

# CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY



**Learning, Developing, Growing Together**

**Spinfield School  
Terrington Hill  
Marlow  
Buckinghamshire  
SL7 2RE**

**Tel: 01628 473551  
Fax: 01628 477652**

Updated:	September 2020
Review date:	September 2021
Signed:	
Position:	
Date:	

## **Spinfield School**

### **Confidentiality Policy**

#### ***To be read in conjunction with the Anti-bullying, Child Protection, Behaviour, Preventing radicalisation, Equalities, Data Protection policies***

The dictionary definition of confidential is "something which is spoken or given in confidence; private, entrusted with another's secret affairs". Some information is in the public domain and is therefore not confidential but it is best practice not to pass it on unnecessarily.

It is important to have an established procedure for dealing with confidentiality, which is understood by pupils, staff, parents, carers and visitors rather than develop ad hoc arrangements in response to a crisis. The procedures need to be consistent and protect the interests of both pupils and staff. A consistent, shared ethos and practice helps pupils, staff, parents, carers and visitors deal with and know where they stand with confidential issues and helps us deal with disclosure of information and establish ways of working (for example in PSHE) which respect privacy and avoid unnecessary personal disclosure.

#### **Background and Context**

Spinfield school is organised on a mixed ability basis and works on a "child-centred" philosophy of education. Support is readily available for children with Special Educational Needs. All children are treated as individuals and have equal access to the curriculum in an environment that fosters friendship, co-operation and high quality learning.

It is our aim to provide a happy and caring atmosphere where all are encouraged to work to the best of their ability and therefore to achieve their full potential. We also aim to develop pupil's self-esteem and self-discipline, so essential to life and to learning. We work hard to create an atmosphere in which all our pupils feel equally valued.

At Spinfield we believe children should be taught within a framework, which models and encourages the following values:-

- A respect for self
- A respect for others
- Commitment and trust within relationships
- Honesty with self and others
- A development of critical self-awareness for themselves and for others
- An exploration of the rights, duties and responsibilities involved with relationships
- Compassion, forgiveness, and care when people do not conform to their way of life
- An acknowledgement and understanding of diversity regarding religion, culture, and sexual orientation
- British Values

We also aim to improve the mental and physical health and well-being of the entire school community by raising the awareness of pupils and families of ways to establish and maintain life-long healthy and environmentally sustainable lifestyles.

#### **The Aims of the Policy**

- The policy supports the procedures for the Child Protection set out in Keeping children safe in Education 2020
- The policy ensures that anyone working in the school is aware of the boundaries of their legal and professional responsibilities towards pupils.
- The policy establishes a common understanding of what is meant by confidentiality and its limits throughout the school.
- The policy establishes a common understanding on issues of confidentiality between parents/guardians and the school.
- The policy guides the work of other professionals working in the school.
- A common understanding on issues of confidentiality (many of which may have little to do with abusive or illegal situations) should remove uncertainty and inconsistency.

## **How the aims will be achieved:**

### **Staff**

The aims will be achieved by all staff being made aware of, and adhering, to the procedures outlined within this policy and those closely related to it.

This policy is closely related to those for:-

- Behaviour and Discipline
- Anti-bullying
- Sex and Relationships Education
- Drug Education and Incident Management
- Child Protection / Safeguarding
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Equality Policy
- The Prevent Agenda
- Staff code of conduct
- 

It is also reflected on our Home School Agreement

### **The needs of pupils**

- Our policy is tailored to the age, emotional maturity, cultural and social needs of the pupils attending this school.
- The policy is supported by the formal and informal learning taking place in the school. Learning opportunities are in place to develop the skills and confidence of pupils to identify situations where they may need support or advice and possible ways to access it.
- All members of the school community, including pupils, have a right to privacy and mutual respect.
- Parents can request access to the files of their own children but do not have access to information regarding, or the files of, other children.

Pupils are made aware of the policy and procedures when it is addressed annually during class PHSE and Circle Time sessions.

### **School community (teachers, support staff, governors, parent helpers, visitors, students on work experience etc.)**

Despite robust ground rules, disclosures can be made in a class or group situation. When this occurs the adult involved must take steps to ensure follow up and support. If the disclosure reveals a risk to the child it must be referred to the Designated safeguarding lead. There will be more than one member of staff who are trained as designated persons, currently the Head, Deputy Head and SENDCo are Designated Persons. The child or young person needs to be told what will happen. Steps need to be taken to ensure that confidential disclosures are made to the appropriate person at the appropriate time. In order to ensure this, all members of the school community need to be aware of the limits of confidentiality available in different circumstances and by different individuals. Any decision to break confidentiality should be taken in conjunction with the Key Principles of:-

- a) Safeguarding
- b) Data protection
- c) The 'need to know' (see statement below regarding confidential minutes)
- d) Proportionality
- e) Recording
- f) Fraser guidelines
- g) The Prevent Agenda
- h) Keeping Children Safe in Education

See appendix 1

**Pink paper** is used to record safeguarding concerns or reports and will be distributed only to those who "need to know" and were in attendance at the meeting. This should not be discussed outside the original meeting.

- All staff working in the school are made aware of the policy and procedures and were involved with the creation of the initial policy. All staff in the school will be involved in discussion about any revision or amendments to the policy.
- All staff working in the school know how to access relevant Child Protection procedure manuals and where to access help.
- All staff receive Child Protection training by a Bucks Council accredited provider at least every 3 years and by the DSLs at least annually.
- All staff know the name and have contact details of the Designated Safeguarding leads (DSLs)
- Any concerns about Child Protection issues must be reported to a DSL
- Any concerns about unusual behaviour that may be related to Child Protection issues must be reported to the DSL
- Any concerns about radicalisation or issues outlined within the Prevent Agenda reported to the DSL
- All staff know that they should never give an absolute guarantee of confidentiality to a pupil
- All staff have access to a copy of the policy
- The policy is on the school website

There are no statutory requirements for schools around issues of confidentiality and as such no statutory requirement to always inform parents/guardians of confidential issues. Staff are not legally obliged to inform parents/carers in many instances when personal information which does not constitute a risk to the child has been disclosed. At Spinfield, reporting to parents will always be done following discussion and in consultation with the Headteacher.

Teaching staff and the School Admin team have access to the pupils' files. These are available for staff to keep themselves informed of relevant information that might impact on classroom behaviour or learning. Files for new pupils are passed to class teachers on arrival from the previous school.

Outside Agencies requiring access to this information, for example the Specialist Teaching Service, will need to gain permission from the Headteacher, or in her absence, the Deputy Headteacher, before doing so.

Child Protection information from Social Care is kept in a separate location within the office. All this information is marked "Private and Confidential" and is treated in line with County procedures. (See Child Protection Policy)

All staff have been made aware that they should seek advice and guidance regarding disclosures from the Designated Person if they are faced with a decision which is not clear-cut. This can be done on an anonymous basis without naming the individual pupil. Staff should not be left in a situation of having a difficult issue to deal with alone. Staff should feel confident that they will be supported by the Head teacher & Governing Body.

### **Continuous Professional Development**

- The school recognises and is committed to the professional development of its staff.
- Confidentiality cannot be addressed by attending courses alone and the many and varied issues surrounding confidentiality are dealt with through discussion.

### **The use of external support**

There is a Guidance Document contained within the school handbook that outlines how we work with Outside Agencies and visitors working with our pupils in school. We are also aware that Outside Agencies, for example Educational Psychologists, have their own procedures to adhere to regarding confidentiality.

Our school prospectus states:

*On rare occasions our concern about a child may mean that we have to consult other agencies even before we contact you. The procedures, which we follow, have been laid down by the Buckinghamshire Area Child Protection Committee, and the school has adopted a Child Protection Policy in line with this for the safety of all. If you want to know more about our procedures or the policy, please speak to the Headteacher or your child's class teacher.*

New members of staff and volunteer helpers are asked to read and sign a confidentiality statement. (see appendix 2 and appendix 3). They are made aware by a relevant senior member of staff that under no circumstances can issues of a confidential nature, brought to their attention in the workplace be shared with

outside agencies without first discussing them with a senior member of staff and if necessary, the Designated Person.

### **The school and parents**

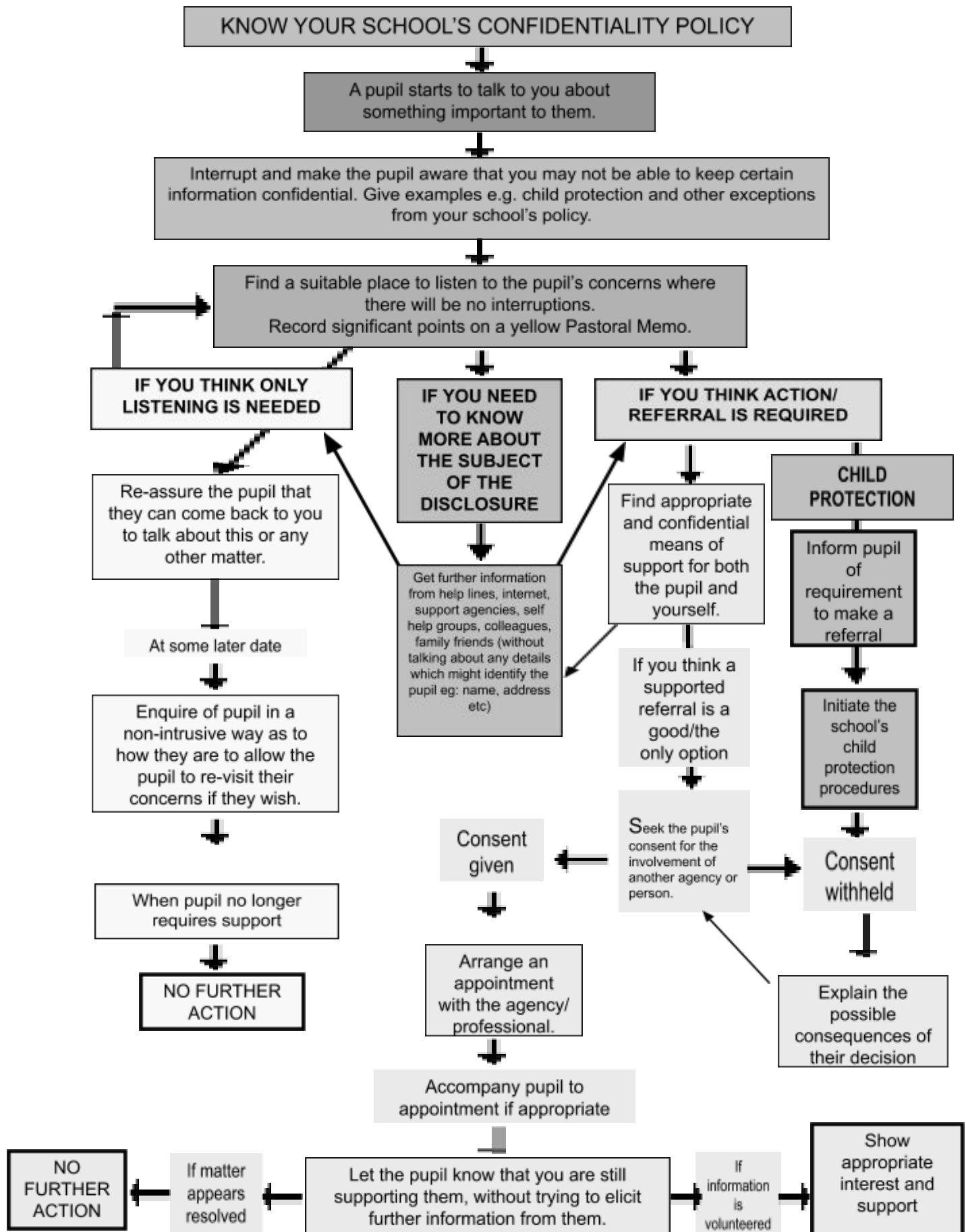
- We have good working relations with our parent body. Teaching Staff are available on a daily basis at the end of the day at the gate to talk to parents about issues that they perceive to be of importance.
- Appointments to discuss issues in depth can be made directly with staff at that time or through the school office. Parents are welcome to visit the office in the morning and messages can be left for the urgent attention of staff. Parents are encouraged to inform school of any issues that might impact on their child's behaviour or their ability to operate within a busy classroom. Trust has been built up over the years which mean that parents do confide in members of staff.
- We aim to ensure that all parents and carers can share their information in the confidence that it will only be used to enhance the welfare of their children. All information given to staff is treated in confidence.
- Parent volunteers are welcomed at Spinfield. We run workshops as an induction to being a volunteer and as well as covering curriculum requirements we ensure that parents understand the importance of confidentiality regarding issues that may arise when they are in school, with individuals or groups of children.
- All parents are DBS checked if they wish to volunteer, all wear identity badges and are asked to sign a confidentiality statement (see appendix 3) All parents are required to attend safeguarding training before they start to volunteer.
- Any financial documents that are given out by school for the purposes of monitoring or financial planning, whether to staff, governors and parent governors need to be treated with the strictest confidence and discretion.

Informal discussions with parents have helped us develop our policy. The Parent Governors are involved with policy review.

### **Responsibility for the pupil & school staff confidentiality policy**

The Headteacher takes overall responsibility for the policy and its implementation in school. The responsibility includes liaison with the Staff, Governing Body, parents, volunteer helpers and the LA.

## Flowchart to Show the Process for Handling a Disclosure of Confidential Information





For New Staff

Dear

As a new member of staff working within a school I am sure that you will understand that we have an obligation to all members of the school community to build in safeguards, which ensure that all children, no matter what their indiscretions, will be treated with respect.

School is a place for children within which they develop socially, morally and intellectually. They often learn by making mistakes and teachers can use these mistakes as teaching points. Parents working in classrooms may see such incidents occur but must resist the temptation to relate the information to anyone outside the school. If the teacher feels that a parent needs to know, then the teacher will transfer the information. For another parent or member of the Support Staff team to do this can be extremely upsetting and embarrassing. Similarly, if you see something occur in school which worries you, please discuss it with the class teacher or the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) as explained in your safeguarding training induction.

It is essential, therefore, that once in the school all those with responsibility for the children, conform to the high standards of confidentiality and I have to ask you to sign and return the attached slip to me as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

Miss J Spreadbury  
Headteacher

---

I have read the guidelines for CONFIDENTIALITY when working in the school and am happy to comply.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Please print name \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 3

Dear Volunteer



### CONFIDENTIALITY

We are very grateful to all our volunteers who are prepared to give their time to work in the school, on a voluntary basis. Voluntary help allows teachers to provide many more opportunities for children in classrooms. All help is gratefully appreciated, whatever form it may take, and it is often the case that activities not directly related to working with children make a valuable contribution to the life of the class as a whole. However, I do hope that you understand that we have an obligation to all members of the school community to build in safeguards, which ensure that all children will be treated with respect.

School is a workshop for children within which they develop socially, morally and intellectually. They often learn by making mistakes and teachers can use these mistakes as teaching points. Volunteers working in classrooms may see such incidents occur but must resist the temptation to relay the information to anyone outside the school. If the teacher feels that a parent needs to know, then the teacher will transfer the information. For a volunteer to do this can be extremely upsetting and embarrassing. Similarly, if you see something occur in school which worries you, please discuss it with the class teacher or the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) as explained in your safeguarding training induction.

The children at Spinfield are always our priority and it is essential therefore that, once in school, parents and all volunteers conform to the high standards of confidentiality expected of all the staff and adults. Please could you sign and return the attached slip to the class teacher with whom you will be working.

Thank you for your understanding, help and confidentiality.

### COST OF DBS CHECKS

Currently, the cost of a DBS check is £15.00 and school funds these checks. However, we would welcome any voluntary payments from volunteers who would be happy to cover this cost. We do not routinely re-check every 3 years but would be grateful if you would inform us of any change in circumstances. Applicants may register with the DBS update service at [DBS website](#). There is a small annual cost for this service.

Yours sincerely

**Miss J Spreadbury**

Headteacher

### VOLUNTEERS WORKING IN THE CLASSROOM

I have read the guidelines for volunteers working in the school and am happy to comply.

Signed ..... Name (please print)  
.....

Child's name ..... Home phone number  
.....



## Guidance for Volunteers

Thank you for volunteering to help us here at Spinfield. We do appreciate you giving up your time to help.

In order to follow Health & Safety guidelines and our confidentiality policy we hope the following information is useful.

- All volunteers must have had a successful DBS check. This can take a period of time to come through and a form can be obtained from the front office
- The enclosed letter needs to be signed and returned to school before a volunteer comes into help
- When a volunteer comes they need to come in through the main entrance and sign in. An identity badge also needs to be collected and worn while the volunteer is in school
- Fire and Health & Safety information needs to be read (this is displayed near the signing in book)
- If there is an emergency the bell will sound continuously and school will evacuate to KS2 Playground (by the wall)
- If the bell sounds intermittently this is a lockdown and everyone should stay inside. Outside doors will be locked.
- The staffroom and main office contain confidential information so they may not be used
- Please be aware that during your visit you may see or hear teachers and children working in a variety of situations and it is important to resist the temptation to discuss matters concerning teachers, children and their work outside school
- Please see one of the designated leaders for a safeguarding and Prevent briefing
- If you have any concerns please do not hesitate to contact me to discuss the matter further

Once again thank you and we hope you enjoy your time as a volunteer at Spinfield.