

ASTON HALL JUNIOR AND INFANT SCHOOL

Confidentiality and Sharing Information Policy

NB

Volunteers, students, supply teachers and external contributors should be asked to read this policy before working in the school.



ASTON HALL
JUNIOR & INFANT SCHOOL

Approved and adopted July 2011 then reviewed July 2015

To be reviewed July 2017

Rationale

Members of staff in all schools are asked, on occasion, to keep information confidential. This can relate to a variety of issues, including under age sexual activity, drug use, abuse or other dangerous or illegal activities. Although there is no statutory duty to pass on confidential information, in circumstances where a pupil appears in need of immediate protection, there is a moral, professional and often contractual duty to pass on information where significant harm may otherwise result. Aston Hall Junior and Infant School seeks to provide a safe and secure learning environment, and works in accordance with all statutory guidance around safeguarding children, and advice from the Rotherham Local Safeguarding Children Board. It is committed to developing ways for the pupil's voice to be heard, whilst recognising its responsibility to use/hold/safeguard any information received. Aston Hall Junior and Infant School is aware that it holds a position of trust with all stakeholders and there is an expectation that a professional approach will be used in all matters of confidentiality.

However, there may be times when a member of staff may wish to discuss an individual case with a class or group. For instance, it could support the inclusion of a pupil with Down's syndrome or Autism if their peers are made aware of the condition and have some idea of what to expect. In such cases, permission will be sought from the pupil and his/her carers.

Confidentiality is a whole school issue. All pupils have right to the same level of confidentiality irrespective of gender, race, religion, medical concerns, sexuality, special educational needs etc. A lot of data may be requested by category, but individual pupils should not be able to be identified, where possible.

It is important that the whole school follows the same clear and explicit policy and that pupils, parents and carers are made aware of it, and how it works in practice. Aston Hall Junior and Infant School has a Designated Safeguarding Lead, Mrs Paula Bestall, who undertakes training regularly. Child Protection and safeguarding procedures are understood and training is undertaken by all staff every year.

Aims and objectives

- to protect the individual at all times
- to give clear guidance to all members of the school around confidentiality
- to encourage pupils to talk to a trusted adult if they are having problems
- to give staff confidence to deal with sensitive issues
- to ensure that pupils and parents/carers know that the school staff cannot offer unconditional confidentiality



ASTON HALL
JUNIOR & INFANT SCHOOL

Key Points

- pupils should be reassured that their best interests will be maintained at all times.
- pupils should be reassured that, if confidentiality has to be broken, where possible they will be informed first and then supported appropriately, and that information regarding them will only be passed on without their consent if Child Protection issues are present.
- pupils should be informed of where they can access confidential help, advice and/or information if they need it e.g. school nurse, Youth Start, Childline etc.
- any personal information should be regarded as private and not passed on indiscriminately (e.g. in the staff room).
- if a member of staff receives information which they think may be a child protection issue, they should refer the case to the designated teacher for child protection **at the very earliest opportunity**, after informing the young person involved that they intend to do so.
- professionals are encouraged to consult as much as possible with parents about their children when referring to another agency. In general, parents should be asked if they wish to be referred **UNLESS THERE IS REASON TO BELIEVE THAT OBTAINING SUCH CONSENT MAY PUT THE YOUNG PERSON AT RISK**. If the referral is about pupil abuse, or the risk of it, this should be discussed with the designated teacher for pupil protection in the first instance, who will then decide whether it is good practice to refer the concern onto MASH/ Social Care **BEFORE** discussing the issue with parents.
- parents/carers need to be aware that the school cannot guarantee unconditional confidentiality and the school has a duty to report child protection issues.
- disclosures from pupils may take place at an inappropriate place or time. If this happens, the member of staff should talk again to the pupil **before the end of the school day**. The member of staff needs to discuss the issue with an appropriate colleague to decide on suitable action e.g. referral to the MASH team.

For all pupils, staff members and members of the wider school community to enjoy privacy from gossip, for the school to be fair to its community and for pupils and adults to have disciplinary matters dealt with out of the eye of the wider school community it is important that:

- all information about individual pupils is private and should only be shared on a need to know basis
- matters of child protection must only be made known to staff on a need to know basis
- staff should not put pressure on pupils to disclose personal information and should discourage other pupils from applying such pressure
- staff should not enter into detailed discussion about a pupil's behaviour with other pupils or their parents
- staff must not discuss issues about an individual pupil in the presence of another pupil in the school
- parents in school (working as volunteers, as part of Friends of Aston Hall etc.) must not discuss cases of poor behaviour/pupil discipline or any other issues they might see/hear relating to individual pupils, with other parents in the school. This allows school staff to deal with such matters in line with school policy
- all personal information about an individual should be kept in a safe and secure place which can only be accessed via data protection procedures



- clear ground rules must be set for any classroom work such as Circle Time and other PSHE and Citizenship session dealing with sensitive issues such as SRE or drugs
- staff performance management will be carried out privately. Targets for individuals, named lesson observation sheets and other performance data will be kept by the Head Teacher
- staff must not discuss details of individual cases arising in staff meetings to any person without direct professional connection to, and interest in, the welfare and/or education of the individual concerned
- Governors, especially those on Discipline Committees/Sub groups, must not divulge details about individuals (staff, families or individual pupils) to any person outside the meeting
- at full Governors' meetings, matters such as pupil exclusion, personnel issues, safeguarding concerns and personal details of any member of the school community will be dealt with in a specific section of the Head Teacher's report, which is minuted separately and not published. This is not for the knowledge of any person outside the Governing body

External Contributors

Health professionals should observe their own policies on confidentiality and information sharing when working in a one to one situation.

Please note: All external contributors, when working in a classroom/teaching situation, are bound by relevant school policies. Attention is drawn to the Healthy Schools 'Visitors Policy-Working in Partnership' document, and it is recommended that these guidelines be used whenever external contributors are invited to the school. These guidelines can be found within the 'Policies' section of the Rotherham Healthy Schools Website.

In line with best practice guidance, like all 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.

Conclusion

Aston Hall Junior and Infant 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 to ensure all children are safe from harm and the risk of harm.

The care and safety of the individual pupil is the underlying principle of this document. Some other policies and guidance which may prove useful for reference are:

Local

The school's Sex and Relationships Education policy

The school's Child Protection/Safeguarding policy

The school's Drug policy

RMBC Data Protection Policy

S. Yorks Healthy Schools 'Visitors Policy-Working in Partnership' - Guidelines for Schools and External Contributors



ASTON HALL
JUNIOR & INFANT SCHOOL

National

Working Together Document 2015

The Data Protection Act 1998

DfES Guidance 0116/2000 'Sex and Relationships Education'

DfES Drugs: Guidance for Schools - 2004



ASTON HALL
JUNIOR & INFANT SCHOOL