

Confidentiality Policy (Version 3)

1 Definition

- 1.1 The overall meaning of a confidential relationship is openness and agreement about what will happen to information disclosed between two or more people. It may not have to take the form of total secrecy. In practice there are few situations where absolute confidentiality is offered. In most cases only limited confidentiality can be offered. The boundaries of confidentiality should be made clear to all people involved in the schools within our Federation.

2 Aims and Objectives

- 2.1 All members of staff working on our school sites are clear about the levels of confidentiality that they can offer to the school community and expect themselves.
- 2.2 For everyone (staff and governors, pupils, parents and volunteers) to understand the varying levels of confidentiality which might be offered in different circumstances.
- 2.3 The principles and practice contained within this policy applies equally to all staff employed by our schools and anyone else supporting our work with the children including governors and volunteers.

3 Guidelines

Confidentiality and pupils

- 3.1 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 maybe some potential difficulties in being supportive. Staff should adhere to the following :
- They must 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 e.g. significant illegal issues such as drugs.
 - Pupils should be warned that if there is a child protection issue where the pupils, or others, are likely to be at risk of significant harm, staff are legally required to inform the school's designated teacher who may have to involve other agencies. (Please refer to the schools *safeguarding / child protection procedures* for further advice on this aspect.)
 - In all cases where staff feel that they may have to break confidentiality with a pupil, they must inform the pupil and reassure them that their best interests will be maintained.
 - In talking with pupils, staff need to encourage them to talk with their parents / carers about the issue that may be troubling them and support in doing this

should be offered where appropriate.

- Pupils should be made aware of the specialist confidential services that maybe available in the school community e.g. Home School Link Worker , school nurse team, family doctor.

Confidentiality and Staff /Governors

- 3.2** All staff can 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.
- 3.3** The above conditions apply to governors also unless the school would be adversely compromised in any way by the withholding of information.
- 3.4** Governors are bound by Instruments of Governance in following guidance recommended by the Local Authority regarding confidentiality issues of any description relating to the school community.

Confidentiality and families

- 3.5** 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.

Confidentiality and Visitors

- 3.6** A visitor in this context is any person who works in school either in a paid or a voluntary capacity. In some instances, the visitor may become privy to personal information regarding pupils, parents and staff that is of a confidential nature. There is an agreement between the Governing Body and everyone who works in school to sign and adhere to a declaration not to use any such information outside the school context and to share relevant information with other agencies in situations of child protection.

4 Lines of Responsibility and Referral

- 4.1** If a member of the school community receives information where they believe a child protection issue is addressed, they should refer the case to the designated teachers in the schools.
The person must make it clear to the pupil that they will be passing on the information but that the information will remain confidential between them and the designated teacher. If confidentiality has to be broken, the child must be informed why this is necessary.

5 Links and Dissemination

- 5.1** This Confidentiality Policy is linked to the schools policies for PSHE, Drugs Education, Safeguarding / Child Protection and Inclusion / Equal Opportunities. It follows guidance recommendations for Oxfordshire Schools.

- 5.2** The policy will be widely publicised to all in our federated school community through various school publications such as the prospectus, parent and staff handbooks.

Signed Head of Learning:

Date reviewed January 2016