

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

Confidentiality is an understanding that any information shared with someone in trust can only be passed on to a third party with the agreement of the person disclosing it.

Date: April 2010

This policy sits in conjunction with the schools policies on Child Protection, Sex and Relationships Education and Drug Education.

Introduction

All schools are asked on occasions to keep information confidential. This can relate to a variety of issues including under age sexual activity, drugs use, abuse or other dangerous or illegal activities. It is important that the whole school follows the same clear and explicit policy.

Aims:

- To give clear guidance to all members of the school around confidentiality
- To encourage young people to talk to a trusted adult if they are having problems
- To give staff confidence to deal with sensitive issues

In lessons:

- Ground rules and distancing techniques should be used where sensitive issues are to be addressed
- Staff should not put pressure on students to disclose personal information and should discourage fellow students from applying any such pressure

Personal disclosures

Key Points:

- Students should be reassured that their best interests will be maintained
- Students should know that staff cannot offer unconditional confidentiality
- Students should be reassured that, if confidentiality has to be broken, they will be informed first and then supported appropriately
- Students should be informed of sources of confidential help, for example, the school nurse, counsellor, GP or local young person's advice service
- Any personal information should be regarded as private and not passed on indiscriminately (for example in the staff room)
- If a member of staff receives information that leads them to believe that there is a child protection issue, they should refer the case to the DMS and follow the guidelines in the Child Protection Policy

Further Guidance

For all children, staff and governors to enjoy privacy from gossip, for the school to be fair to all its community, and for children and adults to have disciplinary matters dealt with according to the school's own procedures and out of the eye of the wider school community, it is important that:

- Staff do not discuss details of individual cases arising in staff meetings to any person without direct professional connection to and interest in the welfare and education of the individual concerned.
- No member of staff discusses an individual child's behaviour in the presence of another child in school.
- Staff do not enter into detailed discussion about a child's behaviour with other children or their parents.
- Staff & Governors, in particular those sitting on Discipline Committees, do not divulge details about individuals (be they staff, families or individual children) to any person outside of the meeting.
- Parents in school, working as volunteers, or as part of the Parents and Friends Association, do not report cases of poor behaviour or student discipline to other parents in the school. This allows teachers to deal with such matters in line with school policy.
- Matters of Child Protection are made known to staff on a need to know basis.
- It is important that class teachers and support staff are aware of some confidential matters in order to support individuals. These staff will respect the sensitivity of such cases and not divulge information to people unconnected professionally with the individual concerned.
- When volunteers, such as parents and friends of the school are working in classes, they do not discuss educational matters outside the classroom

Equal Opportunities

Staff may wish to discuss an individual case with a class or group. For instance it can support the inclusion of a child with Aspergers Syndrome or Autism, if their peers are made aware of the condition and so have some idea of what to expect. Similarly a child with visual impairment can be supported if his/her friends know how to look out for them in the playground. In such cases permission will be sought from the child and his/her carers.

Health professionals

Health professionals are bound by their professional codes of conduct to maintain confidentiality when working in a one to one situation. When working in a classroom, they are bound by relevant school policies. In line with best practice guidance, like other school staff, they will seek to protect privacy and prevent inappropriate personal disclosures in a classroom setting, by negotiating ground rules and using distancing techniques.

Policy Reviewed Annually by Director of Pastoral Care