

Wootey Infant School

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY



Created by: Full Governing Body
Responsibility: Full Governing Body
This Review: March 2024
Next Review: January 2027
Cycle: 3years

Status: Not statutory

Web: Y

1. Introduction

The Staff and Governors at Wootey Infant 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, visitors 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.

2. Aims

We aim 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.

3. 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.

This policy is written in association with our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policies and Procedures and reflects the current national statutory/ guidance documents contained within them.

4. Where and to whom the policy applies.

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
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5. Staff support and training

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

- Staff induction
- Training offered by Hampshire Children's services

- School based INSET sessions
- For Governors through the Governor Induction process.
- For Parents through Parent Leaflet.

6. POLICY

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:

- Keep anything seen or heard within school confidential to the school.
- Not to divulge any child's personal details over the phone until the validity of the request has been verified, via a return call if necessary.
- Know that you should not discuss an individual child's behaviour in the presence of another child or parent.
- Know that you should not enter into detailed discussion about a child's behaviour or progress with other children or parents.
- 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 confidential services offered on the school site.
- You must consider the suitability of the surroundings and the presence of other people when you have conversations with parents, children and carers that may be confidential.
- 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 Child Protection/ Safeguarding Liaison Officer who may have to involve other agencies. (Please refer to the school's child protection/ 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.
- 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.
- You must ensure that any transfer of personal data is carried out in accordance with the School's policy on GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation).

The school ELSA

The school has an ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant) who, as a result of her work with pupils, can become involved in a confidential discussion. The ELSA cannot offer confidentiality over a child protection issue, but sometimes it is helpful for a pupil to be able to talk about troubling issues in order to help the pupil through their situation. We do not require our ELSA to inform staff about conversations unless there is a child protection issue or other significant risk.

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.

Information about children will be shared with parents/carers but only about their child. Parents/carers will 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 if and when they change school.

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.

Staff performance management will be carried out in private. Records and data will be securely stored.

Linked Policies

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

- Child Protection Policy and Procedures
- Safeguarding Policy
- PSHE Policy including appendices on Sex and Relationships and Drugs education
- Single Equality Scheme
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Behaviour management Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Whistle blowing
- Data Protection & Freedom of Information Policy

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 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.

4. 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.