



Confidentiality Policy

S Field March 2020

Approved by Chair: Amanda Picken

Review Date: March 2023



Confidentiality Policy

Rationale

Definition of Confidentiality

The dictionary definition of confidential is ***"something which is spoken or given in confidence; private, entrusted with another's secret affairs"***.

At SHINE Academies 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 sharing of information between school staff and some external organisations is an essential element in ensuring our pupils well-being and safety.
- The information gained in school should remain confidential as it is needed to protect the family and children entrusted to our care; the phrase is 'need to know'.
- 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 and minimise the number of situations when personal information is shared to ensure pupils, staff and parents/carers are supported and safe.
- Pupils, parents/carers and staff need to know the boundaries of confidentiality in order to feel safe and comfortable in discussing personal issues and concerns.
- The school's attitude to confidentiality is open and 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 health or other personal issue they want to discuss.

Key Principles

The aims are to:

- To protect the child at all times and to give all staff involved clear, unambiguous guidance as to their legal and professional roles.
- To ensure good practice throughout the school this is understood by pupils, parents/carers and staff.

At SHINE Academies we aim to do this through:

- Fostering an ethos of trust within the school.
- Actively promoting a positive ethos and respect for the individual.
- Providing consistent messages in school about how to handle information about children once it has been received.
 - Reassuring pupils that their best interests will be maintained.
 - Encouraging our children to talk to their parents and carers.
 - Ensuring that pupils and parents/carers know that school staff cannot offer unconditional confidentiality.
 - Ensuring that there is equality of provision and access for all, including rigorous monitoring of cultural, gender and special educational needs.
 - Ensure that if there are child protection issues then the correct procedure is followed

The general rule is that staff should make 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 or family will be informed (whenever possible) when a confidence has to be broken for this reason and will be encouraged to do this for themselves whenever this is possible.

The principles we follow at SHINE Academies are:

- To ensure the time and place are appropriate, when they are not we reassure the child or family that we understand they need to discuss something very important and that it warrants time, space and privacy.
- See the child or family (and always in cases of neglect, or abuse) before the end of the school day.

More serious concerns must be reported immediately to ensure that any intervention necessary to protect the child or family is accessed as early as possible.

- To tell the child or family we cannot guarantee confidentiality if we think they will:
 - hurt themselves

- hurt someone else
- or they tell us that someone is hurting them or others
 - Not interrogate the child or family or ask leading questions
- We won't put children or parents in the position of having to repeat distressing matters to several people
- Inform the pupil or family first (whenever possible) before any confidential information is shared, with the reasons for this
- Encourage the pupil or family, whenever possible to confide in his/her own parents/carers or immediate family for support and for the purpose of transparency
- All children and families have a right to the same level of confidentiality irrespective of gender, race, religion, ability, disability, medical concerns and special educational needs.
- 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 and videos during public school events.

School staff

School staff (including non-teaching and voluntary staff) should not promise confidentiality. Pupils do not have the right to expect that incidents will not be reported to his/her parents/carers and may not, in the absence of an explicit promise, assume that information conveyed outside that context is private. No member of this school's staff can or should give such a promise.

School staff are NOT obliged to break confidentiality except where child protection is or may be an issue. However, at Busill Jones we believe it is important staff are able to share their concerns about pupils with colleagues in a professional and supportive way, on a need to know basis, to ensure staff receive the guidance and support they need and the pupils' safety and well-being is maintained.

School staff are reminded that the use of social media, as set out in the school's 'Use of ICT' policy, also falls under the Confidentiality policy.

Working in school volunteer parents sign an agreement not to discuss the things that they see and hear in the school setting with people outside the school, this includes any parents or friends.

Parents/carers

SHINE Academies 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 or family does discuss a difficult personal matter to staff at SHINE Academies, they will be encouraged to also discuss the matter with their parent or carer or immediate family themselves.

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

Governors

Governors need to exercise complete confidentiality especially in relation to matters concerning individual staff, pupils and parents.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Head Teacher has responsibility for monitoring this policy.

Links to other school policies and procedures:

This policy is intended to be used in conjunction with the following policies:

Safeguarding and Child Protection, Inclusion Policy and Behaviour Policy.