



Dickleburgh VC Primary School

Confidentiality Policy

Introduction

Dickleburgh Primary School believes that it is essential to work in partnership with parents and carers and we endeavour to keep parents/carers abreast of their child's progress at school, including any concerns about their progress or behaviour. However, we also need to maintain a balance so that our pupils can share any concerns and ask for help when they need it.

The safety, well-being and protection of our pupils is the paramount consideration in all decisions staff at this school make about confidentiality.

Aims

- To ensure that children are protected at all times.
- To provide clear, unambiguous guidance, to all staff involved, as to their professional roles.
- To ensure good practice throughout the school; which is clearly understood by pupils, parents/carers, staff and governors.

Objectives

- To foster an ethos of trust, respect and equality within the school.
- To ensure that staff, parents/carers and pupils are aware of the school's responsibility on confidentiality.
- To provide consistent messages in school about handling information about children once it has been received.
- To encourage children to talk to their parents and carers, and staff.
- To ensure that pupils and parents/carers know that school staff cannot offer unconditional confidentiality.
- To ensure that if there are child protection concerns, then the correct procedure is followed.
- To ensure that confidentiality is a whole school issue and that in some lessons ground rules are set for the protection of all
- To ensure that parents/carers have a right of access to any records that school may hold on their child but not to any other child for whom they have no caring responsibility.

How the Policy was developed

This policy is based on the guidance provided by the Local Authority, which has been adapted to suit the needs of Dickleburgh Primary School following consultation with staff and governors.

The Confidentiality Policy is linked to and supported by other policies in the school including Child Protection, Behaviour, Health and Safety, PSHCE, Sex and Relationships Education and Equal Opportunities.

Confidentiality Policy

Where and to whom the Policy applies.

The policy applies to the whole school community and is made available to:

- All staff employed by the school
- Depending on their contractual arrangements all visiting staff, working with children on the school site during the school day.

All school staff members: Confidentiality and Pupils

The school prides itself on effective communication and close relationships with parents/carers. Staff are always available to talk to both children and parents/carers about issues causing them concern, and may in some cases support the children in talking to their parents/carers.

Some pupils may feel that they can turn to staff members for support. While wanting to be as helpful as possible staff also recognise that there may be some potential difficulties in being supportive. Staff should adhere to the following guidance:

- When talking with pupils, it is important for you to be aware of maintaining professional boundaries.
- Staff must make it clear to pupils that they cannot offer unconditional confidentiality when a pupil first begins to talk about something sensitive or concerning about their welfare.
- Pupils should be warned that if there is a child protection issue where they, or others, are likely to be at risk of significant harm, staff have a duty to inform the school's Child Protection Liaison Officer who may have to involve other agencies. (Please refer to the school's Child Protection Policy for further advice on this aspect.)
- School staff can only offer confidentiality to pupils on issues that do not involve significant illegal activities. 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 first and reassure them that their best interests will be maintained.
- Clear ground rules must be set for any classroom work such as circle time and other PSHCE sessions dealing with sensitive issues. Distancing techniques should be used when dealing with sensitive issues.
- All information about individual children is private and should only be shared with those staff members that have a need to know.
- All social care, medical and personal information about a child should be held in a safe and secure place which cannot be accessed by individuals other than school staff.
- Information collected for one purpose should not be used for another.
- All children have a right to the same level of confidentiality irrespective of gender, race, religion, medical concerns and special educational

Confidentiality and Information about Parents/Carers and Families.

School recognises 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.

Confidentiality Policy

School staff 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 ICT

We will always observe safe internet practice and ensure all staff members are aware of the correct protocols when using the internet, school website or social media sites.

Confidentiality and Information about 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
- It 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.

Dissemination

This policy is publicised to all in the school community

- Through access to the school policy file
- Staff training and induction
- Through occasional assemblies/ circle time discussions as appropriate – by emphasising links to the school's anti-bullying policy and child protection policy and procedures.
- On the school website.

APPENDIX 1: Statement for pupils concerning confidentiality

(To be discussed at whole school assemblies, Class circle Time and Class Councils)

We understand that there may be times when there are things which may be worrying you but you can't talk about them with your family. Teachers and other members of school staff will do all we can to help you but need to know the following:

- If you really want to talk to someone confidentially, without anyone else knowing what you have said you can speak to any adult that you trust and know.
- The teachers and other members of staff in the school will often be able to help you with many of the things that may be worrying you but they cannot promise to keep everything to themselves. For example if you tell them about some things like stealing, they will have to speak to the Headteacher who might then have to speak to your parents.
- If the staff member feels that they have to tell someone else what you have talked about, they will normally tell you first and help you sort it out, perhaps helping you to speak to your parents/carers if you want this.
- Very rarely there are things which you talk about that can be very dangerous for you or for other young people e.g. someone trying to harm you. The Staff member may have to tell someone else about what you have said, but they will normally tell you first and always help you to sort things out.