

Woodthorpe J.I.School

Confidentiality Policy

Dissemination

This policy will be shared with all interested parties both in school and in the wider community and will apply to all staff, visitors and volunteers to the school except where they are working explicitly under their own professional guidelines. The school will only in exceptional circumstances handle information without parental knowledge.

Rationale

At Woodthorpe School we wish to create an atmosphere where pupils feel able to speak to staff. In order to support staff, pupils, visitors and volunteers it is important to have a clear and explicit policy on confidentiality so that all parties involved are aware of the boundaries and legal frameworks to which they have to adhere. The school at all times puts the safety and welfare of the child first and any issue will be referred to the school's Designated Senior Person for Child Protection (DSP) if necessary. This policy is in effect for all situations inside and outside of the classroom. It will underpin other school policies such as RSE (Relationships and Sex), Drug Education, Drug Related Incidents, Social Media, Acceptable Use of the Internet and Digital Technologies for Adults and E. Safety policies.

Definitions:

Confidentiality

For the purpose of this policy the following definition of confidentiality will apply:

‘discretion in keeping private information private’

Safe place

A section of the Study classroom can be used as a ‘Safe Place’ for individual discussion between staff and pupils. Staff working in one to one situations with children may be more vulnerable to accusations. Staff should recognise this possibility and plan and conduct such meetings accordingly. Every attempt should be made to ensure the safety and security needs of both pupils and staff are met.

Ground Rules

In order to create the right sort of learning environment and to help safeguard people's rights to confidentiality, it is best to establish a clear set of ground rules to work within whilst in the classroom. Ground rules will enable sensitive or controversial issues to be explored in a way that can minimise the risks of inappropriate disclosures being made.

Any set of ground rules should be a working document, so that rules can be added or modified as situations arise. When initially setting out to formulate some ground rules for a group the overriding question that needs to be asked is:

‘What do we need to do to create a safe environment for everyone to work in and what behaviour will show this?’

As adults we are usually aware of the standards and behaviour required to fulfil the requirements of agreed ground rules. This may not be the case for all pupils and it is important to spend time to talk about how we demonstrate respect, honesty, trust, empathy, encouragement and value. Pupils, staff and visitors need to be clear about what is meant by confidentiality and its limits within a school.

A set of ground rules will help teachers and teaching assistants create a safe environment in which they do not feel embarrassed or anxious when dealing with unintended or unexpected questions or comments from pupils.

The ground rules are:

- To value everyone's contribution
- To not feel pressurised to contribute
- If you wish to contribute do not use other people's experiences as an example
- To keep a sense of humour – laugh with someone not at them
- To listen to views and opinions
- Ensure no-one will have to answer a personal question
- To make sure you are aware of what you are saying and its possible implications
- Ensure no-one will be forced to take part in a discussion
- Adults will only use the correct (anatomical) name for parts of the body
- Meanings of words will be explained in a sensible and factual way
- Explain that not everyone is the same and should not try to be the same.

Staff, visitors and volunteers responsibilities

All people working with children or young people in this school will:

- Have the best interests of the pupil at heart at all times,
- Use distancing techniques and ground rules in lessons in order to try and avoid situations that may encourage disclosures,
- At the outset inform pupils that they cannot offer complete confidentiality in certain circumstances,
- Inform any pupil wishing to make a disclosure, or who inadvertently made a disclosure, that they may have to share the information with another member of staff and as far as possible tell the pupil the name of the person with whom they will share the information,
- At all times abide by the school's child protection policy,
- Encourage pupils where appropriate to talk with parents/carers,
- Be duty bound to act appropriately upon information not directly given to them.

Principles for referral

1. There is a statutory duty to report child protection issues.
2. If in doubt tell the Designated Senior Leader for Child Protection.
3. Visitors to the school should be made aware of the DSL and deputy DSL when they arrive at the school.

Principles of working with pupils

1. It will be clear to pupils the limits of confidentiality that they can be offered.
2. If a confidence is to be broken, the pupil will be told first.
3. Pupils will be told with whom the information will be shared.
4. Pupils will be encouraged where appropriate to talk with parents or carers about their issues.

Signed:

Dated: 16 June 2016

Review: June 2019

The ground rules are adapted from The Complete Guide to Secondary School Sex and Relationship Education, Andrew Cooper 2002. Birmingham Health Education Unit. ISBN 1 903693 10 1
Policy adapted from 'Guidelines for developing a School Confidentiality Policy' Birmingham Health Education Service.