



WHITMINSTER ENDOWED C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL
A FAMILY, A FOUNDATION, A FUTURE

Whitminster Endowed C of E Primary School

Confidentiality Policy

**Agreed by Governors: Summer Term
25**

Review Date: Summer Term 27

Introduction

The Staff and Governors at Whitminster Endowed C of E Primary School are conscious that a clear, explicit and well publicised confidentiality policy ensures good practice throughout the school which staff (including those from external agencies) parents/carers and pupils can easily understand. 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. The policy was developed through discussion by the whole staff team and members of the Governing Body.

Aims of the Confidentiality Policy

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- To provide clear guidance to all members of the school community around confidentiality.
- To encourage children to talk to a trusted adult if they are having problems.
- To ensure all adults working in school deal confidently with sensitive issues.

This Confidentiality Policy impacts upon every other school policy.

All individuals working with children, young people and their families have a duty and responsibility to report any allegations or concerns of a child protection nature, which comes to their attention.

When such a concern is raised:

Discuss with the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead, Miss Parry-Jones.

In writing, log briefly and accurately the concern and the child's comments.

In those cases, where there is a concern but you are unsure about how to proceed contact the Children's Help Desk Tel: 01452 426565 and ask to speak to a social work practitioner.

Further guidance can be found at: <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/gscp/>

Policy into Practice

The school needs to be clear about the boundaries of their legal and professional roles and responsibilities e.g. Child Protection/ safeguarding 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.

The policy has been developed with reference to the documents encouraging the development of confidentiality policies. These include:

- Guidance from the Gloucestershire safeguarding children services (GSCP)
- Guidance for safer working practice for adults who work with children and young people (DFE updated 2018)
- Teacher's standards (September 2012) PART TWO: PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

Legal Requirements

Human Rights Act 1998

Gives everyone the right to “respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence”, unless this is overridden: by the pupil interest, for reasons of child protection, for the protection of public safety, pupil order, health or morals or for the rights and freedoms of others.

Data Protection Act 1998

Applies to personal data of living, identified viable individuals, not anonymised data, manual and electronic records. Schools need to be clear, when collecting personal data, what purposes it will be used for and schools should have policies to clarify this to staff, pupils and parents.

Freedom of Information Act 2000 Amends the Data Protection Act.

Gives everyone the right to request any records a public body, including schools, holds about them. A school may withhold information it has if it is considered the information may damage the recipient, if disclosed. School data or record keeping policy should also cover the requirements of this act.

The policy applies to:

All teaching and non-teaching members of staff working in the school.

- Governors
- Visiting staff from external agencies
- Parents and other volunteers working in school

All the above are asked to sign a confidentiality agreement – see appendix 1

Staff support and training

Training and support will be offered to all staff in the school through

- Staff induction
- School based INSET sessions
- Governors through Governor Induction.
- Parents through Parent leaflets and induction when becoming regular parent helpers.

POLICY

For 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.
- 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/ safeguarding issue where the pupil, or others, are likely to be at risk of significant harm, you are under a duty to inform the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead who may have to involve other agencies. (Please refer to the school's safeguarding 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, 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.
- When 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.

Other professional duties

- All staff meeting minutes are confidential unless the head teacher states otherwise
- Performance management discussions are confidential between individual members of staff and the Head teacher
- All confidential data is sent via confidential e-mail or using the encrypted memory sticks issued to all member of staff and are password protected.

The school nurse:

The requirement to offer a confidential service is within the professional Code of Practice for school nurses and other health service staff. The government has also signed up to international legislation and charters which entitle young people to access health services.

However, health professionals like everyone else, must inform appropriate services if they become aware of a child protection/ safeguarding issue in discussions with a young person.

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.

Pupils – example statement to share with pupils

We understand that there may be times when there are things which may be worrying you but you feel that you can't talk about them with your family. Teachers and other members of school staff will do all we can to help you but you need to know the following:

If you really want to talk to someone confidentially, (this means without anyone else knowing what you have said), you can speak to any member of the staff .

The teachers and other members of staff in the school will often be able to help you with many of the things that may be worrying you but they cannot promise to keep everything to themselves. If you tell them about some serious things like stealing, they will have to speak to one of the senior teachers in the school who might then have to speak to your parents or the police.

If the staff member feels that they have to tell someone else what you have talked about, they will normally tell you first and help you sort it out, perhaps helping you to speak to your parents if you want this.

Very rarely there are things which you talk about that can be very dangerous for you or for other young people like someone trying to harm you. Then the staff will have to tell someone else about what you have said, but they will normally tell you first and always help you to sort things out.

Governor duties

It is understood that in the course of normal Governors' duty, Governors will often deal with highly sensitive and confidential issues, relating both to pupils and staff. This policy is designed to protect both Governors, pupils and staff and enable them to exercise their duties effectively:

- All confidential documents will be circulated on coloured paper. These documents will be contained within school; available for governors to read and distributed at the following meeting.

- Individual Governors will be responsible for ensuring that papers distributed to them are not misplaced or accessed by another individual, unless they have prior agreed this with the Headteacher and Chair of Governors.
- Where Governors have 'an interest' in a particular matter of a sensitive/confidential nature, they are to declare this and will be offered the opportunity to withdraw from discussions on such a matter.
- Governors will not discuss matters of a confidential nature with others outside the Governing body, unless this is part of an agreed course of action e.g. when the school nurse is called upon for advice.
- Where Governors have knowledge which relates to a confidential matter, that has been gained from a third party or conflicting role (other than teacher) this information should not be used for the purpose of Governors' discussion.
- At Governor meetings, agenda items of confidentiality will be noted as such.
- In summary, confidential and sensitive matters will be dealt with by the Governing body of Whitminster Endowed Church of England School, in an appropriate and professional manner.

Staff and Governors

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

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

Linked Policies

This policy needs to be read in conjunction with the policies on:

- Safeguarding
- PSHE Policy including appendices on Sex and Relationships and Drugs education
- Equality Scheme
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Data protection
- Acceptable user policy and guidance about using social media (in staff handbook)

Dissemination

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

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

The policy will be written in such a way as to be accessible to pupils, teachers, parents/carers and the wider community.

Monitoring and evaluation

It is the responsibility of the Governing Body to monitor the effectiveness of the Confidentiality Policy through the school Self Evaluation procedures.



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Head Teacher: Miss A Parry-Jones

Confidentiality Statement

Teachers and staff talk about their job constantly. Conversations at breaks and lunchtimes are often about school, individual children and their families.

We ask that such conversations are regarded as confidential.

If a parent approaches you with a question about their child's behaviour or progress, please refer them to the class teacher as your comments could be misinterpreted which may lead to further misunderstandings.

Small incidents are dealt with in school and should end there. **More serious incidents will be discussed *in confidence*, with parents by the class teacher or Headteacher/Senior Management Team.**

Please read the confidentiality policy carefully and ask for further clarification if needed.

We feel sure you will understand the need for such confidentiality on school matters. As an important part of our school we ask that you respect confidentiality on such matters to avoid misunderstandings and upset.

Everyone who works in the school is asked to abide by the Confidentiality Policy and is asked to sign that you have read, understand and are committed to carrying out the content.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Alison Parry-Jones

Headteacher

CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

I _____ have read and understood the Confidentiality Policy and I agree to follow the guidelines as set out. (Please tick role)

Signed _____ Date _____

Teacher Supply Teacher TA Parent helper Office Staff

Midday Supervisor Student

Other Name of organisation _____