



**Guidance on Issues  
of Confidentiality**

# **Guidance on Issues of Confidentiality**

*This document is freely available to the entire school community*

This guidance is provided in order to:

- Protect the children and facilitate their learning
- Ensure that all teaching and support staff behave in a professional manner and that volunteers and outside partners to the school are made aware of the importance of confidentiality
- Maintain and promote the reputation of The Downley School
- Comply with legal requirements such as the Data Protection Act.(1998),Child Protection Act (1989)

### **Teaching Staff:**

- Will always behave in a professional way as detailed in their contract of employment
- Should only discuss a child's progress, behaviour or personal circumstances with colleagues in school or the child's parent
- Should take care that conversations such as these are not overheard by other children or adults/parents who may be helping at, or visiting, school
- Should never discuss a child with any parent/parents other than his/her own
- Should not make any comments about incidents/procedures which occur in school if approached by parents either in the playground or outside of school unless it involves their own child
- When meeting parents off-site, within the bounds of politeness, should not be drawn into discussions about their child's progress
- Should take care when in public places when discussing issues relating to school. Children's names should never be used in this context
- Should not leave sensitive information such as test results, written reports about children's progress, behaviour or personal circumstances where it can readily be seen by anyone, both children and adults, entering the classroom.
- Should never make promises to children about keeping things secret
- When children disclose information which causes concern about their safety and welfare reference should be made to the school's Child Protection Policy or the named CP officer
- Should ensure that data carried on computers or storage devices such as memory sticks or external hard drives is kept safe at all times and never left in a car or public place
- Should take great care when discussing the school in a social context. Individual children and/or families should never be mentioned in this kind of arena. This includes social networking sites such as Facebook

### **Teaching Assistants and all other support staff**

- Should only discuss a child's progress, behaviour or personal circumstances with teachers and colleagues in school
- Should take care that conversations such as these are not overheard by other children or adults/parents who may be helping at, or visiting the school
- Should not discuss a child's progress or behaviour with any parent but refer them to the child's class teacher or member of senior management, unless under the teacher's guidance
- Should not make any comments about incidents/procedures which occur in school if approached by parents either in the playground or outside of school. If this occurs you should refer them to a member of the teaching staff
- Should take great care when discussing the school in a social context. Individual children and/or families should never be mentioned in this kind of arena. This includes social networking sites such as Facebook
- If friends seek an opinion about any child or an incident which has happened in school, answers should be given in a way which is positive and supports the school. Suggest that they talk to the child's teacher if there is a problem
- Must never give personal details of staff or children such as surnames, telephone numbers, addresses without permission
- Should never make promises to children or adults about keeping things secret. Any information of a sensitive nature which could concern a child's safety or welfare must be passed onto the child's teacher or the Headteacher at once.

### **Voluntary Helpers/ Visitors**

- Should not discuss any events or incidents which take place in school with anyone except teaching staff
- Should remember that even positive comments outside of school are a breach of confidentiality
- Should be aware of the sensitive and personal nature of information which they may overhear and make sure this is not repeated
- Should not use this position of privilege within the school to further the interests of their own child
- Should take great care when discussing the school in a social context. Individual children and/or families should never be mentioned in this kind of arena. This includes social networking sites such as Facebook
- Should not make any written comment on a child's work
- Should not make any written comment on a child's reading card, except to initial and date
- Must bear in mind that information about individual children is confidential and should not be discussed with anyone including the child's parents
- Should understand that confidentiality covers both academic attainment and behaviour
- If approached by other parents or friends about school issues you should refer them to the child's class teacher or the headteacher

## Governors

- Should always behave in a professional way as detailed in the Guide to the Law for School Governors (DES).
- Should understand that all issues under Part 2, without exception, covered at Governor's meetings are confidential and should not be discussed with anyone except members of the governing body and the Headteacher
- Should not make any comments to parents about incidents/procedures/attainment at the school unless this has been discussed with the governing body or headteacher
- Should ensure that when asked their opinion about aspects of the school by friends or parents they answer in a way which is positive and supports the school
- Should not discuss issues relating to the school in public places
- Should take care that any conversations within school are not overheard by children or parents, who may be helping at, or visiting school
- Should take great care when discussing the school in a social context. Individual children and/or families should never be mentioned in this kind of arena. This includes social networking sites such as Facebook
- Should encourage parents to use the usual channels such as class teacher and year co-ordinator where there are issues about an individual child's progress, including their own.
- Should never make promises to children or adults about keeping things secret. Any information of a sensitive nature which could concern a child's safety or welfare must be passed onto the headteacher.
- Should never use personal details of members of staff or the headteacher to which they may have access to contact people outside of school hours unless in an emergency.