**Orchard Lea Federation**

**Confidentiality Policy**

**Date agreed: January 2024**

**Date for review: January 2027**

We aim to ensure that all members of the Federation, including staff from external agencies and voluntary organisations, parents, pupils and governors have a clear understanding about the levels of confidentiality which they can offer to members of the Federation community and expect themselves.

Providing a clear, explicit and well-publicised confidentiality policy ensures good practice throughout the Federation which staff (including staff from external agencies), parents and pupils can easily understand.

The policy refers to:

- All teaching and non-teaching staff employed by the Federation.
- All visiting staff, Governors, outside agencies and volunteers working with young people on the site during the Federation day (in this policy all these persons are referred to as staff).

Information regarding this policy will form part of the induction procedures for all new staff. It will also be referenced within whole staff training on General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and staff will be reminded of this policy at least annually.

Any data collected by the Federation will be processed in line with our GDPR policy and retention schedule.

**Our principles for all staff to adhere to:**

- All staff must act professionally at all times. Conversations about members of the community must be held at appropriate times and with the correct members of staff.
- Each individual's right to confidentiality must be respected. All personal information must be treated with care and kept securely.
- Information about the schools and members of the community must not be shared outside of work including on social media. Nor must staff communicate anything via ICT resources and systems or post that may be regarded as defamatory, derogatory, discriminatory, harassing, bullying or offensive, either internally or externally.
- Any inappropriate use of email, texting, social media sites or other messaging services, by staff or pupils should be reported to the Executive Headteacher immediately.
- Staff must not present any personal views and opinions as the views of the Federation, or to make any comments that are slanderous, false or misrepresent others.
- Staff must store confidential personal data securely and use it appropriately, whether on site, taken off the Federation premises or accessed remotely.

- Use of texting, social media sites or other messaging services must not be used to communicate with parents, pupils or ex-pupils.
- All staff can normally expect that their personal situations and health issues will remain confidential unless: it impinges on their terms of contract, endangers pupils or other members of staff, there is a legal obligation to disclose such information, it is necessary for legal proceedings despite the duty of confidence, or is in the wider public interest.
- Staff will check and confirm the identity of any person working for an external agency before giving out any information about pupils.
- Any concerns about breaches of confidentiality should be reported to the Executive Headteacher in the first instance.
- Staff must follow the Federation's whistleblowing procedures and not promise confidentiality to another colleague if they have any concerns about their conduct or if they suspect behaviour that may be harmful to another child. Should a concern relate to the Executive Headteacher then the Chair of Governors must be contacted.
- Staff must respect that all members of the community have the right to the same level of confidentiality.
- Information must not be accessible to others before, during or after the school day. For example, medical notes must be filed away, screens locked, pupil information locked away at the end of the day.
- During events when parents may be on site, staff must ensure that rooms are tidied and any sensitive information must not be left on general view.

**Safeguarding**

We recognise that there are occasions when pupils are worried about something and feel that they cannot talk about it to their parents/carers. All staff will be clear to pupils that they cannot offer unconditional confidentiality when a pupil first begins to talk about something where confidentiality may become an issue. Pupils will be informed that if there is a child protection issue where the pupil, or others are likely to be at risk of significant harm, staff are under a duty to inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead who may have to involve other agencies.

If information is disclosed that the child is at serious risk of harm, then confidentiality cannot be preserved as safeguarding procedures must take precedence. Information sharing is essential to enable early intervention, and vital to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. Please refer to the Child Protection and Safeguarding policies for further advice on this aspect. It is important that each member of staff deals with this sensitively and explains to the pupil openly and honestly that they must inform the appropriate people who can help the child, but that they will only tell those who need to know in order to help, and that their best interests will be maintained.

If confidentiality is to be broken it should be done so in line with our procedures.

The Federation will never publish photographs or film clips of pupils with the names of individual children. The Federation will also ensure that parental permission is obtained for their child to appear in a photograph on the Federation.

Staff will not confirm if a child attends one of the schools to an external caller or visitor without consulting the parents first.

**Working with Parents**

The Federation strives to foster good communication with parents and carers and staff are always available to talk to both children and parents/carers about issues that are causing concern. The school 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. Should a parent or carer wish to discuss a concern in private then they can ask to meet with a member of staff at a specified time or ask if they can talk in a private space. Staff make take minutes during a meeting and parents can request a copy of the minutes it they need them.

We recognise that sometimes 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 the wishes of the family and where it is felt necessary to share the information given to us, this will be discussed with the parent first unless a pupil is considered to be at immediate risk and/or there is an overriding child protection concern.

We will not discuss children with another parent even when there may be conflict between children or between families.

We do not publish class lists for parents to view.

**Guidance for Governors**

Governors need to be mindful that from time to time issues are discussed or brought to their attention about staff and children. All such issues should be treated as confidential. Confidential papers from meetings should be destroyed.

Governors must observe complete confidentiality, especially in relation to matters concerning individual staff, pupils or parents. Although decisions reached at governors' meetings can be 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 body. There will be a confidentiality reminder at the beginning of all meetings. If Governors have other links to the schools (for example, a Parent Governor), then they must follow the school's normal procedures when dealing with any complaints or concerns not relating to the matters of the Governing body.

Governors will have safeguarding training and be aware of the agreed procedures when dealing with child protection issues.

**Guidelines for coaches/before/after school clubs where staff are not employed by the school**

Before starting a club, any individual who is not a regular member of staff must meet with the Head of School to discuss this policy and the need to maintain confidentiality.

**Subject Access Requests**

Upon receiving a subject access request the Federation will follow the procedures in the GDPR policy and where necessary contact the legal team for advice before sending out any information.

**Complaints**

Should any member of the community feel that confidentiality has not been respected we ask them to contact the Executive Headteacher to discuss their concerns. Should a resolution not

be reached, then the next stage would be to refer to the complaints policy which can be found on our website. Should the concern relate to the Executive Headteacher, then the Chair of Governors should be contacted via one of the school offices.