



Alexander Hosea Primary School

'Roots to grow, wings to fly'

Confidentiality Policy – September 2021

Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

This policy has been screened to ensure that we give 'due consideration' to equality of opportunity and has been agreed and formally approved by the appropriate reviewing and ratification Committee.

Author	Deb Williams	Date reviewed	November 2024
Position	Headteacher	Date ratified	14 November 2024
Document status	Reviewed	Next review date	Autumn 2027
EIA approved by	S&W	Reviewing committee	Staffing and Welfare

EIA = due consideration of potential adverse impacts on the following groups: age; disability; gender and gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; racial groups; religion or belief; sexual orientation.

Introduction

This policy applies to governors, staff, parents and others working in the school, whether paid or helping on a voluntary basis. They will be asked to read this policy before working in school.

This policy is underpinned by the school's vision (Roots to grow, wings to fly) and its values – adaptable, self-belief, perseverance, inclusion, respect, enquiry.

Those working in our school will have access to confidential information about staff, pupils and other members of the school community in order to undertake their everyday responsibilities. This information may be of a more general nature, but can also relate to a variety of more specific issues, including abuse or other dangerous or illegal activities. It is important that the whole school follows the same clear and explicit policy, which pupils, staff, governors, parents / carers, supply teachers, volunteers and work experience students are made aware of, including how it works in practice.

We take our responsibility for GDPR seriously and take all measures necessary to protect information.

Rationale

It is important for all children, staff members and governors to enjoy privacy from gossip, for the school to be fair to all its community, and for children and adults to have disciplinary matters dealt with according to the school's own procedures and out of the eye of the wider school community.

Aims:

- To give clear guidance about confidentiality to all members of the school community
- To protect / safeguard all members of the school community from emotional, physical and sexual harm
- To help meet our duty in relation to GDPR.
- To ensure all members of the school community are safe and treated with respect and dignity
- To promote well-being
- To encourage young people to talk to a trusted adult if they are having problems
- To give staff confidence to deal with sensitive issues

Guidelines:

All adults working in school are in a position of trust.

Pupils**In lessons**

- ❑ Ground rules and distancing techniques should be used where sensitive issues are to be addressed.
- ❑ Staff should not put pressure on pupils to disclose personal information and should discourage fellow pupils from applying any such pressure.

Personal disclosures

- ❑ Disclosures from pupils may take place at an inappropriate place or time. If this happens, the member of staff should talk again individually to the pupil as soon as is practically possible before the end of the school day. The member of staff may be able to discuss the issue with an appropriate colleague, to decide on suitable action, without giving the name of the pupil.
- ❑ Disclosures from pupils must be listened to carefully and leading questions must be avoided. Any disclosure must be noted on CPOMs or written on safeguarding form which is signed and dated.
- ❑ Pupils should be reassured that their best interests will be maintained.
- ❑ Pupils should know that staff cannot offer unconditional confidentiality. Pupils should be reassured that, if confidentiality has to be broken, they will be informed first and then supported appropriately.
- ❑ Pupils should be informed of sources of confidential help, for example, the school health nurse.
- ❑ Any personal information should be regarded as private and not passed on indiscriminately (for example in the staff room)
- ❑ In circumstances where a child's identity does not need to be disclosed, information should be used anonymously
- ❑ If there is any doubt about whether to share information or keep it confidential, guidance must be sought from a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). Any media or legal enquiries must be passed to a SLT member.
- ❑ If a member of staff receives information that leads them to believe that there is a child protection issue, they should refer the case immediately to the Headteacher who is the Designated Safeguarding Lead, (or the Deputy DSLs in her absence), following a discussion with the young person involved.
- ❑ Pupils should be encouraged to talk to their parents or carers and be given support to do so where ever possible
- ❑ Government guidance requires professionals to consult as much as possible with parents about their children when referring to another agency. In general, parents should be asked if they wish to be referred, UNLESS THERE IS REASON TO THINK THAT OBTAINING SUCH CONSENT MAY PUT THE YOUNG PERSON AT RISK OF HARM. If the referral is about child abuse (or the risk of it) rather than 'child in need', Social Care will be consulted before discussing the issue with parents, unless a parent has asked you to make the referral and is already aware of it.
- ❑ All referrals should be made through South Gloucestershire's Access and Response Team – ART (01454 866000)
- ❑ Matters of Child Protection are made known to staff on a need to know basis.

- All staff will be familiar with the South West Child Protection Procedures which can be found at www.swcpp.org.uk

Teachers

Teachers are expected to demonstrate consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct and always act within the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities (Teacher's Standards 2012).

They must:-

- uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school.
- treat pupils with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observe proper boundaries appropriate to their professional position.
- show tolerance of and respect for the rights of others.
- have regard for the need to safeguard pupils' well-being.

All staff

- All staff must always be mindful of their responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of the school and respond discreetly and professionally when dealing with a child, parent/carer or colleague.
- All staff must exercise the greatest prudence if a discussion of a potentially contentious issue affecting the school arises outside the school and must follow the procedures established by the governing body when making or responding to criticism or complaints affecting the school.
- It is important that class teachers and support staff are aware of some confidential matters in order to support individuals. These staff will respect the sensitivity of such cases and not divulge confidential or personal information to people unconnected professionally with the individual concerned or for their own or others' advantage.
- All members of the school community must be treated with respect and dignity - information must never be used to intimidate, humiliate or embarrass.
- Staff must not discuss details of individual cases arising in staff meetings to any person without direct professional connection to and interest in the welfare and education of the individual concerned.
- Members of staff must not discuss an individual child's behaviour in the presence of another child in school.
- Staff must not enter into detailed discussion about a child's behaviour with other children or other parents.
- Staff must treat information they receive about colleagues and other members of staff in a discreet and confidential manner in line with GDPR.
- Staff appraisal will be carried out privately. Targets for individuals, named lesson observation sheets and other performance data will be in the Headteacher's office and electronic records will only be available from the computers of SLT members.

Data Security

- ❑ The need to ensure that data is kept securely means that precautions must be taken against physical loss or damage, and that both access and disclosure must be restricted.

All staff are responsible for ensuring that:

- ❑ Any personal data which they hold is kept securely.
- ❑ Personal information is not disclosed either orally, in writing or otherwise to any unauthorised third party.
- ❑ Documents containing individual data must not be left visible where it can be read by anyone inappropriately. This includes telephone messages, computer print outs, letters and other documents.
- ❑ Electronic documents must be closed down (using lock screen) when leaving the room.
- ❑ Information passed to others about a child/young person, including what is sent via e-mail (information / data), is only sent through secure e-mail addresses, SOFIE, RM Securenet or CISCO.
- ❑ Precautions are taken against loss and damage of hardware containing confidential information
- ❑ Personal data must not be stored on the hard disc of a laptop or data stick unless it has been encrypted.
- ❑ Hardware requiring disposal must be given to the School Business Manager to remove from the inventory and to ensure secure disposal.
- ❑ All media containing staff information must be destroyed in a manner that ensures that data is not disclosed to an unauthorised person. Manual records should be shredded before disposal or placed in the confidential waste bags kept in the SBM's office
- ❑ All staff must refer and adhere to the Data Retention Guidelines for Schools when disposing of children's and adult's personal information. All teachers have a copy – a master copy is held in the school office.

Parents and Volunteers

- ❑ Parents in school, working as volunteers or as part of the Friends committee/Parent Council, must treat in the strictest confidence, anything they observe or learn about a child or another adult whilst working in the school. Cases of poor behaviour or pupil discipline must not be reported to other parents in the school, or to anyone else. This allows teachers to deal with such matters in line with school policy.
- ❑ When volunteers, such as parents and friends of the school are working in classes, they do not discuss educational matters outside the classroom; for example the ability of children, specific use of teaching assistant time for particular pupils or groups of pupils. Teaching assistants have different roles within a class, including the support of children with special educational needs. The provision for and work undertaken with these children is for the teacher to discuss with the relevant parents or carers.
- ❑ Any disclosures made to them must be referred to the class teacher and / or Designated Safeguarding Lead

Governors

- ❑ When governors attend specific events in school, visit staff members or observe lessons they must adhere to the same recommendations as those applicable to parents, volunteers or 'Friends' as detailed above.
- ❑ At full Governing body meetings matters such as pupil exclusion, personnel issues and personal details of any member of the school community will be dealt with in the Headteacher's Report under Part 2 'confidential.' This is not for the knowledge of persons outside the Governing body meeting. Minutes in Part 2 are minuted separately and minutes are not published.
- ❑ Governors, in particular those sitting on Discipline Committees, do not divulge details about individuals (be they staff, families or individual children) to any person outside the meeting.
- ❑ Governors will observe complete confidentiality when required, or asked to do so by the governing body, especially regarding matters concerning individual staff or pupils.
- ❑ Governors will exercise the greatest prudence if a discussion of a potentially contentious issue affecting the school arises outside the governing body.

Equal Opportunities / Inclusion

Staff may wish to discuss an individual case with a class or group. For instance it can support the inclusion of a child with Asperger's Syndrome or Autism, if their peers are made aware of the condition and so have some idea of what to expect. Similarly a child with visual impairment can be supported if his/her friends know how to look out for them in the playground. In such cases permission will be sought from the child and his/her parents/carers.

Health professionals

Health professionals are bound by their professional codes of conduct to maintain confidentiality when working in a one to one situation. When working in a classroom, they are bound by relevant school policies. In line with best practice guidance, like other school staff, they will seek to protect privacy and prevent inappropriate personal disclosures in a classroom setting, by negotiating ground rules and using distancing techniques.

Conclusion

All members of the school community will be made aware of this policy and it will be reviewed as part of the school's rolling programme of policy review.

This policy takes account of the Data Protection Act (1998) and Equalities Act 2010. It should be read in conjunction with the schools policies for Safeguarding and Child Protection, GDPR- Data Protection, Relationships and Sex Education.

Following appointment, staff are required to sign the 'School Code of Conduct' and Governors are required to sign the 'Governor Code of Practice'.

Parent helpers and volunteers are required to sign a 'Statement of Expectation'.

ALEXANDER HOSEA PRIMARY SCHOOL

Safeguarding: DUTY OF CARE AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Governors, staff and parents, whether paid or helping on a voluntary basis, have a duty to keep young people safe and to protect them from sexual, physical or emotional harm. Children have a right to be safe and to be treated with respect and dignity. It follows that trusted adults are expected to take reasonable steps to ensure the safety and well-being of pupils. Failure to do so may be regarded as professional neglect.

Those working in our school will have access to confidential information about pupils, in order to undertake their everyday responsibilities. In some circumstances you will be given highly sensitive or private information. You should never divulge confidential or personal information about a pupil or her/his family or a member of the school staff or use it for your own, or others' advantage (including that of partners, friends, relatives or other organisations).

Information must never be used to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass the pupil. Equally, information about a child or young person and/or their family or other people working within the school, should never be used casually in conversation or shared with any person other than on a professional basis.

In circumstances where a child's identity does not need to be disclosed, information should be used anonymously. There are some circumstances in which you will be expected to share information about a child, for example when abuse is alleged or suspected. In such cases, you have a duty to pass information on without delay, but only to those with designated child protection responsibilities.

If you are in any doubt about whether to share information or keep it confidential you must seek guidance from a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). Any media or legal enquiries should also be passed to an SLT member.

Teachers are automatically bound by the conditions of the 'Teachers' Standards 2012.