Sibsey Free Primary School

Confidentiality and Confidential Reporting (including Whistleblowing) Policy

Approved by: Headteacher

Date: May 2023

Last reviewed on: May 2022

Next review due by: May 2024

Confidentiality Policy and Confidential Reporting (including Whistleblowing)

Legal References

When considering Confidentiality, due regard must be taken of the requirements of legislation relating to Data Protection, Freedom of Information, Equality, Child Protection & Safeguarding (including the requirements of KCSIE), and other legislation relating to the protection of children.

Aims of the Policy

- To provide clear guidance to all members of the school community relating to confidentiality and confidential reporting.
- To encourage children to talk to a trusted adult if they are having problems.
- To ensure all adults working in school deal confidently with sensitive issues.

Moral and Values Framework

The moral and values framework within which confidentiality is addressed should be consistent with the overarching aims of the school and should be easily translated into practice in terms of:

- The curriculum content.
- The teaching methods.
- The relationships within the school.

Anyone worried about a child must continue to raise the concern until they have a reason not to be worried anymore (and this may involve taking matters further as detailed in the school's Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy and as detailed herein).

It is essential that our school should expect good practice and professional conduct from our school community, and others involved in the safeguarding of our children. Staff/volunteers have a duty to raise concerns about the management of child protection, which may include the attitude or actions of colleagues. Staff/volunteers should follow the appropriate procedures for reporting such concerns by raising any concerns as detailed herein.

Rationale

1. For everyone in the school community to know the procedures to take if they are wish to raise a concern. (See the section on Confidential Reporting (Whistleblowing)This could be concerns relating to:
    - Poor standards of service
    - Issues of bad practice
    - Conduct of colleagues or managers
    - Anything that is not in the best interests of the children or the school
    - Anything which is illegal or unacceptable behaviour

2. For children and adults in school to enjoy privacy from gossip.

3. To enable the school to be fair to all its community.
4. For children and adults to have disciplinary matters dealt with according to school policy and out of the eye of the wider community.

Guidelines

All adults, (whether employed or volunteers) working in our school should:

- Have due regard to the school's Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy and the guidelines detailed therein.

- Not discuss details of individual cases arising in staff meetings to any person without a direct professional connection to and interest in the welfare and education of the individual concerned.

- Not discuss an individual child's behaviour when in the presence of another child(ren) who is not connected to the behaviour/incident being discussed.

- Not enter into detailed discussions about a child's behaviour with other children or their parents.

- Adhere to and enforce the school's procedures for the taking of and use of photographs and video recording in school, including the use of mobile phone technology.

- Not give out a child's personal details over the telephone until the validity of the request has been ascertained.

- Discuss any concerns they may have about a child with the child's Class Teacher, or with the school's Designated Person (or Deputy Designated Person). This includes any information obtained from an external source.

Parents/Volunteers:

- Parents in school working as volunteers in the office, classrooms, or as part of the Friends of Sibsey Free School association, must not report cases of poor behaviour or pupil discipline to other parents in the school. This allows the teachers to deal with such matters in line with school policy and on occasions to allow children to put matter right without the direct involvement of their parents.

- When volunteers such as parents and friends of the school are working in classes they should not discuss educational matters outside of the classroom. For example, the specific use of teaching assistant time for particular pupils or groups of pupils. Teaching Assistants have different roles within a class, including the support of children with Additional Educational Needs. The provision and work with these children is for the teacher to discuss with the relevant parents or carers.

- Volunteers, students and supply teachers are asked to read this policy before working in school.

Child Protection/Safeguarding Issues:

- Matters of Child Protection/Safeguarding will be made known to staff on a need to know basis.

- It is important that class teachers and support staff are aware of some confidential matters in order to support individuals. These staff will respect the sensitivity of such cases and not divulge information to people unconnected professionally with the individual concerned.

Governors:

- Governors, in particular those sitting on Discipline Committees, must not divulge details about individuals (be they staff, families or individual children) to any person outside of the meeting. Although decisions from Committees may need to be made public, the discussions on which the decisions are based should be kept confidential.

- At full Governing body meetings matters such as pupil exclusions, personnel issues and personal details of any member of the school community will be dealt with as a separate confidential matter. This is not for the knowledge of persons outside the Governing Body meeting. Matters such as these are minuted separately and minutes are not published.

Information held about children

- Information about children will be shared with parents/carers but only about their child. Parents/Carers will not have access to any other child's information.

- All personal information about children including social services records are regarded as confidential. The Headteacher will decide who will have access, and whether those concerned have access to all, or only selected information. Confidential pupil information is stored securely on CPOMS, with full access to the system limited to designated school staff only.

- Information regarding health reports such as speech and language therapy, medical reports, SEN reports and minutes, etc, will be kept separately in dedicated files (as well as on CPOMS as appropriate).

Equality and Diversity

Staff may wish to discuss an individual case with a class or group. For instance, it can support the inclusion of a child with ADHD or ASD, if their peers are made aware of the condition and so have some idea of what to expect. Similarly, a child with visual or hearing impairment can be supported if his/her friends know to look out for them in the playground. In such cases permission will be sought from the child and his/her parents or carers.

Confidential Reporting (Whistleblowing)

Sibsey Free Primary School adopts the Local Authority Policy on Whistleblowing.

Where a member of staff or other has concerns about the actions or conduct of a member of staff these should be reported to the Headteacher who will take the necessary steps. When the concerns relate to the actions or conduct of the Headteacher, these should be reported to the Chair of the Governing Body (or the Vice Chairman if the Chair is unable to act impartially).

If anyone does not feel that a matter has been dealt with appropriately, or has other concerns, then the Lincolnshire County Council's Whistleblowing Policy should be followed. The policy can be found using the following link:

Whistleblowing policy – Introduction and scope - Lincolnshire County Council

Examples of concerns which might be raised:

- Conduct which is an offence or a breach of the law;

- A breach of our Code of Conduct for staff;
- Sexual, physical or verbal abuse of others;
- Damage to the environment;
- Dangerous procedures risking the health and safety of others;
- Unauthorised use of public funds;
- Suspected fraud or corruption;
- Unethical conduct/Improper conduct;
- Services that fall seriously below approved standards or practice;
- Disclosures which relate to miscarriage of justice;

(This list is not exhaustive)

The Whistleblowing Policy gives full details on how to submit a concern, in writing, or by email. There is also a confidential reporting free telephone line (0800 0853716).

All staff should feel confident to voice concerns about the attitude or actions of colleagues. If the concern relates to a possible Safeguarding/Child Protection matter, and the member of staff believes that a reported allegation is not being dealt with appropriately by their organisation, they should report the matter to the LADO, who will advise on the course of action which either they or the member of staff should take. The school operates a policy that details the procedures to be taken to investigate Allegations of Abuse made against Staff or Volunteers. The NSPCC also offers a Whistleblowing Helpline (see attached).

Review

This Policy will be reviewed annually.

NSPCC

Whistleblowing advice line

If you're a professional with concerns over how child protection issues are being handled in your own or another organisation, you can talk to us anonymously.

[0800 028 0285](tel:08000280285)