


Confidentiality Policy

SCHOOL

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Head Teacher	Chair of Governors	Review Dates
		Last Review: July 2021
Lisa Keighley	Philip Cavalier-Lumley	Next Review: July 2024

1. Policy

This policy will be abided by at all times by staff, volunteers, visitors, pupils and parents/carers. In order to ensure the utmost level of safety for pupils, staff members at Blakehill Primary School have a duty to act in accordance with this policy and not share information with external agencies, other schools or individuals.

This Confidentiality Policy has the following benefits, it:

- Ensures that important information regarding the school is not shared
- Guarantees that financial information stays confidential and secure
- Helps to build trust amongst staff, volunteers and external agencies
- Supports the school's safeguarding measures.

2. Purpose

Staff members take a supportive and accepting attitude towards pupils as part of their general responsibility for pastoral care. It is our hope that both pupils and parents/carers feel free to discuss worries about Blakehill Primary School, and concerns that may affect the educational progress of a pupil, with members of the school team.

3. Scope

This policy guides staff, volunteers and visitors on the policy and procedures surrounding confidentiality.

4. Principles

Legislative framework

This policy has due regard to statutory legislation including, but not limited to, the following:

- The Education Act 2002
- The Crime and Disorder Act 1998

- Data Protection Act 1998
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Freedom of Information Act 2000
- The Equality Act 2010

This policy is compliant under the following case law:

- The Common Law Duty of Confidentiality

This policy also has due regard to guidance documents including, but not limited to, the following:

- DfE 'Information sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers 2015'
- DfE 'Working together to safeguard children 2015'

Definitions

- For the purpose of this policy, 'confidentiality' is an understanding that any information shared with someone in trust will only be passed on to a third party with the prior agreement of the person disclosing it.
- Within this policy, a 'disclosure' is the sharing of any private information; this term does not solely relate to child protection issues.
- The term 'limited confidentiality' refers to the disclosure of information with professional colleagues; however, the confider would not be identified except in pre-determined circumstances.

5. Responsibilities

- All staff members, volunteers and individuals working in cooperation with Blakehill Primary School will uphold their responsibility and duty of confidentiality, ensuring that information and personal details are not shared or discussed with others, except for the appropriate necessary bodies.
- Visitors, volunteers and other professionals, such as healthcare professionals, will work within the same boundaries of confidentiality as all staff members.
- Staff members and volunteers alike, have the responsibility of keeping information regarding the school, including its pupils and parents/carers etc., confidential. This information will under no circumstances be shared, unless it is in the best interest of the school or its pupils.
- All staff members, volunteers and external agencies will treat any information regarding the management and finance of Blakehill Primary School as confidential, and therefore this information will only be shared with necessary and appropriate external individuals.
- Members of staff, volunteers, visitors, external parties and other agencies will always seek advice from a practitioner at Blakehill Primary School if there is any doubt over sharing the information concerned, without disclosing any identifiable information where possible.

6. Procedures

Confidentiality and child protection

- Blakehill Primary School aims to strike a balance between confidentiality and trust, ensuring the safety, wellbeing and protection of our pupils.
- Staff members and volunteers alike will pass on information if they believe a child is at risk of harm, otherwise, staff are not obliged to break confidentiality.

- In almost all cases of disclosure, limited confidentiality is always on offer.
- Staff members and volunteers will use their own professional judgement when considering whether to inform a child that a disclosure may be made in confidence and whether such confidence could remain having heard the information, bearing in mind that staff can never guarantee absolute confidentiality to pupils.
- At Blakehill Primary School, the Headteacher is to be informed of all incidents regarding child protection concerns which are highlighted by a volunteer, parent/carer or other external party to the school.
- Staff members inform the Headteacher of any concerns regarding a pupil's safety or welfare.
- Any concerns raised over a child's welfare and safety will be reported immediately to ensure that any intervention necessary to protect the child is accessed as early as possible.
- Staff members are not obliged to inform the police on most matters relating to illegal activity, such as illegal drugs or assaults. These will be assessed on a case-by-case basis with the support of the Senior Leadership Team.

Sharing information

- Blakehill Primary School takes the stance that all information about individual pupils is private and should only be shared with other professionals who have a legitimate need to know.
- Under no circumstances will personal information about pupils, staff members or Blakehill Primary School be passed on indiscriminately.
- Under no circumstances will information regarding the school's finances be shared with anyone, other than those with a legitimate need to know.
- If members of staff, volunteers or cooperating external parties share unsuitable or misrepresented information, Blakehill Primary School withholds the right to take the appropriate civil, legal or disciplinary action.
- The safety and protection of pupils, as well as Blakehill Primary School, is the paramount consideration in all confidentiality decisions.
- All non-teaching staff and volunteers will report disclosures of a concerning personal nature to the Designated Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible and in an appropriate setting.
- All external visitors will be made aware of the Staff and Volunteer Confidentiality Policy and act in accordance with it when dealing with information, particularly sensitive information, regarding Blakehill Primary School, its pupils and parents/carers.
- All data will be processed and held in line with the school's Data Protection Policy. In the event of information and data being shared with external or inappropriate parties, the individual responsible will be liable for disciplinary or legal action in accordance with the Data Protection Policy.

Breaking confidentiality

When confidentiality must be broken because a child may be at risk of harm, in accordance with the school's Child Protection Policy, Blakehill Primary school will ensure the following:

- Pupils are told when information has been passed on
- Pupils are kept informed about what will be done with information
- To alleviate their fears concerning the information becoming common knowledge, pupils are told exactly who their information has been passed on to

If confidential information is shared with the consent (implied or explicit) of the individuals involved, and they are informed of the purpose of sharing the information in question, there will be no breach of confidentiality or of the Human Rights Act 1998.

In the event that consent for sharing confidential information is not gained, an individual will satisfy themselves that there are reasonable grounds to override the duty of confidentiality in these circumstances before sharing the data.

Blakehill Primary school recognises that overriding public interest is a justifiable reason to disclose information; however, permission from the Executive Headteacher / Head of School will be sought prior to disclosing any information regarding the school.

Staff should act in accordance with the school's Whistleblowing Policy.

Accessing information

In accordance with section 7 of the Data Protection Act 1998, personal information, such as educational records, can be shared via a subject access request (SAR).

These requests must be made in writing to the governing body and will be responded to within 15 school days if the request is regarding an educational record.

If the data being requested is not in relation to an educational record, the response must be within 40 calendar days.

Pupils, or the parent/carer of a pupil, at a maintained school, such as Blakehill Primary school, have the right to access the information that the school holds about the child in question.

Some types of personal data are exempt from the right of a SAR and so cannot be obtained by making a SAR. Information may be exempt because of its nature or because of the effect its disclosure is likely to have.

Information regarding another individual must not be disclosed in a SAR.

Individual requests for non-personal information cannot be treated as a SAR, but will be dealt with either as a request under the Data Protection Act 1998 or a Freedom of Information request.

In line with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, private data and public records can potentially be accessed through lodging a Freedom of Information (FoI) request.

These requests must be made in writing to the school, stating the name and address of the requester as well as a description of the information requested.

Successful FoI requests will be responded to within 20 working days from receipt of the request, unless the request does not comply with the procedure set out in the Local Authorities Freedom of Information Policy.

Blakehill Primary school holds the right to charge the requester a fee.

Certain information will not be shared, such as that explained in Part 2 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

7. Monitoring and Review

This policy is monitored for effectiveness by the Headteacher and is reviewed every three years, or where necessary in light of changes to law or statutory guidance.

8. Distribution

This policy will be available on the school website and from the School Business Manager.

9. Contacts

Please contact a member of the Governing body or the Headteacher if you require support or guidance on this policy.

10. Cross Referencing

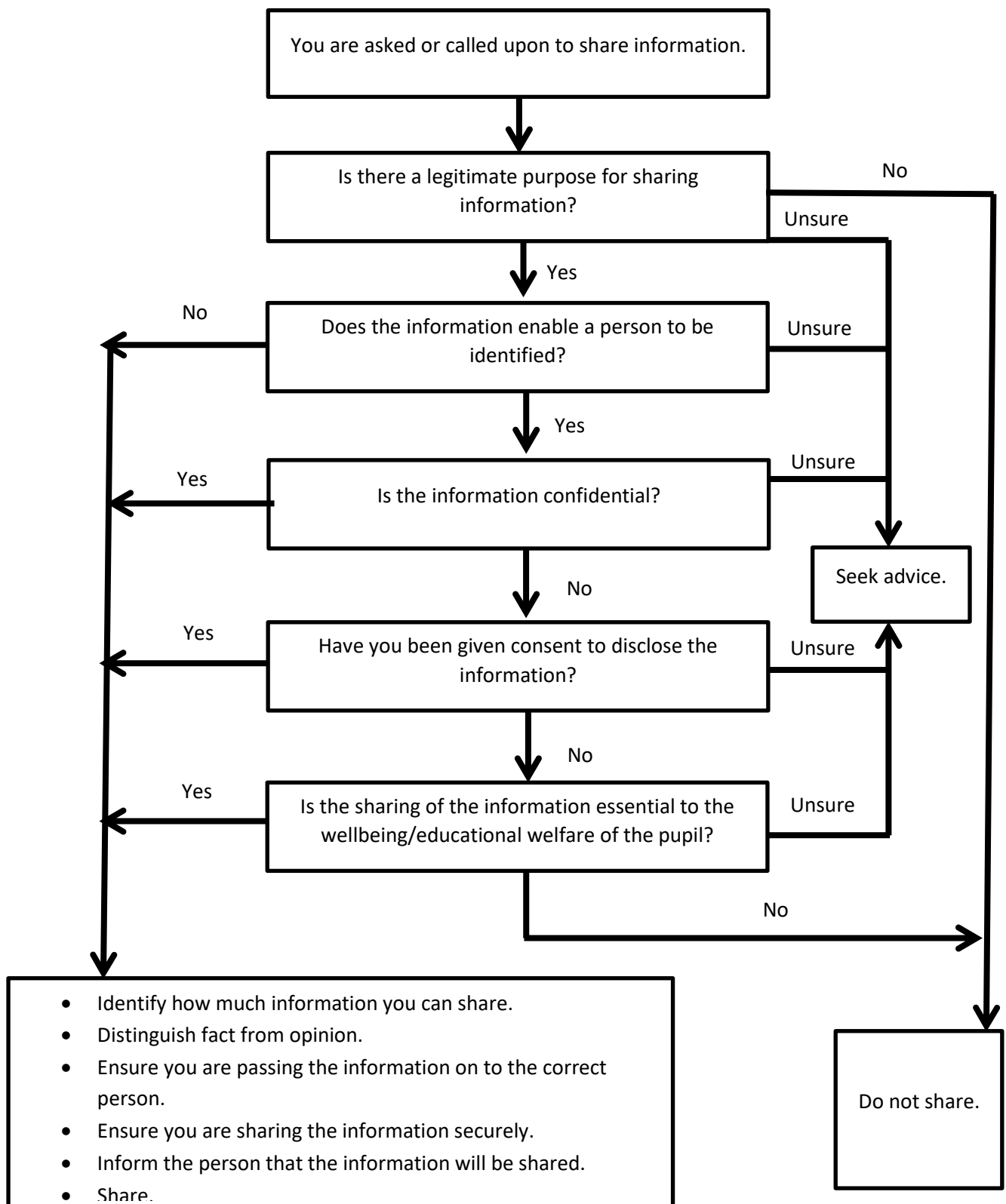
This policy is intended to be used in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Data Protection Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- E-safety Policy

11. Appendices

Appendix A – Information Sharing Flowchart

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Notes

- If there are child protection concerns, follow the relevant procedures without delay.
- Always seek advice if you are unsure whether to share information.