



Hilltop First School and Foundation Stage Confidentiality Policy

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Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Aims of the Policy.....	3
3. Child Protection	3
4. Guidelines	3
Information on pupils	3
Circle Times/PSHE sessions	4
Parents/Carers and families.....	4
Governors.....	4
Volunteers, Temporary Staff, Students and Supply Teachers	5
5. Confidentiality	5
6. Social Networking Sites	5
7. Equal Opportunities	5
8. Breach of the Policy	5
9. Monitoring	5
10. Links to other policies	6

1. Introduction

Hilltop First School seeks to put the child at the heart of the learning process and to provide a safe and secure learning environment and to address the issues which may arise about confidentiality.

Hilltop 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. The school is mindful that it is placed in a position of trust by all stakeholders, and there is an expectation that a professional approach will be used in all matters of confidentiality.

2. Aims of the Policy

- To foster an ethos of trust within the school.
- To ensure that staff, parents/carers and pupils are aware of the school's confidentiality policy and procedures.
- To give all staff clear, unambiguous guidance as to their legal and professional roles.
To ensure good practice throughout the school, which is understood by pupils, parent/carers, governors and staff.
- To understand that Health Professionals have their own codes of conduct but that while in school they are also bound by relevant school policies.
- To ensure everyone connected with the school knows that **no one can offer absolute confidentiality in relation to child protection issues.**

3. Child Protection

Hilltop has clear guidance for the handling of child protection issues. **For all Child Protection issues please refer to Hilltop's Child Protection Policy.**

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Lynn Bima

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead: Juliet Wright

4. Guidelines

Information on pupils

Schools, Local Authorities and the Department for Education hold information on pupils in order to run the education system and in doing so are subject to the Data Protection Act 1998.

Pupils have certain rights under the General Data Protection Regulation, including a general right of access to personal data held on them, with parents/carers exercising this right on their behalf if they are too young to do so themselves.

All personal information about individual pupils is private and should only be shared with those staff that have a need to know. These staff will respect the sensitivity of such cases and will not divulge information to others.

Information about a child will be shared only with that child's parents/carers and nobody else's. Parents should not have access to any other child's books, levels of achievement etc.

No member of staff should enter into a detailed discussion about a child with other children or their parents/carers without prior permission from those discussed. (See Equal Opportunities below.)

Parents should know that information about their child will be shared with the receiving school when they change school.

All social care, medical and personal information about a child should be held in a safe and secure place which cannot be accessed by anybody other than the appropriate school staff.

Information regarding health reports, medical reports, SEND reports and Social Care meetings will be only be circulated to appropriate school staff in a file marked "CONFIDENTIAL" and once read must be returned to the Headteacher for secure filing.

Addresses and contact details of parents/carers and children will not be passed on by school staff except in exceptional circumstances or to a receiving school.

All parents/carers are asked to complete Hilltop's permission form for the use of pupil photographs. No child's photographs will be used without parental permission.

Circle Times/PSHE sessions

During regular weekly circle times/PSHE sessions, children will often talk about sensitive issues in relation to themselves. Staff need therefore, to be aware that discussions during these times can lead to disclosure of a child protection issue.

Careful thought needs to be given to the content of the session. The setting of ground rules for these sessions and effective use of 'bubble time' will minimise 'public' disclosures.

However we are aware that as we work with such young children comments may be made spontaneously. Staff must be alert to this, and in such circumstances early intervention from the adult, including guiding the discussion, will be necessary, and the appropriate school policy (eg Child Protection) will then need to be followed.

Parents/Carers and families

At Hilltop we aim to develop a close trusting relationship with our families and pride ourselves on good communication with parents and carers. Staff are always available to talk to both children and parents/carers about issues that are causing concern. We recognise that on occasions there may be family issues which might affect a pupil and which the family will only disclose to us if they can be sure the information will be treated confidentially. We will respect these wishes unless a pupil is considered to be at immediate risk and/or there is an overriding child protection concern.

Governors

At full Governing Body meetings matters such as exclusions, personnel issues and personal details of any member of the school community will be dealt with during the Part 2 section of the Headteacher's Report.

Minutes in Part 2 are taken separately and are to be printed (where a print-out is required for statutory reasons) on different coloured paper. Part 2 minutes are not published and the information must not be disclosed to any person outside the Governing Body members attendant at the meeting / or who are on the relevant committee but who were unable to attend (and then only if any subsequent action requires their knowledge).

Governors sitting on Discipline or Appeal Committees should not divulge details about any hearing or the individuals concerned to any person outside the hearing.

Volunteers, Temporary Staff, Students and Supply Teachers

Anyone spending time in the school will be asked to read this policy, and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, before working in school and are expected to abide by its contents. They will therefore understand both their responsibilities under this policy and also their responsibility to divulge certain disclosures made by pupils or parents/carers to the Designated Person.

5. Confidentiality

In developing our ethos of trust at Hilltop it is important for children to feel that they can share their concerns and ask for help when they need it.

Where a pupil does discuss a difficult matter (which is not a Child Protection Issue) with an adult at Hilltop they will be encouraged to also discuss the matter with their parent or carer themselves, or be offered support in discussing it with parents/carers.

The safety, wellbeing and protection of the child is the paramount consideration in all the decisions adults at Hilltop make about confidentiality and to this end **no adult in school should promise a pupil absolute confidentiality.**

If a pupil asks to speak in confidence or to keep a secret, they should be told beforehand that absolute confidentiality is not possible if they, or someone else, is at risk. The child also needs to know who will be told, why, what the outcome is likely to be and how the pupil will be supported.

If a spontaneous disclosure occurs then, again, **no adult in school should promise a pupil absolute confidentiality.** Hilltop's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy should be followed.

6. Social Networking Sites

No member of the Hilltop Community should discuss or share any aspect of school business on any social networking site or other online platforms.

7. Equal Opportunities

All children have a right to the same level of confidentiality irrespective of gender, race, religion, medical concerns and Special Education Needs.

Staff may wish to discuss specific information with a class or group which will aid successful inclusion of a child, eg an aspect of SEN or issues around certain sensory difficulties. In such cases permission will be sought both from the child and his/her parents/carers.

8. Breach of the Policy

All members of the Hilltop Community should be aware that any breach of this policy could be considered misconduct, and could therefore result in disciplinary action being taken.

9. Monitoring

The Headteacher has responsibility for monitoring this policy. This policy is reviewed annually by the Governing Body, as part of Hilltop's Policy Review Cycle.

10. Links to other policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Child protection and Safeguarding policy
- Pupil Privacy Notice
- Data Protection Policy
- Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Volunteers Handbook