SOUTHWICK C.E. PRIMARY SCHOOL
POLICY STATEMENT: CONFIDENTIALITY

RATIONALE

Children should be protected at all times and all staff, including volunteers, should be given clear, unambiguous guidance as to their legal and professional roles. There should be good practice throughout the school which is understood by pupils, parents/carers and staff. Southwick Primary School seeks to put the child at the heart of the learning process and to provide a safe and secure learning environment. 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. Sharing information unnecessarily is an erosion of trust. 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.

AIMS

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 that staff, parents 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 and carers.
6. To ensure that pupils and parents/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 then 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 have a right of access to any records the school may hold on their child but not to any other child that they do not have parental responsibility for.

GUIDELINES

1. All information about individual children is private and should only be shared with those staff that have a need to know.
2. All social services, medical and personal information about a child should be held in a safe and secure place which cannot be accessed by individuals other than school staff.
   a) The school continues to actively promotes a positive ethos and respect for the individual:
      The school has appointed a senior lead teacher for child protection who receives regular training (Lesley Shellard)
   b) There is clear guidance for the handling of child protection incidents. And all staff have regular training on child protection issues.
   c) There is clear guidance for procedures if a member of staff is accused of abuse.
   d) 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.
   e) Staff are aware of the need to handle all issues about different types of families in a sensitive manner.
   f) Any intolerance about gender, faith, race, culture or sexuality is unacceptable and should follow the schools discipline policy.

g) 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 and carers and staff are always available to talk to both children and parents/carers about issues that are causing concern. Lesley Davis, Bev Webb and Kathleen Goodier have received training in Basic Counselling Skills and are available to act as 'Listening Ears' for children who wish to discuss concerns. Karen Lane is trained as an Emotional Literacy Support Assistant and Cathy Newton has experience in this field through her work for Barnardo's. The school encourages children to talk to parents/carers about issues causing them concern and may in some cases supports the children to talk to their parents.

7. Parents/carers and children should feel reassured that 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. Much 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 PSHCE session dealing with sensitive issues such as sex and relationship 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 proactive 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 and children.

11. Information about children will be shared with parents but only about their child. Parents should not have access to any other child's books, marks and progress grades at any time especially at parents evening. However parents 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 care records should be regarded as confidential. It should be clearly understood by those who have access to it, whether those concerned have access to all, or only some of the information. Information regarding health reports such as speech therapy, medical reports, SEN reports, SEN minutes of meetings and social services minutes of meetings and reports will be shared with appropriate staff then securely filed. Logs of administration of medication to children should be kept secure in the office cupboard and each child should have their own individual log. Addresses and telephone numbers of parents and children will not be passed on except in exceptional circumstances or to a receiving school.

12. Great care will be taken not to make photographs of any child public without parental permission. Guidance as to the use of cameras and video recorders will be given at any public performances.

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 destroyed after use. 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. 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.

14. All staff, visitors and volunteers should also be aware of the need for confidentiality outside of the school, regarding any information gained about any individual whilst working in the school.

Conclusion

Southwick Primary School has a duty of care and responsibility towards pupils, parents/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.

This policy should be read in conjunction with those on PSHE&C, Behaviour, Anti-bullying, Child Protection (including Guidance for safer working practice '09), CP record keeping, Equalities, Physical Restraint, Safeguarding, Whistle blowing, Volunteer Adults in School, Data Protection, Recruitment, E-safety, our Written Procedures and the Code of Conduct for Safe Practice.

CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT FOR CHILDREN

If you have something important to talk about
If you are worried about things that are happening to you
If you need help or need to find out where to get help

Talk to a member of staff who are there to listen. They will do what they can to help particularly Mrs Davis, Mrs Goodier who have been especially trained to do this.

If you are worried about confidentiality (keeping a secret), tell the staff – they will understand. They may be worried about your safety and may need to share it with others, but they would tell you first.

If you are still unsure about talking to a member of staff you can phone Child line on 0800 1111; the call is free and will not show up on your phone bill. Child line will help you work out what to do next.