

Confidentiality Policy Guidelines

The following provides guidance to the contents of a school confidentiality policy. Whilst a number of headings are used below to help you, schools are expected to use headings compatible with their house style.

School Name: Gainford C of E Primary

Consultation has taken place: 2008

Staff Date : 2008

Governors Date :

2008

Date Policy Formally Approved By Governors: 2008

Date Policy Becomes Effective: 2008

Review Date (s): 2011

Person(s) responsible for Implementation and Monitoring: H Blindt

Other relevant policies e.g. PSHCE Policy, Sex & Relationships Policy, Marking Policy, Child Protection Policy, Discipline Policy, Reporting of Racist Incidents, Drug Education & Incident Management Policy, Anti-bullying Policy

1. Aim

- To ensure clear advice and guidance on the rules of confidentiality in the school for pupils, staff, parents/carers, and visitors.
- 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 put the child at the heart of the learning process and to provide a safe and secure learning environment.
- To seek to implement the underlying principles of the Every Child Matters Agenda and to address the issues which may arise about confidentiality.

2. Rationale

It is becoming increasingly important for schools to have a comprehensive confidentiality policy which gives clarity to parents, pupils, staff and visitors about levels of confidentiality that can be offered in different circumstances. Also the *DfES Sex and Relationship Education Guidance (July 2000)*, the *Drugs Guidance for schools (2004)* and the *National Healthy School Status – A Guide for Schools (August 2005)* all advise that schools should have a clear, explicit confidentiality policy which should be well advertised to the school community.

Reasons for having a Confidentiality Policy

- A clear explicit and well publicised confidentiality policy ensures good practice throughout the school which staff, (including staff from external agencies), parents and 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 and families may wish to disclose information confidentially to the school. Schools need to be clear about their position.

3. Objectives

To provide consistent messages in school about handling information about children once it has been received.

To foster an ethos of trust within the school.

To ensure that staff, parents and pupils are aware of the school's confidentiality, policy and procedures.

To reassure pupils that their best interests will be maintained.

To encourage pupils to talk to their parents and carers.

To ensure that pupils and parents/carers know that school staff cannot offer unconditional confidentiality.

To ensure that there is equality of provision and access for all including rigorous monitoring of cultural, gender and special educational needs.

To ensure that if there is a child protection issue then the correct procedure is followed.

To ensure that confidentiality is a whole school issue and that in lessons ground rules are set for the protection of all.

To understand that health professionals are bound by different code of conduct.

To ensure that parents have a right of access to any records the school may hold on their child but not to any other child that they do not have parental responsibility for.

Pupils should be made aware of the specialist confidential services that may be available on the school site or in the school community e.g. school nurse or STEPs.

Pupils should be reassured that, if confidentiality has to be broken, they will be informed first and then supported appropriately.

4. Guidelines

- Any policy on confidentiality should make it clear that child protection procedures must be followed if any of your work with pupils and young people leads to a disclosure which makes you suspect that a child is a victim of abuse or is at risk of abuse or neglect.
- All information about individual children is private and should only be shared with those staff that have a need to know.
- All social services, medical and personal information about a child should be held in a safe and secure place which cannot be accessed by individuals other than key members of staff.
- When visitors or health professionals are used to help deliver aspects of the curriculum, they should also follow the school's confidentiality policy. However, in a one-to-one situation with individual pupils they are bound by their own professional codes of conduct.
- Schools need to give careful thought to how their confidentiality policies apply in situations where they are employing staff to work in a counselling role.
- Confidentiality is a whole school issue
- Staff should not put pressure on pupils to disclose personal information and should discourage fellow pupils from applying any such pressure.
- The school prides itself on good communication with parents and carers and staff are always available to talk to both children and parents/carers about issues that are causing concern. The school encourages children to talk to parents/carers about issues causing them concern and may in some cases support the children to talk to their parents. The school would share with parents any child protection disclosure before going on to inform the correct authorities.
- All children have a right to the same level of confidentiality irrespective of gender, race, religion, medical concerns and special educational needs. A lot of data is generated in schools by these categories but individual children should not be able to be identified.
- Photographs of children should not be used without parents/carers permission especially in the press and internet. (See Policy on the use of Photographic Devices). At no time should the child's surname be used with a photograph so that they can be identified. The school gives clear guidance to parents about the use of cameras and videos during public school events. (Ref to LA Guidelines).
- Information about children will be shared with parents only about their child. Parents should not have access to any other child's books, marks and progress grades at any time especially at parents' evening. However parents should be aware that information about their child will be shared with the receiving school when they change school.
- Business in Governors' meetings relating to individual pupils or staff should be confidential at all times.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation

Policy is due for renewal in 2011

6. Conclusion

School has a duty of care and responsibility towards pupils, parents/carers and staff. It also needs to work with a range of outside agencies and share information on a professional basis. The care and safety of the individual is the key issue behind this document.

Signed Head Teacher

Signed.....Chair of Governors

Date.....