

CORSHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL

Pupil Confidentiality Policy



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Policy Ratified by the LGC: April 2024

Next Review Date: April 2025

Corsham Primary School

Pupil Confidentiality Policy

Introduction

At Corsham Primary we believe that:

- The safety, well-being and protection of our pupils is paramount and is considered in all decisions staff make about a child. The appropriate sharing of information between school staff is an essential element in ensuring our pupils' well-being and safety.
- It is an essential part of the ethos of our school that trust is established to enable Pupils, Staff and Parents/Carers to seek help both within and outside the school in order to minimise the number of situations when personal information is shared to ensure pupils and staff are supported and safe.
- Pupils, Parents/Carers and Staff need to know the boundaries of confidentiality in order to feel safe and comfortable discussing personal issues and concerns, including sex and relationships.
- The school's attitude to confidentiality is easily understood and everyone should be able to trust the boundaries of confidentiality operating within the school.
- Issues concerning personal information including sex and relationships and other personal matters can arise at any time.
- Everyone in the school community needs to know that no-one can offer absolute confidentiality.
- 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 personal issue they wish to discuss.

Policy Development

This policy was agreed by the Leadership Team and the Local Governing Body, and has been widely disseminated to staff, pupils, parents/carers and partner agencies. The policy is given to all new staff joining the school.

Definition of Confidentiality

- *Confidentiality is defined as ‘something which is spoken or given in private, entrusted with another’s secret affairs’.*

The confider is asking for the content of the conversation to be kept secret. Anyone offering absolute confidentiality to someone else would be offering to keep the content of his or her conversation completely secret and discuss it with no-one.

In practice, there are few circumstances where absolute confidentiality is offered in our school. We strive to strike a balance between ensuring the safety, wellbeing and protection of our pupils and staff, ensuring there is an ethos of trust where pupils and staff can ask for help when they need it and ensuring that when it is essential to share personal information, safeguarding/child protection issues and good practice are followed. This means that in most cases what is offered is ‘limited confidentiality’. Disclosure of the content of a conversation could be discussed with professional colleagues, but the confider would not be identified except in certain circumstances.

Staff should make it clear that there are limits to confidentiality at the beginning of the conversation. These limits relate to ensuring children’s safety and wellbeing. The pupil will be informed when a confidence has to be broken for this reason and be involved in the information sharing. Different levels of confidentiality are appropriate for different circumstances:

1. *In the classroom in the course of a lesson*

Given by a member of teaching staff, teaching assistant, local authority employee or an outside visitor including health professionals. Careful thought needs to be given to the content of the lesson setting the climate and establishing ground rules to ensure confidential disclosures are not made openly. Pupils should be given this opportunity if requested. When a health professional is contributing to a school’s health education programme in a classroom setting, they are working with the same boundaries of confidentiality as a teacher.

2. *One-to-one disclosures to members of school staff*

It is essential all members of staff know the limits of the confidentiality they can offer to both pupils and parents and carers and any required actions and sources of further support or help available both for the pupil or parent/carer, within the school and from other agencies where appropriate. All staff at Corsham Primary School encourage pupils to discuss different issues with their parents/carers and vice versa. However, the needs of all pupils are paramount and the school staff will not automatically share information about pupils with their parents/carers unless it is considered to be in a child’s best interests.

3. *Disclosures to a school nurse or health professional operating a confidential service in the school*

Health professionals such as school nurses can give confidential medical advice to pupils provided they are competent to do so and follow guidelines for doctors and other health professionals on giving medical advice to under 16's. School nurses are skilled in discussing issues and possible actions with young people and always have in mind the need to encourage pupils to discuss issues with their parents/carers.

The Legal Position for School Staff

All school staff never promise confidentiality. Pupils do not have the right to expect they will not be reported to their parents or carers and may not, in the absence of an explicit promise, assume that information conveyed outside that context is private. No member of Corsham Primary School can or should give such a promise.

The safety, well-being and protection of the child is the paramount consideration in all decisions staff at this school make about confidentiality.

School staff are NOT obliged to break confidentiality except where safeguarding/child protection is, or may be an issue. However, at Corsham Primary School we believe it is important that staff are able to share their concerns about pupils' safety and wellbeing.

Professional judgement is required by any member of CPS staff, local authority staff or health professional in considering whether they should indicate to a child that the child could make a disclosure in confidence and whether such a confidence could then be maintained, having heard the information. In exercising their professional judgement, CPS staff, local authority staff or health professionals must consider the best interests of the child, including the need to both ensure trust to provide safeguards for our children and possible child protection and safeguarding issues.

All Corsham Primary staff receive training in child protection and safeguarding as part of their induction to this school and are expected to follow the school's child protection policy and procedures.

Visitors and Non-Teaching Staff

At Corsham Primary School, we expect all non-teaching staff to report any disclosures by pupils or parents/carers of a concerning nature to the DSL or DDSL as soon as possible after the disclosure and in an appropriate setting, so others cannot over hear. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will decide what, if any, further action needs to be taken.

Volunteers in School

At Corsham Primary School, we value the help of parents, pupils and others. Everything that volunteers see and hear, particularly in relation to children's welfare and learning, must be held in confidence and not shared with others outside of the school. If volunteers have questions regarding anything they see or hear in school or they have concerns about the well-being of a child they should speak to the class teacher or Headteacher.

Parents and Carers

Corsham Primary School believes that it is essential to work in partnership with parents and carers and we endeavour to keep them abreast of their child's progress at school and any concerns about their behaviour. However, we also need to maintain a balance so that our pupils can share any concerns and ask for help when they need it. Any information shared will always be respectful of the privacy of the children and their parents and carers. Where a pupil does discuss a difficult personal issue with staff they will be encouraged to also discuss the matter with their parents or carers and may be supported to do so where it is appropriate.

Complex Cases

Where there are areas of doubt about the sharing of information, Corsham Primary will consult with the local area Wiltshire Safeguarding Children Board/Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH team).

For detailed information about when confidentiality should be broken and the procedures for doing this please see the school Child Protection Policy.

The school's Designated Safeguarding Leads are:

Lindsay Fry (Headteacher, Pound Pill)

Kerry Parker (Headteacher, Broadwood)

Support for Staff

Staff may have support needs themselves in dealing with some of the personal issues of pupils. Staff are free to ask for help if they are unsure about making a decision. Staff should discuss any concerns with their Team Leader or Headteacher.

Record Keeping

- Every child and member of staff has an electronic personal record held on Integris. This is password protected and is accessed by the Headteachers and trained members of the Admin Team. The Deputy Headteachers also have access to the children's electronic personal records.
- Pupil paper records are kept in locked files in classes
- Paper copies of confidential personnel records and details are kept locked in the School Office
- Each child in Years FS-6 has learning shared on Seesaw. Any information shared is protected by the Seesaw software and has a password to access it.
- CPS staff record confidential information on pupil behaviour incidents and communication with parents/carers on Safeguard Software. This information is accessed by a member of the SLT daily.
- All paper records regarding pupil concerns, child protection and SEN filing is kept in a double locked cupboard in the Headteacher's office.
- Transferring of confidential information electronically is password protected. When emailing sensitive information staff will use initials only
- When transferring confidential information on paper around the school/between sites it is contained in an envelope with the recipient's name
- Staff ensure that any discussions of a confidential nature take place privately
- Staff are instructed to never leave confidential information out on desks where other adults or children can see
- Staff ensure that when computers are not in use they are securely locked using ctrl, alt, delete
- When printing or photocopying confidential material staff will ensure papers are picked up immediately.

- Paper work and electronic information is destroyed/shredded following GDPR guidance.

Links with other policies

This policy has links with the following school policies:

- Child Protection/Safeguarding
- Data protection and GDPR
- Induction
- PSHEE
- Sex and Relationships
- Anti-Bullying
- Behaviour
- Single Equality Scheme

Dissemination and implementation

This policy has been distributed to all teaching and non-teaching staff as part of whole school training on Child Protection/Safeguarding. A copy of the policy can always be found on the school web-site and Staff Notice Boards and the Safeguarding Folder located in the main school offices. All new staff receive a copy of the policy in their induction packs when they join the school.

Breaches of confidentiality

Any breaches of confidentiality will be managed within staff disciplinary procedures and policies.

Staff are reminded that the Whistle Blowing Policy is designed to support personnel who feel that any member of staff is behaving inappropriately, or are in breach of this policy.

Equal Opportunities

When writing and reviewing this policy staff have completed an Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment in order to ensure it complies with equality obligations outlined in anti-discrimination legislation. We believe the policy positively reflects the aims and ambitions identified in Corsham Primary's Single Equality Scheme.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually and amended as necessary.

UNICEF

Corsham Primary is a UNICEF *Rights Respecting School* which promotes the Convention of the Rights of the Child. This policy underpins Article 29 of the convention:

Aims of Education: Education shall aim at developing the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to the fullest extent. Education shall prepare the child for an active adult life in a free society and shall foster in the child respect for his or her parents, for their cultural identity, language and values and for the cultural background and values of others.