



## **OVINGHAM C E FIRST SCHOOL** **CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY**

### **Aim**

The aim of this policy is to provide clear guidelines to all adults (employed, volunteer or visiting) on the levels of confidentiality that they must offer to the school community and can expect themselves. This policy supports, and is supported, by the Sex and Relationships, PSHE and Safeguarding/Child Protection policies. This policy applies to all children at Ovingham CE First School, including those in EYFS.

### **Objective**

For everyone to understand the varying degrees of confidentiality which must be offered in different situations.

### **Why the policy was developed**

This policy was developed in consultation with teachers, other staff, pupils, parents and governors. A clear, explicit and well-publicised confidentiality policy ensures good practice throughout the school which all adults involved in the school day, parents/carers and pupils can easily understand. The school needs to be clear about its legal and professional roles and responsibilities e.g. child protection/safeguarding procedures. Sometimes parents/carers and families may wish to disclose information confidentially to the school, therefore those receiving such information need to be clear regarding their roles, responsibilities and have guidelines within which to work.

### **Where and to whom the policy applies**

This policy applies to all teaching and non-teaching staff employed by the school, staff from external agencies, trainees, governors, volunteers and all visiting staff working with young people on the school site at all times.

### **Staff support and training**

Induction of new staff should cover the contents of this policy. The school should also provide to all staff with inset training on the policy in conjunction with child protection training.

### **Policy**

#### **1. All school staff members, visiting staff and outside agencies: Confidentiality and pupils.**

We recognise that there are occasions when pupils are worried about something and feel that they are unable to talk to their parents/carers. This can result in enormous stress for the individual which impacts on their education and health. Some pupils may feel they can turn to their 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 to pupils, it is important for you to be aware of maintaining your professional boundaries. Whilst being supportive where you can, distancing techniques should be clear when appropriate.
- You must make it 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 Child Protection Officer who may have to inform other agencies.** (Please refer to the school's child protection/safeguarding procedures

## **OVINGHAM C E FIRST SCHOOL** **CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY**

for more advice on this). 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 they will only tell those who need to know in order to be able to help.

- School staff can only offer confidentiality to pupils on issues that do not involve illegal activities e.g. drug trafficking, arson etc. If the conversation begins to move to this kind of issue, the pupil must be warned that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed
- In all cases where you feel that you have to break confidentiality with the pupil, you should 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 to pupils, you need to encourage them to talk to their parents/carers about the issue that is troubling them and support in doing this should be offered where appropriate.
- Pupils should be made aware, if appropriate, of the specialist confidential services that may be available on site.

**Confidentiality cannot be kept if a child/protection /safeguarding issue is disclosed.**

### **2. Peer support and mentoring projects: Confidentiality between pupils**

- All mentoring and support programmes will cover confidentiality in their training. At Ovingham CE First School we have playground buddies. They will know that they are not allowed to promise to keep secrets if a pupil discloses any form of abuse or anything else that will make them worry about their safety and they must tell a teacher if such a disclosure takes place.
- If any pupil is concerned that another pupil is about to disclose this sort of information, then they must tell them that they need to take them to a member of staff to help them.
- The pupils are also made aware that they can come and talk to staff if they have concerns about another pupil and staff will take their concerns seriously and act accordingly.

### **3. Parents and families: Confidentiality and information about parents/carers and families**

- We recognise that sometimes there will be family issues which might affect a family and which the family will only disclose to us if they are sure that the information will be treated confidentially. We will respect the wishes of the family and, where it is necessary to share the information with 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.

### **4. Staff and governors: Confidentiality and information about staff and governors**

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

- It impinges on the terms of their contract.
- It endangers pupils or other member of staff.
- There is a legal obligation to disclose such information.
- It is necessary for legal proceedings.

## OVINGHAM C E FIRST SCHOOL CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

- Despite the duty of confidence, the staff member's interest, or the wider public interest, justifies disclosure.

### **Linked policies**

All policies are linked to our Confidentiality Policy. However, some of the policies that are particularly relevant are:

- Child Protection/Safeguarding policy
- Health and Safety policy
- Anti-Bullying policy
- Code of Conduct for those working with children and young people.
- E-Safety and AUP

### **Dissemination**

This policy is widely publicised to the whole school community through;

- assemblies
- the School Council
- our peer mentoring training programme – Playground Buddies
- staff induction and Inset training
- a statement in the prospectus for parents and carers concerning confidentiality and pupils.

Policy approved and adopted January 2008

Last reviewed: June 2020