

Christ Church (Church of England)
Infant School & Nursery

CONFIDENTIALITY
POLICY

Follows Model Policy provided by Wolverhampton Local Authority

January 2016

Introduction and context

This school recognises its legal duty under Section 175 Education Act 2002 to work with other agencies in safeguarding children and protecting them from “*significant harm*”.

This school recognises that a clear confidentiality policy will support the school in meeting the Every Child Matters outcomes of ‘be healthy’ and ‘stay safe’.

The staff seek to adopt an open and accepting attitude towards children and young people as part of their general responsibility for pastoral care.

Staff hope that parents and children will feel free to talk about any concerns or worries which may affect educational progress and that they will see the school as a safe place if there are any difficulties at home.

This school recognises the following benefits of working to a confidentiality policy:

- It highlights the importance of pupils being able to talk to adults in school to share their problems in a safe and supportive environment
- It safeguards the wellbeing of those involved in the disclosure of confidential information
- It builds trust between pupils and staff
- It empowers each pupil to exercise control over the choices that will affect their life
- It prevents the need to deal with each disclosure as a crisis in isolation

A definition of confidentiality

Confidentiality is an understanding that any information shared with someone in trust can only be passed on to a third party with the agreement of the person disclosing it.

Please note, in this policy, a ‘disclosure’ is the sharing of any private/personal information.
It is a general term and does not just relate to child protection issues.

The limits of confidentiality

Staff, pupils, parents/carers will be informed about the limits of confidentiality in this school. Some issues have to be shared with other people/agencies, eg child protection.

Pupils will be advised (wherever possible prior to a disclosure) what kinds of disclosure will require information to be shared, what will be done with the information and who else will have access to it.

Members of staff will be made aware of who (if anyone) to inform in the event of different types of disclosures of a personal nature.

This school recognises that confidential discussions need to take place in a confidential environment. Public places such as the staffroom, the classroom and the playground are not, in general, confidential environments.

This school will provide opportunities for its pupils to access confidential support on school premises in the following ways:

- *A quiet area will be found where the pupil can talk comfortably and confidentially (if appropriate) to the staff member*

Parents/carers and pupils have the right to view educational records upon written request. It is therefore not possible to guarantee the confidentiality of recorded information.

Staff must pass on confidential information in the following circumstances:

- Child Protection
- Where there is a risk of serious harm or threat to life
- Where a pupil needs urgent medical treatment
- Where potential or actual serious crime is involved
- Where safeguarding national security is involved, eg terrorism

Responsibilities to parents/carers

The guidance below will be followed with additional appropriate consideration to the very young age of our pupils.

Members of staff are not legally obliged to inform parents/carers in many instances where personal information has been disclosed.

Where it is believed that the pupil may be at emotional or physical risk, or in breach of the law, staff will ensure that the pupil is aware of the risks they face.

Staff will encourage the pupil to inform and seek support from their parents/carers.

In most cases information provided by a pupil will only be passed on to their parents/carers with the pupil's consent. When the school chooses to inform parents/carers it will only be done if it is in the best interests of the child.

Illegal activity

Members of staff are not obliged to inform the police on most matters relating to illegal activity (eg illegal drugs activity, assaults).

In the case of illegal activity, the school will discuss the possible consequences with the pupil and seek the course of action with the most productive outcomes for the pupil.

Staff roles and responsibilities

All staff (teaching and non-teaching) will be made aware of the confidentiality policy and their entitlement to training and support in its implementation.

All staff are under a contractual obligation to uphold the policy as with all other school policies. Failure to comply with this policy will result in disciplinary procedures being followed.

This policy will be distributed annually to all staff and will also be uploaded on to the One Drive shared area. Reminders and actions related to this policy will be revisited alongside Safeguarding training.

Staff should seek advice and support for themselves when dealing with a disclosure whilst keeping the individual's identity anonymous. The school will maintain an up-to-date list of appropriate contacts for staff so that they can seek support. This will include the following members of staff at this school:

Wendy Large (Headteacher)

Chris Potter (Deputy Headteacher)

Sharon McHale (SLT)

Janice Granger (SENCO/LAC) (can signpost to multi-agency support)

External support can be accessed through

Paul Cooper (Local Authority Designated Safeguarding Officer), 550661

Working with External Agencies

Anyone working with pupils from the school particularly on sensitive areas of the curriculum needs to be made aware of the school's confidentiality policy.

School staff and staff from external agencies will establish at the beginning of lessons dealing with potentially sensitive topics that it is inappropriate to disclose personal information during the lesson. Ground rules need to be agreed which ensure individual do not pressure one another to answer questions about their own experiences. *(This will not usually be applicable as an Infant School but may still need consideration in some circumstances).*

Staff will outline the sources of support available to any pupil who may wish to discuss the topics and/or their feelings further on a one-to-one basis.

As an Infant School support will usually be from 'chosen' staff (those staff whom children have chosen to discuss their feelings with). Staff are usually open to pupil discussions but may need to restrict pupils to discussing certain information in a more confidential environment depending on the nature of the information.

Recording Information

The school acknowledges that:

- Pupils and their parents/carers have a right to gain access to *processed* information upon written request.
- Agencies such as the Police and Social Services may be able to get a court order to gain access to *processed* information which the school deems confidential. This can also include the Local Authority's legal department and insurers, as well as other solicitors, eg in custody cases.
- Any information recorded about a pupil will be written in a way that assumes it will be read by either the subject or their parents/carers.
- In order to comply with the Lord Chancellor's Code of Practice on the Management of Records (issued under section 46 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000), any *processed* information will be stored in accordance with the Schools Record Management Systems.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The policy will be reviewed after each significant disclosure to ensure that the policy and procedures work appropriately.

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis in line with other policy documents.

Communicating the Policy

The policy will be communicated to all school staff, governors, parents/carers, partner agencies and relevant visitors. School staff and governors receive hard copies of this policy as well as it being available on our One Drive. The policy will be available to view on our school website for parents/carers and other agencies.

A flow chart for how to deal with confidential disclosures will be displayed on staffroom notice boards.

