



Cornerstone CofE VA Primary School

Building our Community with Love & Hope



Confidentiality Policy

Reviewed By	Resources Committee	Authorised By	Resources Committee
Last Review	27.1.15	Next Review	Spring 2018
Review Cycle	Tri-annually	Signature (Governor)	

Aim:

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

Objectives:

For everyone to understand the varying levels of confidentiality which might be offered in different circumstances.

Why the policy was developed:

Providing 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. The school needs to be clear about the boundaries of their legal and professional roles and responsibilities, e.g.: child protection procedures.

This policy was developed to meet the requirements of the following documents:

- Sex and relationship education guidance, DfES, July 2000, ref: 0116/2000
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused: Children's Services guidance, DfES/DH, May 2003, ref: 31553
- National Healthy School Status – a guide for schools, DH, September 2005, REF: 270390
- Information Sharing and confidentiality policy – Children's Trust, May 2010.

Where and to whom the policy applies:

The policy should refer to:

- all teaching and non-teaching staff employed by the school
- all visiting staff and volunteers working with young people on the school site during the school day.

Staff support and training:

Whole staff training and induction procedures for new staff

Policy:

All school staff members: confidentiality and pupils:

NB: This applies to both teaching and non-teaching members of staff, visiting staff and outside agencies.

- 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 policy.
- All practitioners who have access to information have a duty to preserve confidence. Each individual's right to confidentiality must be respected. All personal information must be treated with care and kept securely.
- 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 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 Liaison Officer who may have to involve other agencies.** If information is disclosed that the child is at serious risk of harm, then confidentiality cannot be preserved **as safeguarding procedures must take precedence.** Practitioners should always record the reasons for their decisions in the young person's case file.
- Information sharing is essential to enable early intervention, and vital to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. (Please refer to the school's Child Protection policy for further advice on this aspect.) It is important that each member of staff deals with this sensitively and explains to the pupil openly and honestly 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, and that their best interests will be maintained. If confidentiality is to be broken it should be done so in line with their organisation's procedures.
- 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. ELSA or school counsellor.
- The school will never publish photographs of pupils with the names of individual children. The school will also ensure that parental permission is obtained for their child to appear in a photograph on the school website, Facebook or Twitter accounts
- Staff are not permitted to discuss specific school related issues on social networking sites.
- It is advised that if staff choose to network, on social networking sites, with parents of children within school or ex-pupils who are over 13 years old they should ensure that any viewable content on their personal profile does not tarnish the professional reputation of themselves or the school.
- Any inappropriate use of email by staff or pupils should be reported to the Head Teacher immediately.

Parents and families: confidentiality and information about parents 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 child protection concern.

Staff and governors: confidentiality and information about staff and governors

All staff can normally expect that their personal situations and health issues 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 (rationale is everyone feels confident that someone will listen and offer help and support when needed or requested. Adults will be sensitive to others' needs for privacy and respect.)
- Child Protection
- Health and Safety
- Personal Social and Health Education policy (PSHE)
- Sex Education (Teachers may reassure a pupil that their best interests will be maintained, but at no time will a member of staff offer a child advice or confidentiality. If teachers have concerns about specific children, they will consult the Head Teacher).
- Acceptable Usage on IT

Linked Internal support and External agencies:

- ELSA

Dissemination:

This policy should be widely publicised to all in the school community:

- through staff training
- through the Shared Resources folder on the system
- through Circle Time and class Collective Worship
- by emphasising links to the school's anti-bullying policy and child protection policy and procedures
- through Induction of new staff