

The New School at West Heath

Policy on Information Recording - Student

Introduction

Recording is an integral part of the life and work of our school. It is an essential component of gathering information, analysis and decision making and a means by which staff can justify, explain and be accountable for their actions. As such, this policy and guidance is relevant and applies to all information recorded by all staff in our school and the principles laid out in this framework apply to all records that are maintained in our school about individuals, whether the information is held in manual files or electronically.

Good recording practice helps to focus the work of our school and supports effective partnerships with our students, their parents or carers and their advocates or representatives, including all those who have an interest in the education of our students. It ensures there is a documented account of our involvement with students, families and carers and others. It assists continuity when staff are unavailable or change and provides an essential tool for work to be monitored and tracked. Indeed, experience has shown that it can become a major source of evidence for investigations and enquires.

This guidance sets out a framework to recording, identifying key principles and reflecting core values that staff working throughout our school need to consider.

Aims and Objectives

Good record keeping ensures good practice in a number of ways:-

- Supporting effective partnerships with all having a direct and indirect interest in the life and work of our school.
- Assisting continuity when staff are unavailable or change
- Providing documented evidence and an account of the school's involvement with students both individually and in groups, and their carers and others having an interest in their education
- Providing evidence for planning and allocating resources at an individual and strategic level (e.g. Annual Reviews, Achievement reports etc.)
- Facilitating reflection, analysis and planning
- Supporting the formulation of risk assessments and risk management plans
- Supporting staff supervision and professional development

- Recording that staff and “the school” have met the expected standards of good practice, statutory requirements and satisfied Data Protection legislation

Strategies - General Principles for Recording

Information held by our school regarding individual students should meet the following principles:-

1. Records will clearly show the purpose and nature of the type of involvement with our students or their carers, and, if relevant, what decisions have been taken, by whom and on what basis
2. Students and carers are helped to understand the purpose and content of their record and are invited to contribute to it.
3. Students and carers are informed about decisions and outcomes of requests made by them to our school and will be kept informed at all stages.
4. Students and carers are informed of their right of access to their file and the procedures for doing so. Students, if this is their wish, will be supported in reading their records, correcting any errors and omissions and recording personal statements, including any dissent.

Recording Formats

Information about students will be kept in both manual records and electronically. Part of the manual record provides data entry sheets for the electronic system and the relationship between these two methods of storage is crucial if information on students is to be kept accurate, up to date and secure.

Increasingly part or all of the information held regarding our students will be stored electronically and records will become less manual and more electronic. However, recording standards apply equally to both. Clarity, coherence and evidence base are important factors whether the recording is on hard copy or on an electronic system. It is the quality of recording that allows recorded information to provide a clear account of individual circumstances and cases.

Individual student files held in different parts of our school will be maintained according to a filing protocol detailing how manual records are held. These guidelines will take into account the structure of the file and how they link with records held electronically.

Standards for Recording

- Each student will have a separate central file
- Key points about the content of records are that they must be:-
 - Accurate and to the point
 - Up to date
 - Relevant
 - Easy to read and in plain English (NO jargon)
 - Easily understood by the student or their representative
 - Included on the record within 48 hours of the event.
- Essential, key components of every record will ensure:-
 - Every contact concerning individual students is recorded.
 - Any decisions taken are recorded and clearly identified
 - That the evidence on which decisions are based is clearly shown
 - There is clear evidence on the record showing when copies of key documents (e.g. assessments, annual reviews, minutes of meetings) are supplied to students and carers.
 - Where appropriate the wishes, feelings and views of individual students are recorded on file under clear headings
- Where relevant (especially work beyond the school day) records will show that students :-
 - Have been consulted
 - Have had their views recorded
 - Have been informed of decisions and plans where the student agrees to this information being disclosed or where the carer has significant involvement in their care (e.g. Child Protection issues)
- Unsubstantiated and unattributable information will be recorded on the file (e.g. Child protection) only if it is judged to be of current or possible future significance.(If in doubt staff should consult with vice principal) The standing of this information must be absolutely clear. Attempts should be made to check its accuracy as quickly as possible and to record the results.
- Where there is unresolved disagreement with a student or their carer about recorded facts, this is noted and a record of the student's point of view is included.

- There will be occasions where ‘detailed’ recording will be required and is likely to be used to cover what might be seen as significant events e.g. child protection issues. Even where a detailed recording is required, this will still be as concise as possible.

There will always be good reason for recording and continuing to hold any information on individual students and third parties and staff will always distinguish between fact, judgement and unverifiable information.

The amount of information collected and recorded must be the minimum necessary for the particular purpose, but be complete, i.e. all essential information appearing to be relevant relating to a particular decision or purpose must be recorded.

Heads of School (Senior Support Worker for boarding student files) are responsible for ensuring that individual student files are kept to the required standard by this policy and that they meet statutory requirements.

Confidentiality and Sharing Information

Our school has a general duty in common law to safeguard the confidentiality of personal information; because of the personal and sensitive nature of information implicit in the life and work of our school, our recording practices must conform to the standards set out in the Data Protection Act (see data Protection Policy).

Staff will pay particular attention to ensuring consent to share information is clearly recorded on file. Where it has been necessary to share information without consent then the justification should be recorded and authorised by a Vice Principal or their representative.

Implementation and Monitoring

Information & Recording - Students	
This Policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies: Assessment Recording & reporting	
Appendices:	
Monitoring of Policy Implementation is the responsibility of: The Senior Leadership Team	
Lead responsibility:	Vice Principal – Student & Staff Welfare
Relevant Legislation:	To be detailed in the next release
Annual Policy Review Required:	Yes / No
Approved by: S.S. Committee	Date approved: 10/2007
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