



Confidentiality Policy

“Everyone who works with children should do what is in the best interests of the child.”

Article 3 United Nations Rights of the Child

Aims

A clear, explicit and well publicised Confidentiality Policy ensures good practice throughout the school and can easily be understood. The policy should confirm that all members of the school community are clear about the levels of confidentiality that they can offer to other members of the community and expect themselves. This policy should be read in line with other school policies on Child Protection, Safeguarding, PSCE, Inclusion, Behaviour, Health and Safety and Counter-bullying.

This policy applies to:

- all teaching and non-teaching members of staff working in the school;
- visiting staff from external agencies;
- parents, students and other volunteers working in school.

Procedures

Pupils

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, health and well-being. 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 consequences.

Staff will adhere to the following procedures:

- when talking with pupils we will maintain professional boundaries. Whilst being supportive where we can, we will use distancing techniques when appropriate. We must be clear to pupils that we cannot offer unconditional confidentiality when a pupil first begins to talk about something where confidentiality may become an issue;
- leading questions should be avoided and records should be taken of any conversations. Records should be passed on to the Headteacher or Deputy immediately;
- pupils should be warned that if there is a child protection/safeguarding issue where the pupil, or others, are likely to be at risk of significant harm, we are under a duty of care to inform the school's Child Protection Officer (Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher/ LT) who may have to involve other agencies. 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 we will only tell those who need to know in order to help;
- in all cases where we feel that you have to break confidentiality with the pupil, we will inform the pupil, (unless there is a good reason not to inform them e.g. risk of harm) and reassure them that their best interests will be maintained;
- in talking with pupils, we will 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;
- all pupil records should be disposed of in the appropriate manner;
- only share information with those staff who need to know (leadership).

Parents/carers 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 parents/carers first unless a pupil is considered to be at immediate risk and/or there is an overriding child protection/safeguarding concern. The information will only be disclosed to those staff who need to know, who must also keep it confidential.

Staff

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

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

Staff discussions

Staff must keep information about pupils and families confidential. Staff should be very aware of discussing pupils in the staffroom or other areas around school where they might be in earshot of parents, students or other volunteers. Staff should avoid discussing pupils when out socially.

Students, volunteers and cover staff

Volunteers and students on work placements such as Project Trident should have the Confidentiality Policy clearly outlined to them by the member of staff that is supervising them. They will sign a document to agree to keep the information that they learn in school confidential. The leader in charge will keep these documents.

Record keeping / paperwork Confidential paperwork (e.g. SEN files, Inclusion files, medical information, Child Protection information, staff files) should be stored securely in locked filing cabinets. It should be passed on to the next school/department securely – marked Private and Confidential. Confidential paperwork that is no longer needed should be placed in the appropriate bin for shredding. Highly sensitive information that needs emailing e.g. Child Protection paperwork should be sent password protected.

Monitoring and evaluation The head teacher will monitor the implementation of the policy. Staff should read this policy alongside the States of Jersey Data Protection Policy and the on-line safety policy.