

Brighter Futures Academy Trust

Confidentiality Policy



Name of Policy Writer/Amendments	Date Written/Amended	Next Review Date
L. Johnson	July 2013	July 2014
L. Johnson	May 2014	July 2015
L. Johnson	August 2015	August 2016
L Johnson	August 2016	August 2017
J.Burton	August 2017	August 2018

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, parent /carers and staff.

Rationale

Brighter Futures Academy Trust seeks to put the child at the heart of the learning process and to provide a safe and secure learning environment. It seeks to implement the underlying principles of the previous 'Every Child Matters Agenda' and to address the issues which may arise about confidentiality. 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 and carers.
- To ensure that pupils and parents/carers know that school cannot offer unconditional confidentiality.
- To ensure that there is equality of provision and access for all including rigorous monitoring of cultural, gender and special education 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 codes 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 children is private and should only be shared with those staff that 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 academy trust continues to actively promote a positive ethos and respect for the individual:

- Each academy/school has appointed a senior lead teacher for child protection who receives regular training.
- There is clear guidance for the handling of child protection incidents and 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 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.

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 academy trust 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 academy/school encourages children to talk to parents/carers about issues causing them concern and may in some cases support the children to talk to the parents. Where it is felt that a member of staff's safety would not be compromised, the academy trust would share with parents any child protection disclosure before going on to inform the correct authorities.

Parents/carers and children should feel reassured that in exceptional cases 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 academy/school has appointed senior members of staff as designated safeguarding leads. Child protection procedures are understood by staff and training is undertaken every year for all staff. Confidentiality is a whole school issue. Clear ground rules must be set for any classroom work such as circle time and other PHSCE session dealing with sensitive issues such as sex and relationships and drugs. 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 staff needs to be aware of. At no time should the child's name be used with a photograph so that they can be identified. Children's photographs should not be used in a medical room identifying their medical needs. The school gives clear guidance to parents about the use of cameras and videos 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 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, SEN reports, SEN 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 and children will not be passed on except in exceptional circumstances or to a receiving school.

Trustees and governors should 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. These confidential papers should be destroyed. Trustees and governors must observe complete confidentiality when asked to do so by the board of trustees and local governing body, especially in relation to matters concerning individual staff, pupils or parents. Although decisions reached at trustee or governors' meetings are normally made public through the minutes or otherwise, the discussions on which decisions are based should be regarded as confidential. Trustees and governors should exercise the highest degree of prudence when discussion of potentially contentious issues arises outside the board of trustees and local governing body.

The Legal Position of Academy Trust Staff

Academy staff (including support and voluntary staff) should not promise confidentiality. Pupils do not have the right to expect that incidents will not be reported to parents/carers and may not, in the absence of an explicit promise, assume that information conveyed outside that context is private. No member of the academy trust staff can or should give such a promise. The safety, well-being and protection of the child are the paramount consideration in all decisions that staff of the academy trust make about confidentiality.

Conclusion

Brighter Futures Academy Trust 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.

Dissemination and Review

This policy, once approved by the Governing Body, will be reviewed annually.

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

Safeguarding Policy

Sex and Relationships Policy

Behaviour and Anti-bullying Policy

Data Protection Policy

Freedom of Information Policy

Safeguarding policies

Code of Conduct

Code of Safer Working Practices

Whistle Blowing Policy

Administration of Medication