

PREFACE

Chiltern Hills Academy is a learning environment at the heart of its community. We encourage every person in our community to:

Create, Aspire and Excel to 'Live life in all its fullness' (John 10:10)

We achieve this through our dedication to the seven Christian values of love, hope, self-discipline, compassion, forgiveness, respect and honesty.

We are a community in which staff, students and parents work collaboratively to develop a learning environment and organisation which is spiritual, safe, innovative, creative and exciting. All members of the Academy are motivated and inspired by the vision to give their best and to play a full part in the life of the school and in their own developing lives.

The Governors at Chiltern Hills Academy are committed to achieving the vision and values. They oversee and monitor this policy to ensure that this is being achieved.

THE PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY IS:

To protect the child at all times and to give all staff involved clear, unambiguous guidance as to their legal and professional roles and to ensure good practice throughout the school which is understood by students, parents/carers and staff.

RATIONALE

Chiltern Hills Academy seeks to put the child at the heart of the learning process and to provide a safe and secure learning environment. All in the Academy are 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 Academy 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.

OBJECTIVES:

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 Academy.
3. To ensure that staff, parents and students are aware of the Academy's confidentiality policy and procedures.
4. To encourage children to be aware of confidentiality issues relating to their peers.
5. To reassure students that their best interests will be maintained.
6. To encourage children to talk to their parents and carers.

CONFIDENTIALITY

7. To ensure that students and parents/carers know that school staff cannot offer unconditional confidentiality.
8. To ensure that parents have a right of access to any records the Academy may hold on their child but not to any other child for whom they do not have parental responsibility.

GUIDELINES

1. All information about individual children is private and should only be shared with those staff who 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 Academy staff.
3. The Academy prides itself on good communication with parents and carers and staff are available to talk to both children and parents/carers about issues that are causing concern. The Academy encourages children to talk to parents/carers about issues causing them concern and may in some cases support the children to talk to their parents.
4. All children have a right to the same level of confidentiality irrespective of gender, race, religion, medical concerns and special educational needs. A lot of data is generated in schools by these categories but individual children should not be able to be identified.
5. Confidentiality is a whole school issue. Clear ground rules must be set for any classroom work such as circle time and other Life Skills sessions dealing with sensitive issues such as sex and relationships and drugs.
6. All children, parents, staff members and governors must enjoy privacy from gossip. All matters are dealt with according to the Academy's procedures and out of the eye of the wider community. It is important that:
 - Staff do not discuss details of individual cases arising in staff meetings to any person without direct professional connection to and interest in the welfare and education of the individual concerned.
 - No member of staff discusses an individual child's behaviour in the presence of another child
 - Staff do not enter into detailed discussion about a child's behaviour with other children or their parents.
 - Governors, in particular those sitting on Discipline Committees, do not divulge details about individuals (be they staff, families or individual children) to any person outside of the meeting.
 - Parents working as volunteers, do not report cases of poor behaviour or student discipline to other parents in the Academy. This allows teachers to deal with such matters in line with Academy policy.

CONFIDENTIALITY

- At full Governing Board meetings matters such as student exclusion, personnel issues and personal details of any member of the school community will be dealt with in the Principal's Report.
- Staff performance management will be carried out privately. Targets for individuals, named lesson observation sheets and other performance data will be in the HR office.
- Matters of Child Protection are 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.
- When volunteers, such as parents and friends of the Academy are working in classes, they do not discuss educational matters outside the classroom. For example the specific use of teaching assistant time for particular students or groups of students, teaching assistants have different roles within a class, including the support of children with special 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.

OTHER PROFESSIONALS

7. Health professionals are bound by their professional codes of conduct to maintain confidentiality when working in a one to one situation. When working in a classroom, they are bound by relevant school policies. In line with best practice guidance, like other school staff, they will seek to protect privacy and prevent inappropriate personal disclosures in a classroom setting, by negotiating ground rules and using distancing techniques.
8. Staff should be aware of children with medical needs. This information should be accessible to staff who need it but not on general view to other parents/carers and children.
9. Photographs of children should not be used without parents/carers permission especially in the press and internet. This is often a cultural issue of which the Academy needs to be aware. At no time should the child's name be used with a photograph so that they can be identified. The Academy gives clear guidance to parents about the use of cameras and videos during public school events.
10. Information about children will be shared with parents but only about their child. However parents should be aware that information about their child will be shared with the receiving school when they change school.

11. All personal information about children including social services records should be regarded as confidential. It should be clearly understood by those who have access to it, and 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 circulated in envelopes and once read should be returned for secure filing.
 - Logs of administration of medication to children should be kept secure and each child should have their own individual log.
 - In all other notes, briefing sheets etc a child should not be able to be identified.
12. Governors need to be mindful that from time to time issues are discussed or brought to their attention about staff and children.

All such documents that are published electronically should contain a “Confidential” watermark in a file using the word, “Confidential” in the file name. Any such papers issued at meetings should be collected and destroyed.

Governors must observe complete confidentiality when asked to do so by the governing board, especially in relation to matters concerning individual staff, students 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 board.

CONCLUSION

Chiltern Hills Academy has a duty of care and responsibility towards students, 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.

MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed when there are changes in the law or at least every two years, to assess implementation and effectiveness.

This policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the Academy.

APPENDIX 1

SIX KEY POINTS ON INFORMATION SHARING FOR THE GUIDANCE OF STAFF

1. You should explain to children, young people and families at the outset, openly and honestly, what and how information will, or could be shared and why, and seek their agreement. The exception to this is where to do so would put that child, young person or others at increased risk of significant harm or an adult at risk of serious harm, or if it would undermine the prevention, detection or prosecution of a serious crime (see glossary for definition) including where seeking consent might lead to interference with any potential investigation.
2. You must always consider the safety and welfare of a child or young person when making decisions on whether to share information about them. Where there is concern that the child may be suffering or is at risk of suffering significant harm, the child's safety and welfare must be the overriding consideration.
3. You should, where possible, respect the wishes of children, young people or families who do not consent to share confidential information. You may still share information, if in your judgement on the facts of the case, there is sufficient need to override that lack of consent.
4. You should seek advice where you are in doubt, especially where your doubt relates to a concern about possible significant harm to a child or serious harm to others.
5. You should ensure that the information you share is accurate and up-to-date, necessary for the purpose for which you are sharing it, shared only with those people who need to see it and shared securely.
6. You should always record the reasons for your decision – whether it is to share information or not.