

# Cavendish Primary School



## Confidentiality Policy

Summer 2008

Review Date: Summer 2012

### **Formulation of the policy**

This policy was drawn together from principles contained within the policy and practice for Child Protection, Equal Opportunities and PSHCE, together with Government and local guidelines. It reflects current practice within school and areas of best practice that were highlighted by discussions with staff and governors.

The issues discussed were as follows:

- Key purpose of a Confidentiality policy
- Areas covered by confidentiality
- Child Protection issues surrounding confidentiality
- Importance of training for all staff
- Importance of relaying the policy to parents and children
- Informing temporary or voluntary staff

### **Statement of Intent**

It is our intention to respect the privacy of children, their families and staff, while ensuring that they are provided with a high standard of education and a safe and secure environment in which to grow and learn.

### **Aims**

- To ensure that all families can share their information in the knowledge that it will only be used for the welfare and safety of their children;
- To support staff in their work by having clear guidelines for confidentiality;
- To ensure that all stakeholders are aware of the school policy for confidentiality.

### **Objectives**

To ensure that children, families and staff can feel secure within the school community, we respect confidentiality in the following ways:

- Parents have access to the records of their own children, but do not have access to information about other children.
- Staff will not discuss personal information given by parents with other members of staff, except where it affects the school's ability to meet that child's needs.
- Children are made aware of what will happen to any information they give to staff, namely that some information can remain confidential, while some has to be shared with other adults.
- Staff allow time to talk to children and families at an appropriate time and in an appropriate place.
- Staff, student and governor induction includes an awareness of the importance of confidentiality.
- Staff are supported by the Designated Teacher for Child Protection (headteacher), and if necessary by the Local Authority Education Welfare officers, when dealing with difficult situations.
- Volunteers helping in school will be given a copy of the policy so that they are aware of the importance of confidentiality.
- Regular training is given with regards to dealing with a disclosure from a child. (See flowchart) Parents are informed through the School Child

Protection Policy of the duties of the Designated Teacher for Child Protection, should a disclosure occur.

- All members of the school community are made aware that the Headteacher is the Designated Teacher for Child Protection.
- Any concerns relating to a child's safety are kept in a secure, confidential file and are shared with as few people as possible on a 'need to know' basis.
- Personal information about children, families and staff is kept securely, whilst remaining as accessible as is necessary.
- Issues relating to the employment of staff and volunteers remain confidential to the people directly involved with making personnel decisions.
- Parents' permission with regards to taking photographs of their children is sought on entry to the school and staff are kept informed.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

A copy of the policy will be included in the school prospectus given to parents and kept in the policy folder at the front of the school. It will be shared with the children during School Council meetings and with the staff and governors at their respective meetings.

The governor with responsibility will review any issues that arise over confidentiality with the headteacher, in order to assess the effectiveness of the policy in practice. This will give us an opportunity to monitor our practice before the official review date.

### **DEFINITION OF CONFIDENTIALITY**

Confidentiality is defined as 'something which is spoken or given in private, entrusted with another's secret affairs'.

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, child protection issues and good practice are followed.

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 where possible.

Different levels of confidentiality are appropriate for different circumstances:

- 1. In the classroom in the course of a lesson given by a member of teaching staff or an outside visitor including health professionals -** Careful thought needs to be given to the content of the lesson setting the climate and establishing ground rules to ensure confidential disclosures are not made. It should be made clear to pupils that this is not the time or place to disclose confidential personal information. When a health professional is contributing to a school's health education programme in a classroom setting, they are working with the same boundaries of confidentiality as a teacher.
- 2. One-to-one disclosures to members of school staff -** It is essential all members of staff know the limits of the confidentiality they can offer to both pupils and parents and carers and any required actions and sources of further support or help available both for the pupil or parent/carer, within the school and from other agencies where appropriate. It is standard practice at Cavendish that all staff encourage pupils to discuss different issues with their parents or carers and vice versa. However, the needs of the pupil are paramount and, in exceptional circumstances, the school staff will not automatically share information about the pupil with his/her parents if it is not considered to be in the child's best interests.
- 3. Disclosures to an outside professional operating a confidential service in the school -** Parents are always informed and their permission is sought before children receive support from outside professionals.

#### **Supporting documentation**

Please refer to the following documents in support of this policy:

- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- Every Child Matters
- Data Protection Act
- Sex Education Policy
- PSHCE Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy

## Can I keep it confidential?

Is it a Child Protection issue?  
OR  
Do other people need to know to ensure the well-being of the child?

YES



Following the school child protection procedures, speak to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection. At Cavendish this is the headteacher, or in the head's absence the Deputy Head.

NO



There is no reason to inform anyone.  
If you are concerned or in any doubt, speak to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection. At Cavendish this is the headteacher, or in the head's absence the Deputy