
Policy on **Confidentiality**

September 2021

Pardes House Primary
School

Headteacher: Rabbi J Sager

POLICY ON CONFIDENTIALITY

Aims of this policy

- To provide clear guidance to all members of the school community around confidentiality.
- 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.

* The Confidentiality Policy impacts upon every other school policy.

A Definition of Confidentiality

Confidentiality is an understanding that any information shared with someone in trust can only be passed on to a third party with the agreement of the person disclosing it.

Introduction and Context

- Pardes House Primary School recognises its legal duty under section 175 Education Act 2002 to work with other agencies in safeguarding children and protecting them from “*significant harm*”.
- This school recognises that a clear ‘Confidentiality Policy’ will support the school in ensuring that every child can “be healthy” and “stay safe”.
- Our staff seek to adopt an open and accepting attitude towards children and young people as part of their general responsibility for pastoral care.
- Staff hope that parents and children will feel free to talk about any concerns or worries which may affect educational progress and that they will see the school as a safe place if there are any difficulties at home.
- Our school recognises the following benefits of working to a confidentiality policy:
 - i. It highlights the importance of pupils being able to talk to adults in the school to share their problems in a safe and supportive environment.
 - ii. It safeguards the well-being of those involved in the disclosure of confidential information.
 - iii. It builds trust between pupils and staff.
 - iv. It empowers each pupil to exercise control over the choices that will affect their life.
 - v. It prevents the need to deal with each disclosure as a crisis in isolation. (See guidance on school specific information 1 – Appendix 1, page 5)

Legal Requirements

Human Rights Act 1998: Gives everyone the right to respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence, unless this is overridden: by the pupil interest, for reasons of child protection, for the protection of public safety, pupil order, health or morals or for the rights and freedoms of others.

Data Protection Act 2018: Everyone responsible for using personal data has to follow strict rules called ‘data protection principles’. They must make sure the information is:

- used fairly, lawfully and transparently

- used for specified, explicit purposes
- used in a way that is adequate, relevant and limited to only what is necessary
- accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date
- kept for no longer than is necessary
- handled in a way that ensures appropriate security, including protection against unlawful or unauthorised processing, access, loss, destruction or damage

Freedom of Information Act 2000: Amends the Data Protection Act. Gives everyone the right to request any records a public body, including schools, holds about them. A school may withhold information it has if it is considered the information may damage the recipient, if disclosed. School data or record keeping policy should also cover the requirements of this act.

Children's Act 2004: set out the following objectives under the Every Child Matters agenda:

- Children and Young People are mentally and emotionally healthy.
Equality and cohesion will be promoted, in line with our Equality and Cohesion Policy, and the policy will be operated in a non-discriminatory way
- Children and Young People are sexually healthy ;
- Children and Young People choose not to take illegal drugs;
- Children and Young People are safe from maltreatment, neglect, violence and sexual Exploitation;
- Children and Young People have security, stability and be cared for.

Specific Issues

* **Note:** All staff working at Pardes House Primary School are under a contractual obligation to uphold the policy and follow its guidance, as with all other school policies.

All Adults Working In Our School:

- Implement the Child Protection Policy.
- Encourage children to talk with their parents / carers.
- Keep anything seen or heard within school confidential to the school.
- Who have a concern about a child, but do not feel they know the child's circumstances well enough to make a judgement about procedure, that adult should discuss their concerns with the child's class teacher who will have greater knowledge of the child, at an appropriate place and time.
- Will be made aware of who (if anyone) to inform in the event of different types of disclosures of a personal nature.
- Know that unconditional confidentiality should never be given.
- Will know that confidential discussions need to take place in a confidential environment. Public places such as the staffroom, the classroom and the playground are not, in general confidential environments.
- Will know that our school will provide opportunities for its pupils to access confidential support on school premises.
- Will not divulge any child's personal details over the telephone until the validity of the request has been ascertained via a returned call.
- Know that if they receive external information that leads them to believe there is a child protection issue, they should refer the information to the 'School Safeguarding and Designated Person for Child Protection' (the Headteacher).

- Know that they should not enter into detailed discussion about a child's behaviour or academic progress with other children or their parents.
- Know that they should not discuss an individual child's behaviour in the presence of another child.
- Should adhere to and enforce the schools procedures for the taking of and use of photographs and video recording in school.

Seeking advice

Staff can seek advice and support for themselves when dealing with a disclosure whilst keeping the individual's identity anonymous. The school will maintain an up-to-date list of appropriate contacts for staff so that they can seek support. This will include the following members of staff at this school, who form the school's Child Protection Team.

1. Rabbi J Sager – Headteacher (Designated Person for Child Protection)
2. Rebbe S Roitenbarg – Menahel
3. Mrs H Cohen – Inclusion Leader
4. Ms J Zrihen – Deputy Head and Pastoral Leader

Governors Meetings

- Governors, in particular those sitting on discipline committees, will not divulge details about individuals (be they staff, families or individual children) to any person outside of the meeting.
- 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 copied onto different coloured paper. These confidential papers should be destroyed.
- Governors must observe complete confidentiality when asked to do so by the governing body, especially in relation to matters concerning individual staff, children or parents/carers. Although decisions reached at governors meetings are normally made public through the minutes or otherwise, the discussions on which decisions are based should be confidential.

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 books, marks and progress grades at any time, especially at parents evening. However, parents/ carers should be aware that information about their child will be shared with the receiving school, if and when they change school.
- 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.
- Information regarding health report such as speech therapy, medical reports, SN reports, SN minutes of meetings, Social Care and Health Services will be circulated in envelopes and once read should be returned for secure filing.

In The Classroom

- Ground rules and distancing techniques will be used where sensitive issues are addressed e.g. Drugs Education, personal safety, relationships education.
- All adults should not put pressure on children to disclose personal information and should discourage others from applying any such pressure.
- All adults will remind children that some information they share in the classroom may need to be shared with other adults for their protection.
- Children will be reassured that, if information has to be shared, they will be informed first and then supported appropriately.
- If a child and his/her parent/ carer wish to highlight an issue to a peer group then this will be carried out sensitively by the class teacher/ head teacher, e.g. bereavement.

Parent Helpers & Other Classroom Support Volunteers

- Parent helpers & other classroom support volunteers will be made aware of and abide by the school's policy on disclosures and confidentiality.
- If they have any concerns they must refer them to a member of staff. Any disclosure must be passed onto a member of staff.
- It is essential that parent helpers and volunteers understand why anything seen and heard in school must remain confidential. The Headteacher and/or governors reserve the right to withdraw the invitation to help if they fail to comply with this policy.

Dissemination of the policy

All staff members, governors and adults working in the school (including voluntary helpers) can see this policy. A copy is available to view at the school office upon request.

Working with external agencies

Anyone working with pupils from the school particularly on sensitive areas of the curriculum needs to be made aware of the school's confidentiality policy.

Signed:

Date: November 2021

Review: November 2024

APPENDIX 1

GUIDANCE ON SCHOOL SPECIFIC INFORMATION

1. Examples of where a confidentiality policy might be of use

- A pupil knows someone who is bullying others at the school but is unsure about whether or not to tell;
- A pupil starts sharing something very personal in a classroom situation;
- A school uses staff or peers as a support system for pupils e.g. listening, befriending;
- A pupil informs a lunchtime supervisor that their father is hitting their mother;
- A pupil talks to a member of staff about their knowledge of a crime e.g. shoplifting, assault.

2. Exceptions to Confidentiality

Likely exceptions requiring consideration by the school might include:

- Where there is a safeguarding and child protection concern;
- Where there is risk of serious harm or threat to life;
- Where a pupil needs urgent medical treatment;
- Where potential or actual serious crime (e.g. physical abuse) is involved.