



# HERNE VIEW CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

*including Apple Orchard Pre-School*

## Confidentiality Policy including Use of Social Media

Review Date	Version No	Date of previous Review
Autumn 1 FGB 2023	10	Autumn 1 FGB 2022

Date approved by the Board	Chair	Signature
12 <sup>th</sup> October 2023	Guy Adams	

### Our Vision

Building for tomorrow, we share knowledge and foster aspirations through acceptance and welcome. We strive to strengthen our connection to the whole community through dignity and respect. Children are the heart of Herne View Primary and we celebrate the worth and uniqueness of all.

'...let your light shine.' Matthew 5:16

Care

Friendship

Respect



# Herne View Church of England Primary School

## Confidentiality Policy (Including Use of Social Media)

### AIM

To protect the 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

Herne View 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.

The widespread availability and use of mobile technology, internet and social media applications means we have to balance appropriate use with our duties to our school, the community, our reputation and our legal responsibilities to safeguard all children.

### 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 and 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 special educational needs.
- To ensure that if there are child protection issues, then the correct procedure is followed.
- To ensure that confidentiality is a whole school issue and that in lessons ground rules are set for the protection of all.
- To understand that health professionals are bound by different code of conduct.

- To ensure that parents/carers 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.
- To ensure that staff and parents understand appropriate use of social media and mobile technology.

## **GUIDELINES**

- All information about individual children is private and should only be shared with those staff that have a need to know.
- All Children's Social Care, 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
- There is clear guidance 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 abuse.
- 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.
- 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 and 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.
- Parents/carers and children should feel reassured that 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 special educational needs. A lot of data is generated in schools by these categories but individual children should not be able to be identified.
- The school has appointed a senior member of staff as Designated Safeguarding Lead DSL (Child Protection). Child protection procedures are understood by staff and training is undertaken annually.
- Confidentiality is a whole school issue. Clear ground rules must be set for any classroom work such as PHSE/RSE sessions dealing with sensitive issues. 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. School needs to be proactive so children feel supported but information is not unnecessarily 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 that information but not on general view to other parents/carers and children.
- Photographs of children should not be used without parents/carers permission especially in the press and internet. This is often a cultural issue that the school needs to be aware of. At no time should the child's full name be used with a photograph so that they can be identified. The school gives clear guidance to parents about the use of cameras, smart phones and other mobile technology during public school events.
- Information about children will be shared with parents but only about their child. Parents should not have access to any other child's books, marks and progress grades 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 Children's Social Care 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, SEND reports, SEND minutes of meetings and Children's Social Care 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.
- Addresses and telephone numbers of parents and children will not be passed on except in exceptional circumstances or to a receiving school.
- Governors need to be mindful that from time-to-time issues are discussed or brought to their attention about staff and children. All such papers should be marked as confidential and should be copied onto different coloured paper. Governors must observe complete confidentiality especially in relation to matters concerning individual staff, pupils or parents. Although decisions reached at governors' meetings are normally made public through the minutes or otherwise, the discussions on which decisions are based should be regarded as confidential. Governors should exercise the highest degree of prudence when discussion of potentially contentious issues arises outside the governing body.
- Staff should be especially aware of confidentiality principles when using social media. They will not invite, accept or engage in communications with children from the school community in any personal social media whilst in employment at Herne View Church of England Primary, and any communication from children on any personal social media sites must be reported to the designated person for Child Protection.

- All email communication between staff and members of the school community on school business must be made from an official school email account. They should not use personal email accounts or mobile phones to make contact with members of the school community on school business.
- Staff are advised to avoid messaging, posts or comments that refer to specific, individual matters related to the school and members of its community on any social media accounts as these may be in breach of this confidentiality policy and lead to disciplinary action.
- Use of smart phones and other personal mobile technology on site is only with permission from DSL and DDSL.

## **CONCLUSION**

Herne View School 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.

### **Please also refer to the following Policy Documents:-**

Supporting pupils with Medical conditions policy  
Freedom of Information Policy  
Data Protection Policy  
Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy