

Community Primary School Hampshire



Confidentiality Policy

Adopted on:	Feb-25
Signed on behalf of the Governing Body	Mrs B Read Chair
Review Date	Feb-27

Confidentiality Policy

1. Aim

The aim of this policy is to ensure that all members of staff, governors, volunteers, and others working on or visiting the school site are clear about the levels of confidentiality which they should offer to the school community and expect themselves.

2. Objectives

- To be transparent about the process for developing and reviewing this policy.
- To ensure that everyone understands the varying levels of confidentiality which might be offered and expected in different circumstances.

3. Why the policy was developed

- A clear, explicit, and well publicised confidentiality policy ensures good practice throughout the school which staff (including staff from external agencies), governors, volunteers, parents/carers, and, where appropriate, pupils can easily understand.
- The school needs to be clear about the boundaries of their legal and professional roles and responsibilities e.g., Child Protection procedures.
- Different professionals can offer varying levels of confidentiality in different circumstances which can confuse staff and pupils.
- Sometimes parents/carers and families may wish to disclose information confidentially to the school. Schools need to be clear about their position.
- It is important for the school to share information so that pupils can be safe, healthy, enjoy life and reach their potential but to do this in a way which meets our legal requirements and is understood by the school community.

4. Where and to whom the policy applies?

- All teaching and non-teaching staff employed by the school.
- All visiting staff working with children on the school site during the school day.
- Volunteers working in the school.
- Depending on their contractual arrangements, staff from external agencies delivering services on the school site e.g., EMTAS, Valley Trust Counselling Service and voluntary organisations.
- Governors.

5. Staff support and training

- All new members of staff will receive training in the key statements of this policy as part of their induction.
- Reminders about the provisions of the policy will be carried out annually for all staff through in-service training.
- Key members of staff will receive training in Information Sharing and Assessment

6. All school staff members: Confidentiality and pupils

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.

- All staff members must make it clear to pupils that unconditional confidentiality cannot be offered when a pupil first begins to talk about something where confidentiality may become an issue.

- Pupils should be informed that where there is a child protection / safeguarding issue where the pupil or others may be at risk of significant harm, you are under a duty to inform the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead, Mrs Lewis, (or in her absence one of the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads) who may have to inform other agencies (please refer to the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding policies for further advice).
- Where it is felt that it is necessary to break confidentiality with the pupil, the pupil must be informed and reassured that their best interests will be maintained.

7. The school counsellor: Confidentiality and pupils

- From time to time there may be people working in the school who are able to offer specialist guidance and support for children e.g. The Valley Trust Counsellor, EMTAS, the Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) LSA, and the school's Family Support Worker. 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.
- The school may consider that a child may benefit from talking to the School Counsellor (*The Valley Trust*). In these circumstances, parental permission will be obtained first.
- If a child is upset or distressed, any member of staff would speak to the child on the spot to offer immediate guidance and reassurance. Where the school feels that a child may benefit from sessions with the SEMH LSA (for example, where the school feels that the child's education and well-being is being affected by an emotional issue such as following a bereavement) then parents will be contacted to discuss the proposal and seek permission.
- Neither the school counsellor nor any other adult working with or supporting a child in these circumstances can offer confidentiality over child protection issues.

8. Parents, Carers, and Families

We recognise that sometimes there may be family issues which might affect a pupil and which the family will only wish to disclose to us if they can be sure the information will be treated confidentially. We will respect the wishes of the family but where it is felt necessary to share the information given to us, this will be discussed with the parents/carers first, unless a pupil is considered to be at immediate risk and/or there is an overriding child protection concern in which case we will disclose the information in accordance with our safeguarding and child protection responsibilities, as set out in e.g., our Child Protection and Safeguarding policies, the Keeping Children Safe in Education regulations (KCSiE)), or as required by law.

9. Staff and Governors: Confidentiality and information about staff and governors

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

- it impinges on the terms of their contract of employment.
- 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, or
- is otherwise necessary in accordance with our child protection and safeguarding obligations.

Further information on disclosure of personal data is set out in our Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notices.

10. Staff, volunteers, governors, and representatives of outside agencies: Confidentiality about other general matters

- Staff, volunteers, governors, and representatives of outside agencies should be aware that they may be privy to information about children and adults in the school which must be treated as strictly confidential, and not discussed outside the school. For example, no one should enter into detailed discussions about matters relating to a child's attainment or behaviour with other adults outside the school other than in accordance with our Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notices. Similarly, they should not discuss other matters, such as proposed staff changes, with parents until such changes are formally notified to parents.
- Photographs - the school will seek the permission of parents to use photographs of children in given circumstances (in accordance with our Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notices).
- Medical - health professionals have their own code of practice dealing with confidentiality. School staff should be aware of children with medical needs and the class information sheet will be accessible to staff who need that information but not on general view to other parents/carers and children. Photographs of children and their medical needs will not be on display in the medical room. Details of medicines administered to a child should be kept securely.
- Social Care involvement and Special Educational Needs - all personal information about children including social care records should be regarded as confidential. Minutes of meetings and other documentation relating to children open to Children's Services will be kept on file in a locked cupboard. These documents will not be copied or circulated other than to the SLT, or in accordance with our Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notices and/or in compliance with a legal obligation to share this information. A summary of the relevant information for teaching staff will be placed on the Pupil Log which is accessible only via individual teacher password. Information regarding health reports such as speech therapy, occupational therapy and medical reports will be kept on children's SEND files and copies may be circulated to the staff directly involved in their provision, either by hand or via internal email. Staff may keep copies of these on their class or SEND folders (as appropriate) to facilitate class and intervention provision for these children. SEND reports, such as those produced by the Educational Psychologist or other professionals, and minutes of meetings with parents, will be treated in the same manner.
- Staff performance management will be carried out privately. Targets for individuals, named lesson observation sheets and other performance data will be kept in a secure cabinet in the Headteacher's office and/or that of any other SLT member responsible for staff performance management reviews (as appropriate). Any online documents will be kept in folders that have restricted access. Outcomes of individual performance management reviews will be shared anonymously with members of the Governors' Pay Committee annually for the purpose of reviewing and if appropriate approving individual staff pay and progression recommendations.

Linked policies:

Child Protection, Health and Safety, Anti-bullying, RSHE, Performance Management Policy, Capability Policy, Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notices, ICT Acceptable Use Policy, Supporting Children with Medical Needs, Overarching Safeguarding Policy

Dissemination:

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

- through school website
- as part of new staff induction
- through agreements with other agencies working on the school site through assemblies and the school council