



Coppice Junior School

Confidentiality Policy

Committee with oversight for this policy:

Full Board

Policy ratified and adopted by Full Governing Body:

October 2022

Review frequency:

Annually

Policy due for renewal:

October 2023

Headteacher

Mark Knowles

Date

Chair of Governors

Jo Bromige

Date

Intention

'The governing body of a Coppice Junior School shall, in discharging their functions relating to the conduct of the school, promote the well being of pupils at the school.' (Children Act, 2004)

This school recognises its legal duty under section 175 Education Act 2002 to work with other agencies in safeguarding children and protecting them from "significant harm".

Aims

The aim of this policy is to ensure that positive relationships exist across our school.

Rationale

- The safety, well-being and protection of our pupils are the paramount considerations in all decisions staff make about confidentiality. The appropriate sharing of information between school staff is an essential element in ensuring our pupils' well-being and safety.
- Pupils, parents/carers and staff need to know the boundaries of confidentiality in order to feel safe and comfortable discussing personal issues and concerns.
- 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.

Guidelines

In practise there are few circumstances where absolute confidentiality can be offered in a school. We strive to strike a balance between ensuring the safety, well-being 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, child protection procedures and good practise are followed.

We have an open door policy and we encourage pupils, parents and families to talk to us and we aim to make our school a safe place for them to do so. We are proud of the positive relationships that exist across our school.

We actively promote a range of trusted adults for pupils to talk to, including promoting with pupils the importance of talking to and seeking support from their parents and families.

We aim to empower pupils and their families to exercise control over the choices that will affect their life e.g. through determining for themselves how they would like personal / private information (which is not deemed to be a Child Protection issue) to be shared and with whom.

Parents are entitled to a confidential discussion with a member of staff regarding concerns about their child. In any meeting it is also clear for parents that information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis, but that where there are potential issues around significant harm, this is always shared.

Pupils are encouraged to talk to their parents and families about any issues they have. Posters in school promote this.

School will promote trust in a range of confidential services, erode barriers to seeking help and encourage pupils and families to access the support that they need when they need it.

Sharing information unnecessarily is an erosion of trust. The school is mindful that it is placed in a position of trust by all stakeholders and there is a general expectation that a professional approach will be used in all matters of confidentiality.

Staff will not discuss details of individual cases arising in meetings to any person without a direct professional connection to and interest in the welfare and education of the individual concerned.

Staff will not enter into detailed discussions about a particular child's behaviour with other children or their parents/carers.

At full Governing Body meetings matters such as pupil exclusion, personnel issues and personal details of any member of the school community will be dealt with in the confidential item. This is not for the knowledge of persons outside the Governing body meeting. Matters in the confidential items are minuted separately and minutes are not published.

Governors, in particular those sitting on Discipline Committees, will not divulge details about individuals (be they staff, families or individual children) to any person outside of the meeting.

Parents in school working as volunteers in the office, classrooms, or as part of the Social or Friends' group will not report cases of poor behaviour or pupil discipline to other parents. This allows the teachers to deal with such matters in line with school policy and on occasions to allow children to put the matter right without the direct involvement of their parents.

When volunteers such as parents and friends of the school are working in classes they do not discuss matters outside of the classroom.

Staff performance management will be carried out privately. Targets for individuals, named lesson observation sheets and other performance data will be securely stored in the Head teacher's office. A copy will also be held by the person to whom the information pertains.

Matters of Child Protection are made known to staff on a need to know basis. 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.

Visitors and volunteers are referred to the Solihull's yellow poster that is on show in the entrance hall and around school. 'Confidentiality for Visitors' here, as clearly explained in section 3. Visitors are also given a safeguarding guide.

Pupils are encouraged to talk about worries and concerns, posters in school explain this. See Appendix 1

NB School staff can never promise unconditional confidentiality

We use Solihull's Yellow Poster for Visitors; this underpins our whole school community's approach to confidentiality.

The expectation for all members of the school community is that they will:

- ☺ **Help us in providing supportive opportunities for pupils to talk;**
- ☺ **Only talk in a professional manner about pupils and their families;**
- ☺ **Never promise unconditional confidentiality (keeping a secret) to a pupil;**
- ☺ **Where other professionals work to their own codes of practice, confidentiality must be clearly explained to pupils from the outset;**
- ☺ **Where worries exist about a pupil's safety and where there is a need to discuss this with another adult, initial discussions would maintain anonymity. Where this is no longer possible, the pupil would always be informed of the need to share and be appropriately supported;**
- ☺ **Potential safeguarding issues i.e. risk of significant harm, are always referred to the designated member of staff for Child Protection.**

Considerations (* Indicates statutory policies)

This policy has been created with consideration and consistency across other policies including:

- Anti bullying policy*
- Child protection*
- Safeguarding
- Complaints*
- Equality *
- Inclusion*
- SEN*
- Sex and relationships education policy*?

Confidentiality will need to be considered and explored when developing ground rules as part of the process for:

- establishing a safe climate for learning;
- circle time;
- sex and relationships education;
- handling sensitive and controversial issues;
- Peer mediation training
- religious education;
- citizenship.

Different age groups will express what confidentiality means to them in a variety of ways. This will need to be considered carefully when developing a shared understanding of what confidentiality means to all in your school community.

Monitoring and evaluation

Records will be kept of circumstances where this policy has not been adhered to and recorded in line with the capability and whistleblowing policies.

Reviews of this policy are carried out annually.

Need someone to talk to?

There are lots of people in school who can help.

Tell someone at home

Tell Mrs Simpson

Talk to a friend.

Speak to Mrs Turpin

Speak to your teacher.

Ask a lunchtime supervisor for advice

Phone the NSPCC

Talking about a problem or a worry is the first step to fixing it.

NSPCC 0800 1111

