

Chelmsford County High School Confidentiality Policy

Aims

- To provide clear guidance about the boundaries of the legal and professional roles and responsibilities of all staff with regard to confidentiality.
- To ensure consistent good practice throughout the school which both pupils and parents understand.
- To encourage young people to talk to a trusted adult if they are having problems
- To give staff confidence to deal with sensitive issues
- To ensure that all in the school community are aware that no one can offer absolute confidentiality.
- To ensure that when the school is asked to keep information confidential such as information relating to under age sexual activity, drugs use, abuse or other dangerous or illegal activities, clear and explicit guidelines are in place and understood by all stakeholders.

Roles and Responsibilities

- Students, parents/carers and staff need to know the boundaries of confidentiality in order to feel safe and comfortable in discussing personal issues and concerns, including sex and relationships.
- Everyone in the school community needs to know the limits of confidentiality that can be offered by individuals within the school community so they can make informed decisions about the most appropriate person to talk to about any health, sex and relationship or other personal issue they want to discuss.
- The safety, well being and protection of the child are the paramount considerations in all decisions staff at this school make about confidentiality.
- Appropriate sharing of information between school staff is an essential element in ensuring our students' well being and safety.

Staff

- Staff should explain any necessary ground rules and use distancing techniques where sensitive issues are to be addressed in lessons.
- Staff should make it clear to the student that there may be some matters which are revealed to them that they cannot keep confidential (eg matters which put them or others at risk.)

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- Staff should not put pressure on students to disclose personal information and should discourage fellow students from applying any such pressure.
- If a member of staff receives information that leads them to believe that there is a child protection issue, they should follow the Child Protection Procedure following a discussion with the young person involved this is available on the School website.
- Where a student discloses confidential information at an inappropriate place or time, the member of staff should talk again individually to the student before the end of the school day. The member of staff may be able to discuss the issue with an appropriate colleague, [such as the student's Year leader or the Deputy Head - Pastoral](#) to decide on suitable action, without giving the name of the student. [If there are any safeguarding concerns, the member of staff should follow the advice from their safeguarding training and pass this information on as soon as is reasonably possible to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.](#)
- Any personal information should be regarded as private and not passed on indiscriminately (for example in the staff room or within the hearing of a group of staff or students).
- Staff will 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 will discuss an individual child's behaviour in the presence of another child in school or enter into detailed discussion about a child's behaviour with other children or their parents.
- 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.
- 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 a 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. [The Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for making referrals to another agency. The Child Protection Policy is also relevant and should be adhered to in conjunction with this policy, particularly Section 5: Procedures Section 7: Professional confidentiality and Section 9: Interagency working.](#)
- As employees all staff are entitled to expect confidential information held about them at the School will be managed in accordance with the [General Data Protection Regulation of 2018](#).
- 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 [or other relevant members of the Senior Leadership Team](#).

Deleted: Data Protection Act.

Students

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- Students should be reassured that their best interests will be maintained but that staff cannot offer unconditional confidentiality.
- Students should be reassured that, if confidentiality has to be broken, they will be informed first and then supported appropriately. They will be informed of sources of confidential help, for example the school counsellor.
- Students should be encouraged to talk to their parents or carers and be given support to do so wherever possible.

Health professionals

- Health professionals such as school nurses can give confidential medical advice to pupils provided they are competent to do so and follow the Fraser Guidelines (guidelines for doctors and other health professionals on giving medical advice to under 16s).
- School nurses are skilled in discussing issues and possible actions with young people and always have in mind the need to encourage students to discuss issues with their parents or carers. However, the needs of the student are paramount and the school nurse will not insist that a student's parents or carers are informed about any advice or treatment they give.
- 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.

Governors

- Governors, in particular those sitting on committees, will not divulge details about individuals (be they staff, families or individual children) to any person outside the meeting.
- At full governing body meetings, matters such as [student](#) exclusion, personnel issues and personal details of any member of the school community will be dealt with in the head teacher's report as confidential. This is not for the knowledge of persons outside the governing body meeting. Minutes of these matters are recorded separately and not published. Certain confidential information will be presented on pink paper and collected in at the end of the meeting if appropriate.

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Others

- Parents in school working as volunteers will 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.
- When volunteers, such as parents, work experience students and mentors 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 such as those with special educational needs. The provision and work with these children is for the teacher to discuss with the relevant parents or carers.

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- Volunteers, ITT students, mentors and supply teachers are asked to read this policy 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 her friends know how to look out for them in School. In such cases permission will be sought from the child and their parents/carers.

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Dissemination and implementation:

This policy has been drawn up in consultation with the Healthy Schools Co-ordinator, the complete Senior Leadership Team, the PSHE Co-ordinator and the Governor Staff and Student Matters Committee. It will be distributed to all teaching and non-teaching staff.

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All new staff, including volunteers, will receive basic training on the school's Child Protection Policy and procedures from the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

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