



**Governing Body of the Federation of  
Wallisdean Infant School and Wallisdean Junior School**

**A WHOLE SCHOOL CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY**

**Why do we have a confidentiality policy?**

This policy has been written to protect all members of our community at all times and to give all staff involved clear, unambiguous guidance as to their legal and professional roles and to ensure good practice throughout the school which is understood by pupils, parents/carers and staff.

**Definition of Confidentiality**

The dictionary definition of confidential is "something which is spoken or given in confidence; private, entrusted with another's secret affairs".

When speaking confidentially to someone the confider has the belief that the confidant will not discuss the content of the conversation with another. The confider is asking for the content of the conversation to be kept secret. Anyone offering absolute confidentiality to someone else would be offering to keep the content of his or her conversation completely secret and discuss it with no one.

In practice there are few situations where absolute confidentiality is offered at Wallisdean. We strike a balance between ensuring the safety, well being and protection of our pupils and staff, ensuring there is an ethos of trust where pupils and staff can ask for help when they need it while ensuring that the school meets its legal obligations, to share personal information relating to child protection issues.

This means that in most cases what is on offer is limited confidentiality.

**The general rule is that staff should make clear that there are limits to confidentiality, at the beginning of the conversation. These limits relate to ensuring the safety and well being of both children and members of the school community. The pupil will be informed when a confidence has to be broken for this reason and will be encouraged to do this for themselves whenever this is possible.**

Any other information known that may affect the welfare (including education) of members of the school community, contravene school policy or compromise the stability of the school, should be passed on to the Executive Head Teacher, except in cases affecting the Executive Head Teacher, which should be dealt with by the Chair of Governors.

**The school's confidentiality aims**

1. To provide clear protocol about handling confidential information.
2. To foster an ethos of trust and respect that enables members of the school community to seek help both in and outside the school and to minimise the number of situations when personal information is shared, to ensure members of the school community are supported and safe
3. To reassure all members of the school community that their best interests are the highest priority within the constraints of the law.
4. To ensure that all members of the school community know that school staff cannot offer unconditional confidentiality.
5. To ensure that this policy is implemented in line with equal opportunities.
6. To ensure the correct procedures are followed in the case of child protection issues.
7. To ensure that confidentiality is a whole school issue and that in lessons eg circle times, ground rules are set for the protection of all.
8. To ensure that all liaison with other agencies falls within the boundaries of this policy.
9. To recognise that, in some circumstances, some other agencies may be bound by additional codes of conduct.
10. To ensure that parents have a right of access to any records the school may hold on their child but not to any other child that they do not have parental responsibility for. However this does not apply to records referring to child abuse (see Child Protection Procedures).

## Confidentiality in Practice

1. All sensitive information about individuals within the school community is private and should only be shared with those staff that have a need to know.
2. All Children's Services', medical and personal information about a child/member of staff should be held in a safe and secure place which cannot be accessed by individuals other than relevant school staff. Except where it is necessary to share this eg anaphylaxis, diabetes etc...
3. All members of the school community need to be aware that the school cannot guarantee total confidentiality and the school has a duty to report child protection issues.
4. The schools have appointed senior members of staff as Designated Safeguarding Leads. In the Pre-School this is the Manager, in the Infant School and Junior School there are the Executive Head Teacher and the Heads of School. See *Child Protection Procedure Policy*.
5. All personal information about children, including Children's Services' records should be regarded as confidential. Information about children will be shared with parents but only about their child. Parents should not have access to any other child's marks or progress grades. Parents should be aware, however, that information will be shared about their child for the purposes of moderation and transfer.
6. Secure filing will be provided where necessary: eg personnel records, health and medical reports, Children's Services' minutes.
7. Addresses and telephone numbers of members of the school staff will not be passed on except for trips or in other exceptional circumstances.
8. Governors must observe the terms of this policy. Confidential items should be marked as such. Surplus copies of these confidential papers should be destroyed. Governors must observe complete confidentiality when asked to do so by the Federated Governing Body, especially in relation to matters concerning individual staff, pupils or parents. Although decisions reached at governors' meetings are normally made public through the minutes or otherwise, the discussions on which decisions are based should be regarded as confidential. Governors should exercise the highest degree of prudence if discussion of potentially contentious issues arise outside the governing body.
9. Staff within each school will shred on-site all confidential waste generated by their actions.
10. Electronic information should be stored where possible on the schools' servers. Photographs of children must not be stored on unencrypted memory sticks or staffs' personal computers, cameras, phones or other personal devices.
11. Confidentiality in practise is guided by the following policies and procedures:
  - Child protection
  - Whistle Blowing
  - Health and safety
  - PHSE
  - Sex and relationship education
  - Racist incidents
  - Photographic permission procedure
  - Equal opportunities
  - Complaints
  - Performance Management
  - SEN
  - Inclusion
  - Teachers' Pay and Conditions

## References:

This policy has been prepared with reference to the following documents:

*Sex and relationship education guidance*, DFES, July 2000, ref:0116/2000

- *What to do if you're worried a child is being abused: Children's services guidance*, DFES/DH, May 2003, ref: 31553
- *HIV in schools: good practice guide to supporting children infected or affected by HIV*, Children and Young People HIV Network/NCB, 2005, ISBN: 1904787479
- *National Healthy Schools Status – a guide for schools*, DH, September 2005, REF: 270390

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