



This policy should be taken as part of the overall strategy of the school and implemented within the context of our vision, aims and values as a Church of England School.

CONFIDENTIALITY / DATA PROTECTION POLICY

To be read in conjunction with:

Administration of Medication Policy

Anti-Bullying Policy

Behaviour & Discipline Policy

E-Safety Policy

Freedom of Information Policy

Information for Students / Volunteer Helpers

PSHE Policy

Safeguarding Policy

Single Equalities Scheme

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy

RATIONALE

Flax Bourton Church of England Primary School recognises and respects that everyone has the right to privacy and the responsibility of protecting the privacy of others. A clear and explicit confidentiality policy will help protect this right and ensure good practice throughout the whole school community. All members of the school community are expected to work within the guidelines of this policy.

The school community consists of:

- All teaching and support staff working in the school (including peripatetic and supply staff)
- Pupils
- Governors
- Visiting staff from external agencies
- Students on teaching / work placement
- Parents and other volunteers working in school

AIMS

- To protect the right to privacy of each individual member of the school community;
- To provide clear guidelines on the varying levels of confidentiality that might be offered in different circumstances.

DATA PROTECTION

The storing and processing of personal information is governed by the Data Protection Act 1988. Privacy notices are issued annually and posted on the school's website: www.flaxbourton.n-somerset.sch.uk under Information for parents.

- All confidential information will be clearly labelled as 'Confidential' and stored securely. The means of storage, eg filing cabinet, file/folder will also be labelled as 'Confidential'.
- Confidential labelling will also apply to electronically stored information.
- Confidential information will be disseminated on a 'need to know' basis only.
- To ensure confidentiality, sensitive material will never be stored on personal computer hardware or unencrypted memory sticks. The use of memory sticks for confidential or sensitive material is restricted to school purchased and encrypted devices.
- Personal e-mail accounts must not be used as a communication channel for school related business and must **never** be used for the communication of confidential or sensitive materials.

- Confidential information will be kept in line with the local authority's Retention Scheme (see Appendix A) and destroyed at the end of the retention period (see Appendix B). This applies to both paper and electronic records.
- If confidential/sensitive information has to be sent electronically (fax or email), the communication must be labelled as 'Confidential'. Similarly, any attachments that contain confidential or sensitive material should be labelled and, depending on content, password protected. The recipient will be advised to expect to take delivery of the item if sent by fax.
- Anyone who accidentally accesses confidential information must read no further and inform the Headteacher immediately.
- A clear desk policy will operate at all times when staff are absent from their work station and at the end of the day.
- The 'Screen Lock' will be activated on computers/laptops at times when staff are absent from their work station (Control/Alt/Delete >Lock this computer). Computers/laptops will be switched off at the end of each day.
- The printing of confidential/sensitive information at remote printer stations is not allowed, nor must such information be left uncollected from printers. Care must also be exercised when photocopying confidential/sensitive material – never leave the photocopier unattended.
- Staff will consider the suitability of the surroundings and the presence of other people when they have conversations in person or over the telephone with children, parents/carers or other professionals that are of a confidential or sensitive nature.
- Staff will abide by the school's code of conduct when participating in forums to ensure that confidentiality is not breached and that reputational damage is not caused to the school. Any input should, therefore, be anonymous.
- The school will ensure that confidential/sensitive information is deleted from any equipment sent offsite for repair or maintenance.
- Adults will ensure that they are clear about when information can be shared and in what circumstances it is appropriate to do so.
- Adults will seek advice from a senior member of staff if they are in any doubt about sharing information they hold or which has been requested of them.
- On leaving the employment of the school, the member of staff will be required to sign a declaration to confirm that they have returned all information and assets belonging to the school, and that they understand that the treatment of confidential material is still governed by the Data Protection Act after their employment has ceased.

Governor Business

(to be read in conjunction with NS Code of Conduct for Governors)

- Governors and the clerk to governors are required to ensure that confidentiality is not breached with respect to school business, whether this is in the form of verbal, written or electronic communication.
- Electronic communication of confidential/sensitive material between the school/Chair of Governors/Clerk to Governors will be via their assigned Easymail accounts only and labelled accordingly.
- Confidential and/or sensitive material (minutes or correspondence) will be in the form of hard copies (labelled as confidential) accessed only at meetings. All copies will be collected in at the end of the meeting for shredding. One copy will be retained at the school as part of the official records.
- General minutes of meetings remain confidential until signed off by the respective chair when they become a public document.
- Communication with staff, parents/carers or the wider school community relating to governor/school business should always be through official school channels.

- It is advised that governors should have their own dedicated email address for the purpose of governor correspondence with the school. If this is not possible, suitable arrangements must be in place to prevent unauthorised access to school and governor correspondence.

CHILD PROTECTION & DESIGNATED PERSON

The name of the designated person for Safeguarding at Flax Bourton Church of England Primary School is: Mrs Jane Bennett and Mrs Lorraine Woollven, co-Headteachers, or in their absence Mrs Jo Smith Deputy Headteacher.

There may be occasions when pupils are worried about a situation and wish to speak with someone other than their parents/carers. Very often this will be their teacher or another member of the school staff. In such instances, the following should be adhered to:

- Ensure that professional boundaries are maintained at all times.
- Advise the pupil that you **cannot offer unconditional confidentiality** as soon as you become aware that the conversation involves something where confidentiality is, or may become, an issue.
- Advise the pupil that if there is a child protection/safeguarding issue where the pupil, or others, are likely to be at risk of significant harm, **you are obliged to inform the school's Child Protection Designated Person who may have to involve other agencies**. It is important that this is explained to the child sensitively and in age-appropriate terms so that they understand that they must inform the appropriate people who can help the child, but that they will only tell those who need to know in order to help.
- In cases where you feel that you have to break confidentiality with the pupil, you must inform the pupil (unless there is good reason not to inform them, eg risk of harm), and reassure them that their best interests will be maintained.
- Where appropriate, encourage the pupil to discuss the issue with their parents/carers and offer support to enable them to do this.
- Whilst adults must be aware of the need to listen to and support children, they must also understand the importance of **not promising to keep secrets**.

For further information please refer to the school's Safeguarding Policy.

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Pupils – Confidentiality in the Classroom

- Ground rules will be established that make it clear that personal questions or disclosures are inappropriate during lessons or group activities.
- Pupils will be discouraged from exerting pressure on others to answer personal questions.
- Pupils will be supported in dealing with potential situations where they may have been asked to keep a secret.

Members of school staff

- All members of staff will work within the guidelines of the Confidentiality policy.
- All members of staff can normally expect that their personal situations and health will remain confidential unless:
 - It impinges on their terms of contract;
 - It endangers pupils or other members of staff;
 - There is a legal obligation to disclose such information;
 - It is necessary for legal proceedings; Despite the duty of confidence, the staff member's interest or the wider public interest justifies disclosure.

Governors & Clerk to Governors

- All members of the governing body, including the clerk to governors, will work within the guidelines of the Confidentiality policy.

- All members of the governing body can normally expect that their personal situations and health will remain confidential unless:
 - It impinges on their terms of office;
 - It endangers pupils or members of staff;
 - There is a legal obligation to disclose such information;
 - It is necessary for legal proceedings;
 - Despite the duty of confidence, the governor's interest or the wider public interest justifies disclosure.

Parents/Carers and Families

The school recognises that sometimes family issues may arise which might affect a pupil and which the family will only disclose if they can be sure the information will be treated confidentially. The school will respect the wishes of the family and where it is felt necessary to share the information given, this will be discussed with the parents/carers first, unless a pupil is considered to be at immediate risk and/or there is an overriding child protection/safeguarding concern.

Visiting staff from external agencies

- Visiting staff will be made aware of the Confidentiality Policy and are expected to work within its guidelines.
- Other professionals working within the school will be expected to work within their own codes of confidentiality.

Students on teaching / work placement

- Students on teaching or work placement will be made aware of the Confidentiality Policy and are expected to work within its guidelines.
- Students on placement will be provided with the 'Information for students on work placement' guidelines.

Volunteer helpers

- Volunteer helpers in school will be made aware of the Confidentiality Policy and are expected to work within its guidelines.
- Volunteer helpers in school will be provided with the 'Information for Volunteer Helpers in School' guidelines.

Reference has been made to the following publications in forming this policy:

What to do if you are worried a child is being abused (HM Government 2006)

DFE Guidance for safer working practice for adults who work with children and young people

DFE Information sharing: Guidance for Practitioners and Managers 2008

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Suzy Barnes

Curriculum, Standards and Organisation Committee

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