

Confidentiality and Handling Sensitive Issues for Pupils & Parents Policy

Why do we need a Confidentiality Policy?

There are situations in which confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. The types of occasions when confidentiality cannot be guaranteed & the resulting procedures need to be made clear to staff, pupils & parents/carers.

How is Confidentiality communicated in practice?

It is this school's policy that staff cannot offer or guarantee absolute confidentiality and will act in accordance with the best interests of the pupil at all times. This applies to parents as well as pupils. Any pupil or parent with concerns will always be given the opportunity to speak to a member of staff or an appropriate outside agency.

Ground rules for PSE will be in place. When lessons concerning sensitive issues are taught, ground rules for discussion and behaviour will also be confirmed and referred to again in subsequent lessons. Staff will establish that it is inappropriate to disclose personal information. Ground rules, which ensure pupils agree not to pressure one another to answer questions about their own experiences also apply to staff. Pupils will be reassured that the reason for this is in their best interests and these will be maintained in all events. It will be made clear that although most information can be kept confidential, some may need to be passed on in the pupil's best interest. However a pupil will be informed when this has to happen and what will be done with the information and who has access to it.

Pupils will be encouraged to talk to their parents or carers and be given support to do so. There may be rare occasions when disclosures from pupils may take place at an inappropriate time or place. If this happens, the member of staff will talk again individually to the pupil before the end of the school day. The member of staff will follow the schools confidentiality policy if they feel it would be necessary to discuss the issue raised.

Incident Management (see Child Protection)

If confidentiality has to be broken, the pupil will be told first and supported. If there is any possibility of abuse the schools child protection procedure will be followed. In such cases the procedure for dealing with the situation is as follows:

- The member of staff should approach the designated member of staff – the Headteacher. In the absence of the Headteacher, the classroom teacher will be informed and carry out the duties of the designated staff member.
- The designated member of staff will make appropriate arrangements. They will decide, in discussion with the Social Services whether it is appropriate for the parents or carers to be informed at this stage. The designated member of staff should address the child protection issues and ensure help is provided for the pupil and family. Information about pupils will not be passed on indiscriminately at any time. Other members of staff will only be informed on a need to know basis, where the issue identified affects the daily life of the pupil in school. Staff will not be obliged to pass on information about pupils to their parents. Although where a member of staff believes the pupil to be at moral or physical risk, or in breach of the law they will ensure the pupil is aware of the risks and encourage them to seek support from their parents.

Working with & referrals to Outside Agencies

Outside agencies, such as the Health Visitor, providing support for the parents and the school's PSE programme will be aware of, and abide by, the school's policy about disclosures and confidentiality. In the case of illegal activity, action will be taken in the best interests of the pupil. This does not necessarily involve informing the police but could mean taking advice from the community police liaison officer.

Parent Helpers & other Classroom Support Volunteers

Parent helpers & other classroom support volunteers will be made aware of & abide by, the school's policy about disclosures and confidentiality. If they have any concerns they must refer them to a member of staff. Any disclosure must be passed onto a member of staff. It is essential that they understand why anything seen & heard in school must remain confidential. The governors reserve the right to withdraw the invitation to help if they fail to comply with this policy.

Personnel

The member of staff responsible for Child Protection needs to monitor practice & ensure all staff receive appropriate training. The Child Protection co-ordinator is the Headteacher.

Policy Development & Review

This policy document was produced in consultation with the entire school community, including pupils, parents, school staff, Governors, LA representatives, Health Visitor and local Healthy School Standards representative.

This document is freely available to the entire school community. It will be reviewed as part of a rolling programme.