

## Whaley Bridge Primary School

# Confidentiality and Handling Sensitive Issues for Pupils & Parents Policy

### Why do we need a Confidentiality Policy?

There are situations in which confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. The types of occasions when confidentiality cannot be guaranteed & the resulting procedures need to be made clear to all staff, students/trainees, pupils & parents/carers.

### How is Confidentiality communicated in practice?

It is this school's policy that staff cannot offer or guarantee absolute confidentiality and will act in accordance with the best interests of the pupil at all times. This applies to parents as well as pupils.

Any pupil or parent with concerns will always be given the opportunity to speak to a member of staff or an appropriate outside agency.

Ground rules for PSHE will be in place. When lessons concerning Sex and Relationship Education or Drug Education and Substance Abuse are taught, ground rules for discussion and behaviour will also be confirmed and referred to again in subsequent lessons.

Staff will establish that it is inappropriate to disclose personal information. Ground rules, which ensure pupils agree not to pressure one another to answer questions about their own experiences also apply to staff. Pupils will be reassured that the reason for this is in their best interests and these will be maintained in all events.

It will be made clear that although most information can be kept confidential, some may need to be passed on in the pupil's best interest. However a pupil will be informed when this has to happen and what will be done with the information and who has access to it. Pupils will be encouraged to talk to their parents or carers and be given support to do so.

There may be rare occasions when disclosures from pupils may take place at an inappropriate time or place. If this happens, the member of staff will talk again individually to the pupil before the end of the school day. The member of staff will follow the schools confidentiality policy if they feel it would be necessary to discuss the issue raised.

## **Incident Management (see Child Protection)**

If confidentiality has to be broken, the pupil will be told first and supported. If there is any possibility of abuse the schools child protection procedure will be followed and the pupil will be reassured about the situation and made to feel comfortable and confident about what will happen next.

In such cases the procedure for dealing with the situation is as follows:

The member of staff should approach the designated member of staff, Elaine Stafford or Headteacher. In the absence of these, the Deputy Head will be informed and carry out the duties of the designated staff member.

The designated member of staff will make appropriate arrangements. They will decide, in discussion with the Social Services whether it is appropriate for the parents or carers to be informed at this stage.

The designated member of staff should address the child protection issues and ensure help is provided for the pupil and family.

Information about pupils will not be passed on indiscriminately at any time. Other members of staff will only be informed on a need to know basis, where the issue identified affects the daily life of the pupil in school.

Staff will not be obliged to pass on information about pupils to their parents. Although where a member of staff believes the pupil to be at moral or physical risk they will ensure the pupil is aware of the risks and encourage them to seek support from their parents in advance of the school formally intervening.

In the case of illegal activity, action will be taken in the best interests of the pupil and the pupil should always be informed of what action is to take place.

## **Working with & referrals to Outside Agencies**

Outside agencies, such as the school community nurse, providing support for the school's PSHE programme will be aware of, and abide by, the school's policy about disclosures and confidentiality. Where outside agencies are involved in one-to-one situations either as a referral or through an extended school service the outside agency staff will work within their own professional confidentiality codes of practice apart from where there are child protection issues where they will explicitly agree to and defer to the school policy.

## **Parent Helpers & other Classroom Support Volunteers**

Parent helpers & other classroom support volunteers will be made aware of & abide by, the school's policy about disclosures and confidentiality.

If they have any concerns they must refer them to a member of staff. Any disclosure must be passed onto a member of staff.

It is essential that they understand why anything seen & heard in school that any reasonable person would and should consider confidential information, or indeed information that has been explicitly communicated as confidential, **must** remain confidential. The governors reserve the right to withdraw the invitation to help if they fail to comply with this policy.

### **Personnel**

The member of staff responsible for Child Protection needs to monitor practice & ensure all staff receive appropriate training.

The Child Protection co-ordinator is Elaine Stafford.

### **Policy Development & Review**

This policy document was produced in consultation with the entire school community, including pupils, parents, school staff, Governors, LEA representatives, community dietitian, school community nurse and local Healthy School Standards representative.

This document is freely available to the entire school community. It has also been made available in the school newsletter, web-site and prospectus.

It will be reviewed on an annual basis.

**Review Date: 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2007**

**Signed**..... **Date**.....  
Chair of Governors TLC Committee

### **Policy Links**

Child Protection/Safeguarding  
Sex & Relationships  
Drugs Education  
Drugs Incident Management  
PSHE  
Anti Bullying Policy  
External Contributors