

BEREWOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL



Confidentiality Policy

July 2021

Revised by School	June 2021
Responsible Person	Headteacher
Responsible Committee	Full Governing Body
Ratified by GB	13 th July 2021
Next Review	Summer 2024



BEREWOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL

A distinctive vision

At Berewood Primary School we see education as a journey of discovery to fire the imagination, to establish a sense of self, and to gain the confidence to take full part in the wider world.

An ethos of local partnership

Berewood Primary School and the University of Chichester Academy Trust share the belief that education has the power to transform society. Our school is deeply rooted in its locality and encourages the involvement and interest of parents and the community, recognising that strong and vibrant communities have partnership and inclusion at their heart.

Confidentiality Policy

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, staff governors and other community members.

Rationale

Berewood Primary School 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 Every Child Matters Agenda and to address 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.

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. Sharing information unnecessarily is an erosion of trust.

Berewood Primary School has a duty of care and responsibility towards pupils, parent/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.

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 the 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/Carers.
6. To ensure that pupils and parent/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 child protection issues the correct procedure is followed.
9. To ensure that confidentiality is a whole school issue and that in lessons ground rules are set for the protection of all.
10. To understand that health professionals are bound by different code of conduct.
11. To ensure that Parents/Carers have a right of access to any formal records the school may hold on their child but not to any other child for whom they do not have parental responsibility.

Guidelines

1. All information about individual children is private and should only be shared with those staff who have a need to know.
2. All social services, medical and personal information about a child should be held in a safe place which cannot be accessed by individuals other than school staff.
3. The school continues to actively promote a positive ethos and respect for the individual:
 - The school has appointed a safeguarding lead teacher, the Headteacher, for child protection who receives regular training, the Deputy Head teacher, Senior Teacher and SENCo deputise this role.
 - 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 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.
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 - 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 school's discipline policy.
 - 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 and the school has a duty to report child protection issues.
5. The school prides itself on good communication with parents/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 parents/carers.
6. The school may consult with social services before discussing the issue with parents/carers unless the parent/carer has asked you to make the referral and is already aware of it.
7. Parents/carers and children should feel reassured that only in exceptional circumstances confidentiality will be broken.
8. 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.
9. Confidentiality is a whole school issue. Clear ground rules must be set for any classroom work such as circle time and other PHSE 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 protective, 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.

10. 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.
11. Photographs of children should not be used without parents/carers permission especially in the press and the internet. This is often a cultural issue that the school needs to be aware of. The school gives clear guidance to parents/carers about the use of cameras and videos during public school events.
12. Information about children will be shared with parents/carers but only about their child. Parent 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, SEND reports, SEND minutes of meeting, police incident reports and social services minutes of meetings and children's services reports will be circulated in envelopes and once read should be returned for secure filing.

In all other notes, briefing sheets etc. a child should not be able to be identified. Addresses and telephone numbers of parents/carers and children will not be passed on except in exceptional circumstances or to a receiving school.

13. 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. These confidential papers should be destroyed, 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/carers. 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.

Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed by all staff and Governors in 2023-24 as part of the three-year review cycle, or when significant changes occur.