

HAZELDENE LOWER SCHOOL



**CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY
REVISED OCTOBER 2012**

SIGNED DATE.....
HEADTEACHER

SIGNED DATE

CHAIR OF GOVERNORS

TO BE REVIEWED OCTOBER 2014

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

1. Introduction

The Staff and Governors at Hazeldene Lower School are conscious that a clear, explicit and well publicised confidentiality policy ensures good practice throughout the school which staff (including those from external agencies) parents/carers and pupils can easily understand. The policy should confirm that all members of the school community are clear about the levels of confidentiality that they can offer to other members of the community and expect themselves.

2. Aims

We aim for everyone to understand the varying levels of confidentiality which might be offered in different circumstances.

3. Policy into Practice

- The school needs to be clear about the boundaries of their legal and professional roles and responsibilities e.g. Child Protection/ safeguarding procedures.
- Different professionals can offer varying levels of confidentiality in different circumstances which can confuse staff and pupils.
- Sometimes parents/carers and families may wish to disclose information confidentially to the school. Schools need to be clear about their position. The policy has been developed with reference to the documents encouraging the development of confidentiality policies. These include:
 - What to do if you are worried a child is being abused Department of Health (Ref 31553/"What to do if you're worried a child is being abused")
 - Guidance to schools on Sex and Relationships Education Department for Education and Skills (Ref DfE 0116/2000
 - National Healthy School Status- A Guide for Schools www.wiredforhealth.gov.uk
 - Information Sharing: Practitioners' guide (DfE 2006)
 - Information sharing: Case examples (DfE 2006)
 - Information sharing: Further Guidance on Legal issues (DfE 2006)

4. Where and to whom the policy applies.

The policy applies to:

- All teaching and non-teaching members of staff working in the school.
- Governors
- Visiting staff from external agencies
- Parents and other volunteers working in school

5. Staff support and training

- Staff induction
- School based INSET sessions

Governors through Governor induction.

6. POLICY

All school staff members

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

- When talking with pupils, it is important for you to be aware of maintaining your professional boundaries. Whilst being supportive where you can, distancing techniques should be used when appropriate and pupils encouraged or supported to access the confidential services offered on the school site.
- 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/ safeguarding issue where the pupil, or others, are likely to be at risk of significant harm, you are under a duty to inform the school's Child Protection/ Safeguarding Liaison Officer who may have to involve other agencies. (Please refer to the school's child protection/ safeguarding procedures for further advice on this aspect). It is important that each member of staff deals with this sensitively and explains to the pupil that they must inform the appropriate people who can help the child, but that they will only tell those who need to know in order to help.

- In all cases where you feel that you have to break confidentiality with the pupil, you must inform the pupil, (unless there is a good reason not to inform them e.g. risk of harm) 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.

- **The School Learning Mentor**

The school has a Learning Mentor who as a result of her work with pupils can become involved in a confidential discussion. The School Learning Mentor cannot offer confidentiality over a child protection issue but sometimes it is helpful for a pupil to be able to talk about troubling issues in order to help the pupil through their situation. We do not require our School Learning Mentor to inform staff about conversations unless there is a child protection issue or other significant risk.

Parents/carers and Families

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

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
- 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.

Linked Policies

This policy needs to be read in conjunction with the policies on

- Child Protection
- PSHCE Policy including appendices on Sex and Relationships and Drugs education
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Racial Awareness Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Behaviour management Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Health and Safety Policy

Dissemination

This policy will be widely publicised to all in the school community

- through assemblies and the school council
- on the school website
- by emphasising links to the to the school's anti-bullying policy and child protection/ safeguarding policy and procedures.
parents/carers and the wider community.

It is the responsibility of the *Governing Body* to monitor the effectiveness of the Confidentiality Policy through the school Self Evaluation procedures.

To be reviewed October 2014