

THE QUEENSWELL FEDERATION

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

Policy Written by: **Spencer Clayton**

Date Written: **September 2023**

Date for Review: **September 2025**

Ratified by **Governors: October 2023**



Rationale

The Queenswell Federation 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 safeguarding 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.

Equalities

At The Queenswell Federation we believe it is the right of all pupils and staff, regardless of their gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, physical ability or linguistic, cultural or home background to have access to high quality learning experiences in stimulating and supporting environment where prejudice and stereotyping are challenged.

We recognise that certain groups and individuals may be discriminated against and therefore are strongly committed to positive action to remove and challenge discrimination in all aspects of the Federation and its work. The importance of staff awareness regarding the dangers of preconceived expectations based on stereotypes is discussed as appropriate.

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.

Objectives

1. To provide consistent messages in school about handling information about children once it has been received.
2. To foster an ethos of trust within the school.
3. To ensure that staff, parents/carers and pupils are aware of the school's confidentiality policy and procedures.
4. To reassure pupils that their best interests will be maintained.
5. To encourage children to talk to their parents and carers.
6. To ensure that pupils and parents/carers know that school staff cannot offer unconditional confidentiality
7. To ensure that there is equality of provision and access for all including rigorous monitoring of cultural, gender and special educational needs.

8. To ensure that if there are safeguarding issues then the correct procedure is followed.
9. To ensure that confidentiality is a whole school issue and that in PSHCE lessons ground rules are set for the protection of all.
10. To understand that health professionals are bound by a different code of conduct.
11. 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.
12. To understand that decisions made in school are not to be discussed outside of school until made public.
13. To avoid making judgements based on confidential or previous information.
14. To understand that all staff are entitled to a private life.

GDPR

The principles of the Confidentiality Policy are underpinned by current GDPR regulations. Please consult our Privacy Notice and GDPR Policy.

Guidelines

1. All concerns about individual children should be shared with all staff on a need to know basis.
2. All safeguarding, medical and personal information about a child should be held in a safe and secure place which cannot be accessed by individuals other than relevant staff.
3. The school continues to actively promote a positive ethos and respect for the individual
 - a) The school has appointed a Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy DSLs for safeguarding who receive regular training.
 - b) There is clear guidance for the handling of safeguarding incidents and all staff have access to training on safeguarding.
 - c) There is clear guidance for procedures if a member of staff is accused of abuse.
 - d) 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 safeguarding issue.
 - e) Staff are aware of the need to handle all issues about different types of families in a sensitive manner.
 - f) Any intolerance about gender, faith, race, culture or sexuality is unacceptable and should follow the school's discipline policy.
 - g) Information collected for one purpose should not be used for another.
4. Parents/carers and children need to be aware that the school cannot guarantee total confidentiality with regard to safeguarding and the school has a duty to report safeguarding issues.
5. 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. The school would share with parents/carers any safeguarding disclosures if advised by social services before going on to inform the correct authorities.
6. Parents/carers and children should feel reassured that only in exceptional circumstances confidentiality will be broken.
7. 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.
8. Confidentiality is a whole school issue. Clear ground rules must be set for any classroom work such as circle time and other PSHE sessions dealing with sensitive issues such as sex and relationship 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 safeguarding procedures. The school

is 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.

9. 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.

10. Photographs of children should not be used without parents/carers permission especially in the press and internet. At no time should the child's name be used with a photograph so that they can be identified.

11. Information about children will be shared with parents/carers but only about their child. Parents/carers should not have access to any other child's books, marks and progress 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.

12. All personal information about children including safeguarding 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.

13. Information regarding health reports such as speech therapy, medical reports, SEN reports, SEN minutes of meetings and social care minutes of meetings and reports will be circulated by post or secure email. Logs of administration of medication to children should be kept secure. 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.

14. 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 and part of the Part 2 minutes. Governors must observe complete confidentiality when asked to do so by the Governing Body, 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.

15. On occasions, staff are involved in discussions about the leadership & management of the school i.e. changes in personnel. These must not be discussed with parents/ carers until made public.

16. On occasions, staff may be questioned by parents/ carers during social interaction about issues within the school. Discussions of this nature must be avoided and parents/ carers directed to the appropriate person(s) in the school.

17. Parents/ carers of children in the school must not reveal the identity of future teachers to their child.

18. Staff must not make judgements based solely on previous knowledge of a child's behaviour/ needs.

19. All staff are entitled to a private life, which must not be discussed in the public arena.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

1. The policy will be reviewed as part of the school's monitoring cycle.

2. The PSHE Policy, Relationships & Sex Education Policy and Drugs Policy will enable identified opportunities to deliver aspects of this policy in specified year groups.

3. The Executive Headteacher has responsibility for monitoring this policy.

4. Breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action.

Governors are responsible for the monitoring and implementation of this policy.

Conclusion

The Queenswell Federation 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.