

GILBERT INGLEFIELD ACADEMY



CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

Date of Policy: September 2023

Approved by Head Teacher: October 2023

Review Date: September 2026

Staff responsible: Head Teacher
Director of Pupil Wellbeing

Introduction

The safety, well-being and protection of our pupils are the paramount consideration in all decisions staff at this school make about confidentiality. The appropriate sharing of information between school staff is an essential element in supporting it.

The DFES Sex and Relationship Education Guidance (July 2000) states 'Schools should have a clear and explicit confidentiality policy which is advertised to staff, parents and visitors.'

All schools are asked on occasions to keep information confidential. This can relate to a variety of issues including underage sexual activity, drugs use, abuse or other dangerous or illegal activities. It is important that the whole school follows the same clear and explicit policy. Pupils, parents and carers should be made aware of how it works in practice.

Aims

- To give clear guidance to all members of the school around confidentiality
- To encourage young people to talk to a trusted adult if they are having problems
- To give staff confidence to deal with sensitive issues

In lessons

- Ground rules and distancing techniques should be used where sensitive issues are to be addressed
- Staff should not put pressure on pupils to disclose personal information and should discourage fellow pupils from applying any such pressure

Personal disclosures

Key Points

- Pupils should know that staff **cannot offer unconditional confidentiality**
- Pupils should be reassured that their best interests will be maintained
- Pupils should be reassured that, if confidentiality has to be broken, they will be informed first and then supported appropriately
- Pupils should be informed of sources of confidential help, for example, the school nurse, counsellor, GP or local young person's advice service

- Any personal information/data should be regarded as private and not passed on indiscriminately (for example in the staff room)
- If a member of staff receives information that leads them to believe that there is a child protection issue, they should refer the case to a designated teacher or child protection officer following a discussion with the young person involved
- Pupils should be encouraged to talk to their parents or carers and be given support to do so where ever possible
- Government guidance requires professionals to consult as much as possible with parents about their children when referring to another agency. In general, parents should be asked if they wish to be referred, UNLESS THERE IS REASON TO THINK THAT OBTAINING SUCH CONSENT MAY PUT THE YOUNG PERSON AT RISK. If the referral is about child abuse (or the risk of it) rather than 'children in need', it is good practice to consult Social Services BEFORE discussing the issue with parents, unless a parent has asked you to make the referral and is already aware of it.

Further Guidance

For all children, staff members and governors to enjoy privacy from gossip, for the school to be fair to all its community, and for children and adults to have disciplinary matters dealt with according to the school's own procedures and out of the eye of the wider school community, it is important that:

- Staff do not discuss details of individual cases arising in staff meetings to any person without direct professional connection to and interest in the welfare and education of the individual concerned.
- No member of staff discusses an individual child's behaviour in the presence of another child in school.
- Staff do not enter into detailed discussion about a child's behaviour with other children or their parents.
- Governors, in particular those sitting on Discipline Committees, do not divulge details about individuals (be they staff, families or individual children) to any person outside of the meeting.
- Parents in school, working as volunteers, or as part of the School Association, do not report cases of poor behaviour or pupil discipline to other parents in the school. This allows teachers to deal with such matters in line with school policy.
- At full Governing body meetings matters such as pupil exclusion, personnel issues and personal details of any member of the school community will be dealt with in the head teacher's report under 'confidential.' This is not for the knowledge of persons outside the Governing body meeting.
- Staff performance management will be carried out privately. Targets for individuals, named lesson observation sheets and other performance data will be in the head teacher's office and electronic records will only be available from the head teacher's computer.
- Matters of Child Protection are made known to staff on a need to know basis.
- It is important that class teachers and support staff are aware of some confidential matters in order to support individuals. These staff will respect the sensitivity of such cases and not divulge information to people unconnected professionally with the individual concerned.
- When volunteers, such as parents and friends of the school are working in classes, they do not discuss educational matters outside the classroom. For example: the specific use of teaching assistant time for particular pupils or groups of pupils, teaching assistants have different roles within a class, including the support of children with special educational needs, the provision and work with these children is for the **teacher to discuss** with the relevant parents or carers.
- Volunteers, students and supply teachers will be made aware of this policy and asked to read it before working in school.

Equal Opportunities

Staff may wish to discuss an individual case with a class or group. For instance, it can support the inclusion of a child with Aspergers Syndrome or Autism, if their peers are made aware of the condition and so have some idea of what to expect. Similarly, a child with visual impairment can be supported if

his/her friends know how to look out for them in the playground. In such cases permission will be sought from the child and his/her carers.

Health professionals

The Government has recognised that for some young people, unless they are able to speak to someone away from their family, their health and well-being can be at risk. Health Services can offer confidential health services (including contraception) to pupils under the age of 16 providing they follow the **Fraser Guidelines**, which require:

- The young person understands the advice and has sufficient maturity to appreciate what is involved in terms of moral, legal, social and emotional implications for themselves.
- They cannot be persuaded to tell their parents/carers or allow them to be informed.
- (If appropriate) they are likely to begin to have sexual relationships
- The young person's mental or physical health is likely to suffer if they do not receive advice or treatment.
- It is in the young person's interests to get advice or treatment

Health professionals are bound by their professional codes of conduct to maintain confidentiality when working in a one to one situation. When working in a classroom, they are bound by relevant school policies. In line with best practice guidance, like other school staff, they will seek to protect privacy and prevent inappropriate personal disclosures in a classroom setting, by negotiating ground rules and using distancing techniques. Health professionals like everyone else, must inform appropriate services in the event of a Child Protection issue.

Pupil/Adult Mentoring

All mentoring and support programmes will cover confidentiality in their training.

- The Mentor must tell the Mentoring co-ordinator or a teacher if a pupil discloses any form of abuse or any other information that may lead the mentor to worry about their safety.
- If the pupil is about to disclose this sort of information, the mentor must inform them that they will need to inform a member of staff.
- If the mentor has concerns over the content of a mentoring meeting they are to discuss it with the mentoring co-ordinator. In these circumstances the mentoring co-ordinator is bound by the same rules as the mentor.

Parents

We recognise that sometimes there are family issues which might affect a pupil which the family will only disclose if they are confident that the information will remain confidential. Such information will be treated sensitively and discussed with the parent if the need is felt to share such information. This does not apply if the pupil is considered to be at immediate risk or a child protection concern.

Staff and Governors

All staff can normally expect that their personal situations and health will remain confidential unless:

- It impinges on the terms of their contract
- Endangers pupils or other members of staff
- There is legal obligation to disclose such information
- It is necessary for legal proceedings
- Despite the duty of confidence, it is in the staff member's interests or the wider public interest justifies disclosure.

Other Policies

This policy sits in conjunction with the school's policies on:

- Safeguarding Children
- Relationships and Sexual Health Education
- Drug Education
- Looked After Children (LAC)
- Attendance

- Anti-bullying

It also takes notice of recent developments such as:

- The Children's Act 2004
- Ofsted self evaluation
- Data Protection Legislation
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Working together to Safeguard Children 2004
- DFES Sex and Relationship Guidance
- Beds LSCB
- The Frazer Guidelines – Sex and the law