

William Gilpin CE Primary School Confidentiality Policy

Aim

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

Objective

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

Development of the Policy

This policy has been developed with reference to the documents itemised in the HCC document 'Guidance in writing a Confidentiality Policy' June 2006.

It links to the following School Policies:

- Child Protection
- Health & Safety
- Behaviour & Discipline
- PSHE

The policy has been developed by the Headteacher, Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO), Staff and Governors.

Involvement in the Policy

This policy applies to:

- All teaching and non-teaching staff employed at the school;
- All visiting staff working with children on the school site in the school day;
- Staff from external agencies on the school site;
- Governors.

Training will be through:

- Staff meetings;
- INSET;
- Child Protection INSET/courses;
- Induction of new staff.

Reference to the Policy

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

- The school prospectus;
- Job application details;
- The school website;
- School policy files.

The Policy

Statement for all Staff Members Concerning Confidentiality and Pupils.

We recognise that there may be times when there are things which may be worrying a child about which they feel unable to talk to their parents or carers. This can affect their health and their ability to learn. Some pupils may feel that they can turn to teachers or other staff members for support and we want to be as helpful as we can whilst recognising that there may be potential difficulties in being supportive.

Staff should adhere to the following:

When talking to a child, it is important to maintain professional boundaries. Whilst being supportive where you can, distancing techniques should be used when appropriate and pupils encouraged or supported to access confidential services offered by the school or support agencies e.g. ELSA, SENCo, school nurse, EWO.

You must be clear that you cannot offer unconditional confidentiality if they begin to discuss something where confidentiality may become an issue.

Pupils should be warned that if there is a Child Protection issue where the pupil, or other, are likely to be at risk of significant harm, you are under a duty to inform the school's Child Protection Officer, who may have to involve other agencies. (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 they will only tell those who need to know in order to help).

School staff can only offer confidentiality to pupils that do not involve significant illegal activities. 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, such as risk of harm, for not informing them) and reassure them that their best interests will be maintained.

In talking to pupils, you need to encourage them to talk to parents/carers about the issue that may be troubling them. Support in doing this should be offered where appropriate.

Pupils should be made aware of any specialist confidential services available to them (see above). NB. School counsellors, the school nurse or outside agencies cannot offer confidentiality over a child protection/safeguarding issue or other significant risk.

Statement for Parents and Carers Concerning Confidentiality and Pupils.

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 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 child that can impact on their education, health and behaviour. Whilst we recognise that parents and carers will naturally feel 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 child is unable to cope with the issue themselves.

On this basis we have agreed the following:

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

Senior staff 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.

If necessary, we will make pupils aware of any confidential services available in school. The school nurse, like other health service staff, will offer a confidential service within their professional code of practice.

Statement about the Confidential Support Available in school.

The school's designated Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) can be made available to any pupil for a confidential discussion. Staff may also refer pupils to the school's SENCo who will then arrange appropriate support from the school's linked agencies. The ELSA and the SENCO cannot offer confidentiality over a child protection issue but because sometimes it is necessary for a child to be able to talk about troubling issues in order to help the pupil through their situation, we do not require these staff to pass on information about illegal activities unless there is a child protection issue or other significant risk. Any child protection issue must be passed at once to the school's Child Protection Liaison Officer (CPLO).

Statement for all Pupils about Confidentiality.

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 to members of your family. Teachers and other member of school staff will do all we can to help you but you need to know these things:

Members of staff will often be able to help you but they cannot promise to keep everything to themselves. If you tell them about some things (e.g. an illegal activity) they will have to speak to an appropriate member of staff, who might then have to speak to your parents/carers or the social services or the police.

If the member of staff feels that they have to tell someone else what you have talked about, they will always tell you first and try to help you and how you are feeling, perhaps helping you to talk to your parents/carers, if that is what you want.

If something you have talked about is dangerous to you or other children, the member of staff may have to tell someone else about what you have said, but they will tell you first and always help you to sort things out.

Statement Concerning Staff Confidentiality.

All staff can normally expect that their personal situations and health will remain confidential unless:

- It impinges on their terms of contract;
- It 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 that of the wider public interest justifies disclosure.

Statement Concerning Governors Confidentiality.

All governors can normally expect that their personal information will remain confidential unless:

- It makes their position untenable in the school community;
- It endangers pupils or members of staff;
- There is a legal obligation to disclose information.

This policy will be reviewed in the Summer Term 2011.

Signed:

Date: