:**

**Article 24 - You have the right to a safe environment.**

*Our school aims to support all families and the wider community. Any queries or concerns regarding individual policies will be considered on an individual basis.*