



The Federation of Bedenham and Holbrook Primary Schools



CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

All members of staff working on the school sites 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.

Why the policy was developed:

- A clear, explicit and well-publicised confidentiality policy ensures good practice throughout the schools which staff (including staff from external agencies), parents and pupils can easily understand.
- The schools need to be clear about the boundaries of their legal and professional roles and responsibilities, eg: 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. We need to be clear about our position.
- It is important for the schools to share information so that pupils can be safe, healthy, enjoy life and reach their potential, but we need to do this in a way which meets our legal requirements and is understood by the school community.

Where and to whom the policy applies:

The policy refers to:

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

Staff Support and Training:

- Staff Meetings & INSET training
- Training offered by Hampshire Children's Services
- Induction of new staff
- Service Legal Agreements with visiting agencies

All school staff members

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 some potential difficulties in being supportive. You should adhere to the following policy.

- When talking with pupils, it is important for you to be aware of maintaining your professional boundaries. Whilst being supportive where you can, distancing techniques should be used when appropriate and pupils encouraged or supported to access the 'Listening Ear.'
- **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 schools' Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) this is Caroline Wood at Bedenham and Zoe Dudley at Holbrook, who may have to involve other agencies.** (Please refer to the school's child protection procedures for further advice on this aspect.) It is important that each member of staff deals with this sensitively and explains 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.
- In all cases where you feel that 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 with pupils, you need to 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.
- A decision will be made by the DSL as to whether parents will be informed about the issue disclosed.

Pastoral Team:

The Pastoral Team offer a 'Listening Ear' approach. They can be approached by any pupil for a confidential discussion. Sometimes we may also refer pupils to the Pastoral Team. The Pastoral Team **cannot offer confidentiality over a child protection issue** but, because sometimes it is necessary for a pupil to be able to talk about deep-seated troubling issues in order to help the pupil through their situation, **we do not require our counsellor to inform senior or pastoral staff about illegal activities unless there is a child protection issue or other significant risk.**

Peer mentoring and support

All mentoring and support programmes should cover confidentiality issues in their training.

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

- 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 the safety of the child they are mentoring.
- 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 fits into one of the above categories.

Pupil mentoring programmes involving adult mentors

The suggestion listed for peer mentors applies equally to adult mentors.

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

Police Reports

We regularly receive police reports on families of children in school. It will be up to the DSL on receiving the information, in liaison with the CFSW and Executive Headteacher, to decide if action needs to be taken in school to support the children. Usually parents will be informed by the CFSW if this is necessary.

Staff and governors

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

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

Linked policies

The following policies are linked and supported by the confidentiality policy: bullying; child protection; health and safety; PSHE; SRE; drug abuse and misuse.

Dissemination

This policy will be widely publicised to all in the school community:

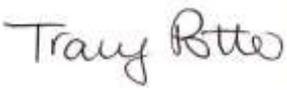
- through the school prospectus
- through school newsletters
- with job details to applicants
- through posters and leaflets or agreements with other agencies working on the school site
- through classes, assemblies and the school council
- on the school website
- by emphasising links to the to the school's anti-bullying policy and child protection policy and procedures.

Signed by:   Heads of School

Agreed and adopted at the Governing Body Meeting on: 7th March 2016

Signed by:


Chair of Governors: _____ Date: 7/3/16


Headteacher: _____ Date: 7/3/16

Agreed at the Governing Body Meeting on
Reviewed by the policy working party on 07.03.16

ANNEX

In formulating this policy, reference has been made to the following documents:

- *Sex and relationship education guidance*, DfES, July 2000, ref: 0116/2000
- *What to do if you're worried a child is being abused: Children's Services guidance*, DfES/DH, May 2003, ref: 31553
- *Developing sex and relationships education in schools: guidance and training activities pack for school governors – Sex Education Forum/National Children's Bureau (NCB)*, 2003, ISBN: 1904787029
- *HIV in schools: good practice guide to supporting children infected or affected by HIV*, Children and Young People HIV Network/NCB, 2005, ISBN: 1904787479
- *Sex and relationships education in pupil referral units*, Sex Education Forum/NCB, 2004, ISBN: 1904787231
- *National Healthy School Status – a guide for schools*, DH, September 2005, REF: 270390
- *Managing the support and reintegration of pregnant pupils and school-age parents: guidance for schools from Hampshire Local Education Authority*, Hampshire Teenage Pregnancy Partnership, November 2004.
- Protocol for sharing information about children and young people (Hampshire Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership February 2005).
- Information Sharing: Practitioners' Guide (DfES 2006)
- Information Sharing: Case examples (DfES 2006)
- Information Sharing: Further Guide on Legal Issues (DfES 2006)