



## ***School Confidentiality Policy***

### ***Context***

This policy has been updated from the one agreed at the school in the Spring of 2004. It has been put together by the Healthy Schools groups and will be re-distributed to all members of staff via the school's weekly bulletin.

### ***What are we trying to do?***

- To ensure the safety, well being and protection of our students.
- To ensure this by the appropriate sharing of essential information.
- 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.
- To ensure that all disciplinary matters (students and adults) are dealt with according to school procedures and in private.
- To enable all staff working at the school to enjoy privacy from gossip.

### ***How are we going to achieve this?***

#### ***a) Confidentiality for students***

- The general rule is that staff should make clear that there are limits to confidentiality, at the beginning of any conversation or potential disclosure. These limits relate to ensuring students' safety and well being. The student will be informed when a confidence has to be broken for this reason and will be encouraged to do this for themselves whenever this is possible.
- 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). All adults working at the school should exercise professionalism and discretion when discussing aspects of their work in any situation outside of working hours. They should avoid using names which may allow others to identify those involved in an incident or issue
- 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 a designated teacher or child protection officer following a discussion with the young person involved
- Students should be encouraged to talk to their parents or carers and be given support to do so where ever possible

- Government guidance requires professionals to consult as much as possible with parents about their children when referring to another agency. In general, parents should be asked if they wish to be referred, unless there is reason to think that obtaining such consent may put the young person at risk. If the referral is about child abuse (or the risk of it) rather than 'children in need', it is good practice to consult Social Services before discussing the issue with parents, unless a parent has asked you to make the referral and is already aware of it.
- Staff should 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 should discuss an individual student's behaviour in the presence of another child in school.
- Staff should not enter into detailed discussion about a student's behaviour with other children or their parents.
- Parents in school, working as volunteers, should not report cases of poor behaviour or pupil 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 subject teachers and support staff are aware of some confidential matters in order to support individuals. This will happen either via Staff Briefing (daily) or via the Bulletin (weekly). These staff should respect the sensitivity of such cases and not divulge information to people unconnected professionally with the individual concerned.
- Governors, in particular those sitting on Discipline Committees, should not divulge details about individual students or families to any person outside of the meeting.
- Any photographs taken of our students may not be published without the prior consent of the parent or carer.
- A student's personal details or circumstances may not be divulged to any caller without first ascertaining the validity of the request.

***b) Confidentiality for staff***

- All members of staff have a right to confidentiality and to be free from rumour or gossip either from students, their peers or from parents, volunteers and others working on the school site.
- Staff should discourage at all times idle chatter about or casual references to colleagues from students, parents, volunteers and others working on the school site.
- Views of students and parents should only be sought in the event of the enacting of a formal complaints procedure. In this eventuality, information may only be gathered by the Deputy Head (as complaints officer) or someone specifically deputed by him/her.
- Governors, in particular those sitting on Discipline Committees, should not divulge details about individual staff to any person outside of the meeting.
- Parents in school, working as volunteers, should not discuss issues relating to teaching or support staff with other parents in the school or in other contexts.

- Staff performance management will be carried out privately. Targets for individuals, named lesson observation sheets and other performance data will be retained only by the member of staff, his/her line manager and the head teacher.
- When volunteers, such as parents, governors and friends of the school are working in classes, they should not discuss educational matters outside the classroom.
- Volunteers, students, supply teachers and others working on the site, are asked to read this policy before working in school.

*Where there are any doubts on any of these issues, clarity should be sought from:*

- *Disclosures and child protection issues: Head of Student Support*
  - *Staffing issues: Deputy Headteacher*
  - *Complaints procedures: Deputy Headteacher*
  - *Overall principles: Headteacher*

#### ***How will we know if this has been successful? (Evidence)***

- Students are happy about the level of guidance and welfare they receive. ***(Annual survey returns; informal feedback)***
- Parents and carers are happy about the level of guidance and welfare their children receive. ***(Annual survey returns; informal feedback)***
- Staff are happy about the level of guidance and welfare they receive. ***(Annual survey returns; informal feedback)***
- Difficult cases are handled successfully and within the framework of the policy ***(Termly ECM reports from the Head of Student Support)***
- There are few, if any, complaints from students, staff or parents/carers in respect of confidentiality issues. ***(Complaints Procedure records held by the Deputy Head)***.

#### ***Where can I find out more?***

This policy has clear and obvious links to the following school policies all of which are available on request:

- Sex and relationships education policy
- Anti-smoking policy
- Policy on drugs
- Anti-bullying policy
- Behaviour policy
- Child Protection policy
- Intimate care policy
- Safer Recruitment policy
- Looked-after children policy
- Race equality policy
- Performance management policy
- School complaints procedures
- Capability procedures