

Confidentiality Policy

Aim

All members of staff working on the school site are clear about the levels of confidentiality that they can offer to the school community and expect themselves.

Objectives

- To be transparent about the process for developing and reviewing this policy.
- For everyone to understand the varying levels of confidentiality which might be offered in different circumstances.

Rationale

A clear, explicit and well publicised confidentiality policy ensures good practise throughout the school which staff, including those from external agencies, parents and pupils can easily understand.

The school needs to be clear about the boundaries of their legal and professional roles and responsibilities e.g. Child Protection procedures.

Different professionals can offer varying levels of confidentiality in different circumstances which can confuse staff and pupils.

Sometimes parents and families may wish to disclose information confidentially to the school. Schools need to be clear about their position.

The following documents encourage the development of confidentiality policies:

- **Guidance to schools on Sex and Relationships Education.**
Department for Education and Skills (DfES 0116/2000)
- **What to do if you are worried a child is being abused.**
Department of Health (Ref 31553/'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused')
- **Developing sex and relationships education in schools-guidance and training for school governors.**
Sex Education Forum (National Children's Bureau, 2003)
- **National Healthy Schools Status-A Guide for Schools**
www.wiredforhealth.gov.uk (August 2005)

The policy applies to:

- All teaching and non-teaching staff employed by the school.
- All visiting staff working with children on the school site during the school day.
- Depending on their contractual arrangements, staff from external agencies delivering services on the school site.

POLICY

Confidentiality and Pupils

We recognise that there are occasions when pupils are worried about something and feel that they cannot talk about it to their parents/carers. This can result in enormous stress for the individual which impacts on their education and health. Some pupils may feel that they can turn to teachers and other staff members for support and we want to be as helpful as we can whilst recognising that there may be potential difficulties in being supportive. You should adhere to the following policy:

You must be clear to pupils that you cannot offer unconditional confidentiality when a pupil first begins to talk about something where confidentiality may become an issue.

Pupils should be warned that if there is a child protection issue where the pupil, or others, are likely to be at risk of significant harm, **you are under a duty to inform the school's Child Protection Officer (Head Teacher, Deputy or Inclusion Manager) who may have to involve other agencies.** (See Child Protection policy for further guidance.) It is important that each member of staff deals with this sensitively and explain to the pupil 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.

School staff can only offer confidentiality to pupils that do not involve significant illegal activities e.g. drugs trafficking, arson, etc. If the conversation begins to move to this kind of issue, the pupil must be warned that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

In all cases where you feel you have to break confidentiality with the pupil, you must inform the pupil and reassure them that their best interests will be maintained.

In talking to pupils you must encourage them to talk to their parents/carers about the issue that may be troubling them and support in doing this should be offered where appropriate.

Peer mentoring and support

Pupils are not allowed to keep secrets but all conversations between the mentor and mentee will be kept confidential except in the following circumstances:

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- The mentor must tell either the mentoring co-ordinator or a teacher if a pupil discloses either any form of abuse or anything else that would make them worry about their safety.
- If the mentee is about to disclose this sort of information, the mentor must tell them that they will need to take them to a member of staff possibly as an advocate to help them.
- If the mentor has a concern about the content of a mentoring meeting, they are encouraged to discuss it with the mentoring co-ordinator- it will not go further unless it is one of the above.

Adult mentoring and support

As above

Parents and families

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 an immediate risk and/or there is an overriding child protection concern.

Staff and Governors

All staff can normally expect that their personal situations and health will remain confidential unless

- It impinges on their terms of contract or
- Endangers pupils or other members of staff or
- There is a legal obligation to disclose such information or
- It is necessary for legal proceedings or
- Despite the duty of confidence, the staff member's interests or the wider public interest justifies disclosure.

Linked Policies

The following policies are linked and supported by the confidentiality policy:

- Bullying Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Health and safety policy
- PSHE policy
- Drugs policy

Dissemination

This policy should be widely publicised to all in the school community

- Through the school prospectus
- Through school newsletters
- With job details to applicants
- Through posters and leaflets
- Through assemblies and school council

Approved: Sept 2019

Reviewed: September 2017 / 2019 / 2021

Review date: September 2025