



Staff (as applicable to their role) keep up to date with training:

- Data Protection
- Information Security
- Freedom of Information Act
- Child Protection

Aim

To protect every 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

Fair Isle Primary School seeks to put the child at the heart of the learning process and to provide a safe and secure learning environment.

It is committed to developing creative and positive ways for the child's voice to be heard whilst recognising the responsibility to use, hold and safeguard information received. Sharing information unnecessarily is an erosion of trust.

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 foster an ethos of trust within the school.
- To ensure that staff, parents and pupils are aware of the school's confidentiality policy and procedures.
- To reassure pupils that their best interests will be maintained.
- To encourage children to talk to their parents/carers.
- To ensure that pupils and parents/carers know that school staff cannot offer unconditional confidentiality.
- To ensure that there is equality of provision and access for all including rigorous monitoring of cultural, gender and additional support needs.
- To ensure that if there is a child protection issue then the correct procedure is followed.
- To ensure that confidentiality is a whole school issue and that ground rules are set during lessons for the protection of all.
- To understand that health professionals are bound by a different code of conduct.

- 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.

Guidelines

- All information about individual children is private and should only be shared with those staff who have a need to know.
- 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:
 - The Head teacher is responsible for child protection and receives regular training.
 - There is clear guidance for procedures for the handling of child protection incidents. All staff have regular training on child protection issues.
 - There is clear guidance for procedures if a member of staff is accused of inappropriate conduct.
 - Staff 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.
 - Any intolerance about gender, faith, race, culture or sexuality is unacceptable and should follow the schools discipline policy.
 - Information collected for one purpose should not be used for another.
 - Staff should not discuss individual pupils outside of school unless with other professionals
- 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 prides itself on good communication with parents/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 any child protection disclosure before going on to inform the correct authorities, unless the Child Protection Officer considers that this would put a child in danger. This decision would normally follow advice from the Shetland Islands Council Social Work Department.
- Parents/carers and children should feel reassured that, only in exceptional circumstances, confidentiality will be broken.
- All children have a right to the same level of confidentiality irrespective of gender, race, religion, medical concerns and additional support needs. Data is generated in schools by these categories but individual children should not be identified.
- The Head Teacher is the school's Child Protection Officer. Child protection procedures are understood by staff and training is undertaken every two years for all staff.
- Confidentiality is a whole school issue. Clear ground rules must be set for any classroom work dealing with sensitive issues such as death etc. Strategies are in place and all children are aware of them for dealing with sensitive information which may fall outside the boundaries of child protection procedures. The school needs to be proactive so that children feel supported but information is not necessarily revealed in a public arena. 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 the class information sheet should be accessible to staff who need the information but not on general view to other parents/carers and children.

- Photographs of children should not be used without parent/carers permission, especially in the press and on the internet. This is often a cultural issue that the school needs to be aware of. At no time should a child's name be used with a photograph so that they can be identified.
- Information about children will be shared with parents but only about their child. Parents should not have access to any other child's books, folders or assessments 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. It should be clearly understood by those who have access to it, and whether those concerned have access to all, or only some of the information.
- Information regarding health reports such as speech therapy, medical reports, ASN/Child's Plan reports, ASN/Child's Plan minutes of meetings and social services minutes of meetings and reports will be circulated in envelopes and once read should be returned for secure filing.
- 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 will not be passed on except in exceptional circumstances or to a receiving school.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Head teacher has a responsibility for monitoring this policy.

Conclusion

Fair Isle Primary School and ELC 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.

Reviewed by G.Maxwell

February 2024

Next review February 2025