

Confidentiality Policy

Whale Hill Primary School





Whale Hill Primary School

Confidentiality Policy

Aims and Objectives

This policy provides guidance and information on confidentiality procedures at Whale Hill Primary School for staff, pupils, parents/carers and governors. The proper protection and safety of pupils is always paramount and includes occasions where there is an external contributor and on visits. This policy should be consulted in conjunction with the school Child Protection Policy and the External Visitors Policy.

Moral Values and Framework

The Confidentiality Policy at Whale Hill Primary School reflects the school ethos and demonstrates and encourages the following values:

- Respect for self;
- Respect for others;
- Responsibility for their own actions;
- Responsibility for their family, friends, schools and wider community.

Policy Statement

Whale Hill Primary School always operates in a way that respects every individual and family's rights to privacy. All our staff and visitors are therefore expected to work within the guidelines of this policy which conform to recent legislation and government guidelines and which protect confidentiality.

In practice this means:

- Keeping personal records of behaviour confidential
- Not discussing pupil or family personal matters in a general way
- Using teaching methods which protect confidentiality
- Using Core Values in lessons
- Always encouraging pupils to talk to their parents/carers about any anxieties they may have and giving them the support to do so
- Reassuring pupils that their best interests will be maintained
- Ensuring that pupils know that teachers cannot offer unconditional confidentiality
- Reassuring pupils that, if confidentiality has to be broken, they will be informed first and then supported as appropriate
- If there is any possibility of abuse, following the school's Child Protection procedure
- Making sure that pupils and families are informed of sources of confidential help, for example, the school nurse, GP etc

Child Protection

Children cannot learn effectively if they are concerned or frightened about being abused or being the victims of violence at home. They have the right to expect schools to provide a safe and secure environment. Any fears or worries should not go unnoticed by staff. Teachers need to be aware that effective sex and relationships education, which brings an understanding of what is and is not acceptable in a relationship, can lead to a disclosure of a child protection issue.

If a member of staff suspects that a child is a victim of abuse, or they have reason to believe that he/she is at risk from abuse, they should follow the child protection procedures and report their concerns immediately to the designated child protection teacher (Mrs Mellor; head teacher, Mrs Marsden; headteacher) or in her absence the deputy designated teacher (Mr Forster; deputy headteacher, Mrs Thompson; SENDCo).

Personal Disclosures

Disclosures from pupils may take place at an inappropriate place or time. The teacher must not ask leading questions and should deal with the disclosure in line with the school's child protection procedures.

If the child asks to speak in confidence, he/she should always be told beforehand that unconditional confidentiality may not always be possible if someone is in danger of abuse. If confidentiality is to be breached, the pupil needs to know who will be told, why and what the outcome is likely to be and how he/she will be supported.

There may be rare occasions when a member of staff is approached by a child who is sexually active or is contemplating sexual activity. This should be viewed as a child protection issue. In such cases, the situation should be dealt with by approaching one of the Head teachers, who will make sensitive arrangements, in discussion with the child, to ensure that parents and carers are informed. The Head teachers will also ensure that child protection issues are addressed and that help is provided for the child and family.

It is only in the most exceptional circumstances that the school will be in a position to handle information without parental knowledge. Where younger children are involved, this will be grounds for serious concern and child protection issues should be addressed.

Data Protection

Confidentiality does not just apply to disclosures of information which could have legal implications such as abuse. Staff members should not handle any confidential information carelessly. The following measures are in place to ensure that confidential information is dealt with appropriately:

- Pupil records are kept in a locked filing cabinet within the Head teacher's office
- Laptops containing pupil data will be secure at all times
- Personal pupil information is not stored in the staffroom and is not displayed on notice boards (with the exception of medical concerns which all staff need to be aware of)

- Discussing pupil, family or other staff members' personal matters in a general way is discouraged
- All school staff have access to private space where personal telephone calls can be made or taken
- Parents and visitors access the school through the main entrance, where they will be asked to sign the visitors book and wear a visitors badge around school. Other entrances/exits will be locked after the children have arrived/left the premises.

Confidentiality in the Classroom

All teaching will be done in a way that reaffirms respect for everyone in the school and associated with it. Teaching staff will work with pupils to develop 'Core Values' for lessons and discussions and show why these need to be agreed and respected by everybody. For example:

- Nobody will have to answer personal questions or disclose any personal details
- Everyone has the right to 'pass' on a question if they want to
- Nobody will be forced to take part in a discussion
- Everyone has the right to be listened to and have their views respected
- No teasing or bullying of any kind
- If you do not want anyone to know something either talk about it as if it was someone else or do not bring it up

Teaching staff will protect pupils' privacy in the class by always depersonalising discussions. For example:

- Use the 'third person' to allow pupils to keep a distance ('If you were Jamie/Sarah what would you do?' rather than 'What would you do?')
- Collect 'group' ideas rather than individuals
- Provide appropriate videos and written scenarios with invented characters to encourage pupils to imagine how the people would feel, and discuss what they would do in their shoes
- Collect answers anonymously on pieces of paper so that pupils can express their feelings without risking exposure
- Making sure that pupils are informed of sources of confidential help and advice, for example, the school nurse, appropriate websites etc

September 2019