

CROPREDY CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Confidentiality Policy

Introduction

This policy was prepared following consultation with school staff, governors, pupils, parents/carers. This policy has been written using guidance from *Guidance to schools on Sex and Relationships Education*, Department for Education and Skills (Ref DfES 0116/2000 and *National Healthy School Status – A Guide for Schools* www.wiredforhealth.gov.uk. It must be read in conjunction with the Confidentiality Guidance produced by Oxfordshire LEA in December 2005.

Definition

The overall meaning of a confidential relationship is openness and agreement about what will happen to information disclosed between two, or more, people. It may not have to take the form of total secrecy. In practice there are few situations where absolute confidentiality is offered. In most cases only limited confidentiality can be offered. The boundaries of confidentiality should be made clear at the beginning of the conversation.

A working definition of confidentiality as it applies to your school:

Factors to consider might be:

- Whether the school is faith based
- Faith/ethnic mix of the school community
- The age range of pupils in the school
- Health issues within the school catchment area e.g. teenage pregnancy rates, incidences of drug misuse, levels of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), alcohol use, crime rates

Aims

All members of staff working on the school site are clear about the levels of confidentiality that they can offer to the school community and expect themselves.

Objectives

For everyone (staff and governors, pupils and parents) to understand the varying levels of confidentiality which might be offered in different circumstances

Links

This confidentiality policy is linked to the school's PSHCE, drug education, R.E, equal opportunities, sex and relationships education, child protection, and anti-bullying policies.

Guidelines

Confidentiality and pupils

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 maybe some potential difficulties in being supportive. You should adhere to the following policy:

- 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 issue where the pupils, or others, are likely to be at risk of significant harm, you are legally required to inform the school's designated teacher who may have to involve other agencies. (Please refer to the school's child protection procedures for further advice on this aspect.)
- School staff can only offer confidentiality to pupils on issues that do not involve significant illegal activities e.g. drug trafficking, arson. 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 must inform the pupil 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
- Pupils should be made aware of the specialist confidential services that maybe available in the school community eg school health nurse, doctor

Confidentiality and Staff/Governors

Staff and Governors

Schools may wish to consider including a statement about confidentiality issues for staff and governors within this policy. This will require careful discussion, potentially involving school trade union representatives. You may wish to consider the following statement as a starting point:

All staff can 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.

Confidentiality and families

As a school you may wish to include a statement to recognise when you are prepared to keep information from parents/carers confidential. You may wish to consider the following statement as a starting point:

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 parent first unless a pupil is considered to be at immediate risk and/or there is an overriding child protection concern.

Confidentiality and Visitors

Visitors to schools and confidentiality

A 'Visitor' in this context is any person who works in school either in a paid or a voluntary capacity. In some instances, the visitor may become privy to personal information regarding pupils, parents and staff that is of a confidential nature. There is an agreement between the Governing Body and everyone who works in school to sign a declaration not to use any such information outside the school context and to share relevant information with other agencies in situations of child protection. (See appendix A)

Lines of Responsibility and Referral

If a member of the school community receives information where they believe a child protection issue is addressed, they should refer the case to the designated teacher (often the Child Protection officer within the school). The person must make it clear to the pupil that they will be passing on the information but that the information will remain confidential between them and the designated teacher. If confidentiality has to be broken, the child must be informed first.

A teacher does not have a general duty to inform the head teacher of disclosures by a pupil. The decision as to whether to do so must be a matter for a teacher's discretion, having regard for child

protection issues, unless the head teacher issues an instruction that they should be informed, in which case the teacher must comply. (See above DfEE guidance).

Dissemination

This policy has been widely publicised to all in the school community:

- Through school prospectus
- Through school newsletters
- Through the staff handbook and referred to in staff induction
- On the school website

Date of Policy: 12th March 2023

Date Approved by Governors: 31st March 2023

Review Date: March 2024

Appendix A

Confidentiality agreement part of Confidentially Policy

Confidentiality agreement for visitors of Cropredy CE Primary School

This is an agreement between the Governing Body and everyone who works in school either in a paid or a voluntary capacity.

I understand that in the course of my work in school, I may be party to personal information regarding pupils, parents and staff that is of a confidential nature. I agree not to use any such information outside school context. I agree to share relevant information with other agencies in situations of child protection.

Signature of member of staff/volunteer worker/governor

Date: _____

Signed by: _____

On behalf of the Governing Body

Those working in school either paid or voluntarily will be asked to sign the agreement on an annual basis.