



CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

Statement of intent

It is our intention to respect the privacy of governors, staff, pupils and their parent(s)/ carer(s).

At Rothwell C of E Primary Academy we believe that:

- The safety, well-being and protection of our pupils is the paramount consideration in all decisions staff make about confidentiality.
- The appropriate sharing of information between school staff is an essential element in ensuring our pupils' well-being and safety.
- It is an essential part of our ethos that trust is established to enable pupils, staff and parents/carers to seek help both within and outside the school.
- The number of situations where personal information is shared is kept to a minimum.
- Information is stored securely.
- Pupils, parents/carers and staff need to know the boundaries of confidentiality in order to feel safe and comfortable in discussing personal issues and concerns.
- The school's attitude to confidentiality is open and easily understood and everyone should be able to trust the boundaries of confidentiality operating within the school.
- Everyone in the school community needs to know that no one can offer absolute confidentiality.

This policy sits in conjunction with our policies on Child Protection, Sex and Relationships Education and Drugs Education. It has been developed and implemented in consultation with the whole school community including pupils, parents/carers, staff and governors.

Introduction

All schools are asked on occasions to keep information confidential. This can relate to a variety of issues. It is important that the whole school follows the same clear and explicit policy. Governors, teachers (including peripatetic), school staff, pupils and parents/carers should be made aware of this and how it works in practice.

Aim of the policy:

- To give clear guidance to all members of the school about confidentiality
- To encourage young people to talk to a trusted adult if they are having problems
- To give staff confidence to deal with sensitive issues in lessons
- Ground rules should be used where sensitive issues are to be addressed
- Staff should not put pressure on pupils to disclose personal information and should discourage fellow pupils from applying any such pressure.

Personal disclosures:



Disclosures from pupils may take place at an inappropriate place or time. If this happens, the member of staff should talk again individually to the pupil before the end of the school day. The member of staff may be able to discuss the issue with an appropriate colleague, to decide on suitable action, without giving the name of the pupil. All staff are to encourage pupils to discuss difficult issues with their parent(s)/carer(s), and vice versa. However, the needs of the pupil are paramount and staff will not automatically share information about the pupil with his/her parent(s)/carer(s) unless it is considered to be in the student's best interests.

When concerns for a child or young person come to the attention of staff, for example through observation of behaviour or injuries or disclosure, however insignificant this might appear to be, the member of staff should discuss this with the Principal (or other Designated Child Protection Co-ordinator) as soon as is practically possible. More serious concerns must be reported immediately to ensure that any intervention necessary to protect the child is accessed as early as possible.

Key Points:

- Pupils should know that staff cannot offer unconditional confidentiality
- Pupils should be reassured that, if confidentiality has to be broken, they will be informed first and then supported appropriately
- Pupils should be informed of sources of confidential help, for example, team leaders, school counsellors, GP or local young person's advice service
- Any personal information should be regarded as private and not passed on indiscriminately (for example in the staff room)
- If a member of staff receives information that leads them to believe that there is a child protection issue, they should refer the case directly to the child protection officer following a discussion with the young person involved
- Pupils should be encouraged to talk to their parents/carers and be given support to do so where-ever possible

Further Guidance

For all pupils, staff members and governors to enjoy privacy from gossip, for the school to be fair to all its community, and for children and adults to have disciplinary matters dealt with according to the school's own procedures and out of the eye of the wider school community, it is important that:

- Staff don't discuss details of individual cases arising in meetings to any person without direct professional connection to and interest in the welfare and education of the individual concerned.
- No member of staff discusses an individual child's behaviour or learning in the presence of another child in school.
- Staff do not enter into detailed discussion about a child's behaviour or learning with other children or their parents/carers.
- Governors do not divulge details about individuals (be they staff, families or specific children) to any person outside of the meeting.
- Parents/carers in school, working as volunteers, or as part of the PTA, do not report cases of poor behaviour or pupil discipline to other parents/carers in



the school. This allows teachers to deal with such matters in line with school policy.

- At Governing Body meetings matters such as pupil suspension and exclusion, personnel issues and personal details of any member of the school community will be dealt within the Principal's Report. This is not for the knowledge of persons outside the Governing Body meeting.
- It is important that class teachers and support staff are aware of some confidential matters in order to support individuals. These staff will respect the sensitivity of such cases and not divulge information to people unconnected professionally with the individual concerned.
- When volunteers, such as parents/carers and friends of the school are working in classes, they do not discuss educational matters outside the classroom.
- Staff, volunteers, students and supply teachers are asked to read this policy before working in school.

Equal Opportunities

Staff may wish to discuss an individual student with a class or group. For instance it can support the inclusion of a child with social integration problems if their peers are made aware of the condition and so have some idea of what to expect. Similarly a child with SEN, visual or auditory impairment can be supported if his friends know how to support them. Such discussions will always be with the agreement of the students concerned and their parent/carer.

Health professionals

Health professionals are bound by their professional codes of conduct to maintain confidentiality when working in a one to one situation. When working in a classroom, they are bound by relevant school policies. In line with best practice guidance, like other school staff, they will seek to protect privacy and prevent inappropriate personal disclosures in a classroom setting, by negotiating ground rules.

Requests for confidential information

The Data Protection Act 1998, requires that personal information is: "obtained and processed fairly and lawfully; only disclosed in appropriate circumstances; is accurate, relevant, not held longer than necessary and is kept securely."

There may be occasions when a request for confidential information regarding a particular pupil is made, from an individual, an agency or an organisation. The usual course of action would be to seek advice from the Principal. However, there are specific circumstances where exceptions may have to be made:

- 1) Where the student has agreed to the sharing of specific, relevant information with a particular individual, agency or organisation.
- 2) Where the request is part of Child Protection procedures.



- 3) Where information is required as part of legal proceedings. Where information is released, this should usually be in the form of a written report, limited to relevant information only. Where possible the report should be shared with the pupil, except where doing so may compromise the safety and welfare of the pupil.

Statement of ground rules to be used in lessons

We adopt ground rules to ensure a safe environment for teaching PSCE or implementing Circle Time/Golden Time and Good Choices Sessions. This reduces anxiety to pupils and staff and minimises unconsidered, unintended personal disclosures. At the beginning of each such event, students will be reminded of these ground rules by the teacher or outside visitor. The teacher establishes the ground rules together with the students at the beginning of each half term.

This is an example of the ground rules:

- We won't ask each other or the teacher any personal questions
- We will respect each other and not laugh, tease or hurt others
- We won't say things we want to keep confidential
- We can pass or opt out of something if it makes us feel uncomfortable
- If we do find out things about other pupils, which are personal and private, we won't talk about it outside the lesson
- If we do find out things about other pupils, which are personal and private, we won't talk about it outside the lesson, but
- If we are worried about someone else's safety we tell a teacher

When confidentiality should be broken and procedures for doing this:

- 1) See the Child Protection Policy
- 2) Where the Child Protection Policy does not apply and you are still concerned and unsure of whether the information should be passed on or other action taken you should speak to the Principal.
- 3) If the Principal issues instructions that he should be kept informed, all staff must comply. There is always a good reason for this, which you may not know about.