

Long Furlong Primary School

Confidentiality Policy

Definition

The overall meaning of a confidential relationship is openness and agreement about what will happen to information disclosed between two, or more, people. It may not have to take the form of total secrecy. In practice there are few situations where absolute confidentiality can be offered. The boundaries of confidentiality should be made clear at the beginning of the conversation. This is as it applies to a Primary school of mixed-sex children between the ages of 3 and 11 years.

Aims

All members of staff and volunteers – including governors - working on behalf of the school are clear about the levels of confidentiality that they must offer to the school community and expect themselves.

Objectives

For everyone (staff, governors, pupils, parents and volunteers) to understand the varying levels of confidentiality which might be offered in different circumstances.

Links

This confidentiality policy is linked to the school's PSHE, Safeguarding Children, Drug Education, RE, Equal Opportunities, Sex and Relationships Education, Anti-Bullying policies and Data Protection policies.

Guidelines

Confidentiality and Pupils

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 staff members or volunteers in school 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:

- 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 Safeguarding issue where the pupil, or others, are likely to be at risk of significant harm, you are legally required to

inform the school's designated teacher, who may have to involve other agencies. (Please refer to the school's Safeguarding Children policy for further advice in this respect.)

- School staff can only offer confidentiality to pupils on issues that do not involve significant illegal activities. If the conversation begins to move to this kind of issue, the pupil must be warned the confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.
- In all cases where you feel that you have to break confidentiality with the pupil, you must inform the pupil and reassure them that their best interests will be maintained.
- In talking with pupils, you need encourage them to talk to their parents/carers about the issue that may be troubling him/her, and support in doing this should be offered where appropriate.
- When appropriate, pupils may be made aware of external services that they may consult, e.g. Childline, anti-bullying resources.

Confidentiality and Staff/Governors/Volunteers

All staff, governors and volunteers can expect that their personal situations and health issues will remain confidential unless it impinges on their terms of contract or endangers pupils or other members of staff.

Confidentiality 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 parent first unless a pupil is considered to be at immediate risk and/or there is an overriding safeguarding concern. If a parent/carer shares information about a child with an adult in school, it will not be discussed with the child without the express permission of the parent/carer.

Confidentiality and Visitors in School

A "visitor" in this context is any person from another agency (e.g. social services, health visitor, etc) who works in a school either in a paid or a voluntary capacity. In some instances the visitor may become privy to personal information regarding pupils, parents and staff that is of a confidential nature. All professionals will have their own guidelines and/or code of conduct regarding confidentiality.

Lines of Responsibility and Referral

If a member of the school community receives information where they believe a safeguarding issue may be involved, they should refer the case to the designated teacher. If the information is received from a pupil, the person must make it clear to the pupil that they will be passing on the information, but that the information will remain confidential between them and the designated teacher. If confidentiality has to be broken, the child must be informed first.

Dates for Review

This policy will be reviewed on a 3-yearly basis.