

# Chalk Ridge Primary School

## Confidentiality Policy



Agreed and adopted: N2016  
Reviewed: November 2017, July 2018, July 21  
Next review: July 2024

### **Aim**

All members of staff working on the site are clear about the levels of confidentiality they can offer to the school community and expect themselves.

### **Objectives**

- To be transparent about the process of, developing and reviewing this policy.
- For everyone to understand the varying levels of confidentiality which might be offered, in different circumstances.

### **Why the policy was developed**

- The school needs to be clear about the boundaries of their legal and professional roles and their responsibilities e.g. Child Protection procedures.
- A clear explicit and well publicised confidentiality policy ensures good practice throughout the school which staff, (including staff from external agencies), parents and pupils can easily understand.
- Different professionals can offer varying levels of confidentiality in different circumstances which can confuse staff and pupils.
- Sometimes parents and families may wish to disclose information confidentially to the school. Schools need to be clear about their position.

### **How the policy was formulated/developed**

Drafted by the Deputy Headteacher (Designated Safeguarding Lead), and discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), PSHE coordinator, Governor with reference to guidance from Hampshire County Council. The draft policy was then discussed with parents and the Curriculum committee before being agreed by the full Governing Body.

### **Where and to whom the policy applies**

- All teaching and non-teaching staff employed by the school.
- All visiting staff working with young people on the school site during the school day.
- Depending on their contractual arrangements staff from external agencies delivering services on site.
- Volunteers working with children and/or on the school site.
- Governors.

### **Staff support and training**

- INSET training e.g. support for PSHE coordinator through Healthy Schools schemes and CPLO/DSL training.
- Induction of new staff
- Service Level agreements with visiting agencies.

### **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:

- 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.
- School staff can only offer confidentiality to pupils on issues that do not involve significant illegal activities e.g. drug trafficking, arson, etc. If the conversation begins to move to this kind of issue, the pupil must be warned that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.
- 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.

Pupils should be made aware of the specialist confidential services that may be available on the school site or in the school community e.g. school nurse, ELSA, doctor.

Any member of staff can be approached by any pupil for a confidential discussion. Sometimes we may also refer pupils to the ELSA, EFA or appropriate member of staff for discussions. Staff cannot offer confidentiality over a child protection/safeguarding issue but because sometimes it is necessary for a pupil to be able to talk about deep-seated troubling issues in order to help the pupil through their situation, we require our staff to inform the Senior Management Team about illegal activities whether or not there is a child protection/safeguarding issue or other significant risk.

The requirement to offer a confidential service is within the professional Code of Practice for school nurses and other health service staff. The government has also signed up to international legislation and charters which entitle young people to access health services. However, health professionals like everyone else, must inform appropriate services if they become aware of a child protection/ safeguarding issue in discussions with a young person.

### **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 and governors can normally expect that their personal situations and health will remain confidential unless

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

### **Linked policies**

Anti - Bullying, Child Protection, Health and Safety, PSHE, Drugs Policy, Relationships and Sex Policy, Visitors, Single Equality Scheme.

### **Dissemination**

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

- With job details to applicants.
- Through class assemblies and the school ambassadors.
- On the school website.

The policy will be written in such a way as to be accessible to pupils, teachers, parents/carers and the wider community.

### **A statement for parents and carers concerning confidentiality and pupils**

This statement reflects and summarises the agreed school's confidentiality policy.

There is increasing national concern for the emotional health and well-being of young people growing up in today's society. We recognise that parents and carers want to do all they can to support their child but even in the most supportive of relationships where there is excellent communication between parent/carer and child, there can be occasions when they are worried about something and feel that they cannot talk about it with you. This may result in enormous stress for the pupil which can impact on their education, health and behaviour. While we recognise that parents and carers will naturally be disappointed if their child does not choose to talk with you about what is troubling them, we feel there could be even more distress if the pupil is unable to cope with the issue themselves. On this basis we have agreed the following:

#### **School staff (with the exception of the school nurse)**

Senior staff in the school will liaise with parents/carers as appropriate in cases where a staff member has reported an issue over which they cannot offer confidentiality.

Staff will support pupils to inform their parents/carers about issues that are troubling them as appropriate.

#### **School nurse**

School nurses are required to offer a confidential service within the professional Code of Practice for school nurses and other health service staff. The government has also signed up to international legislation and charters which entitle young people to access health services. However, health professionals like everyone else, must inform appropriate services if they become aware of a child protection/ safeguarding issue in discussions with a young person.

### **A statement for pupils concerning confidentiality**

Our staff will be supportive to pupils who approach them with concerns but will make it clear that they cannot offer confidentiality to the pupil on anything that involves an illegal activity or anything that is a potential child protection/ safeguarding issue where the pupil or others are likely to be at risk of significant harm.

We understand that there may be times when there are things which may be worrying you but you feel that you can't talk about them with your family. Teachers and other members of school staff will do all we can to help you but you need to know the following:

- If you really want to talk to someone confidentially, (without anyone else knowing what you have said), you can speak to the school staff or school nurse. We might also be able to help you find someone else outside of school if you think this is better for you.
- The teachers and other members of staff in the school will often be able to help you with many of the things that may be worrying you but they cannot promise to keep everything to themselves. If you tell them about some things like using drugs or stealing, they will have to speak to one of the senior teachers in the school who might then have to speak to your parents/carers or the police or Children's services.
- If the staff member feels that they have to tell someone else what you have talked about, they will normally tell you first and help you sort it out, perhaps helping you to speak to your parents/carers if you want this.
- Very rarely there are things which you talk about that can be very dangerous for you or for other young people e.g. someone trying to harm you. Even the staff or school nurse may have to tell someone else about what you have said, but they will normally tell you first and always help you to sort things out.

### **We can check that this is working by:**

- Talking to children and staff about how these issues are handled on a day-to-day basis
- Governor visits – is there an ethos of trust, respect and care observed?