

Student & School Staff Confidentiality Policy Guidance

Policy Guidance

What is presented below is guidance based upon the principles of good practice set out in the Sex and Relationship Education Guidance - DfEE 2000, Barnsley Safeguarding Children Board Child Protection Procedures, 2007, and Confidentiality in Schools, Sheila White, Brook Advisory Centres publication 2001.

What Are Schools Required To Do?

- The Safeguarding Children Procedures have to be followed by all who work with young people.
- It is essential that senior staff and child protection co-ordinators familiarise themselves with the new procedures (2007).
- All staff should have personal information on procedures to follow in the case of child protection issues.

Good Practice

It is strongly recommended that schools have policy guidance and procedures for student and teacher confidentiality. There is no statutory requirement to have such guidance and procedures, however, the DfEE Sex and Relationships Education Guidance (2000) states;

“Schools should have a clear, explicit confidentiality policy which should be advertised in the school community.”

Enhanced national healthy schools status (2005) requires schools to have an up to date and clear confidentiality policy. The policy will also provide evidence of the school working towards the Be Healthy, Stay Safe outcomes of Every Child Matters (2004).

The Policy Background & Context

A brief description of the type of school and the nature of the community it serves. This may include the age range, cultural, ethnic and social mix of the school and its community. The school may set out here its commitment to the general health and well-being of its students.

The Aims of the Policy

It may be appropriate here to link the aims of this policy to the aims of the school and the broad aims of the NC (2000). The following could be adapted to fit the needs of the school:

- The policy supports procedures for safeguarding children set out in the Barnsley Safeguarding Children Board Child Protection Procedures (2007).
- The policy aims to ensure that anyone working in the school is aware of the boundaries of their legal and professional responsibilities towards students.
- The policy establishes a common understanding of what is meant by confidentiality and its limits throughout the school.
- The policy establishes a common understanding on issues of confidentiality between parents/guardians and the school.
- The policy guides the work of other professionals working in the school.
- Common understanding on issues of confidentiality (many of which may have little to do with abusive or illegal situations) should remove uncertainty and inconsistency.

How will the aims be achieved?

Statement explaining how this policy relates to other policies, e.g.:

- * Positive Behaviour Policy
- * Home School Links Policy
- * Sex and Relationships Education Policy
- * Drug Related Incidents Policy & Procedures
- * Safeguarding Children Child Protection Policy

The Needs of Pupils

- The policy is tailored to the age, emotional maturity, cultural and social needs of the students.
- The policy is supported by the formal and informal learning that takes place in the school. Learning opportunities are in place to develop the skills and confidence of students to identify situations where they may need support or advice and possible ways to access it.
- Students have a right to privacy and mutual respect.
- Statement to explain how students are made aware of the policy and procedures. How does the school involve students in developing the policy and procedures?

School Staff

- All staff working in the school are made aware of the policy and procedures. Does the school involve all staff in discussion about the policy?
- All staff working in the school have personal information on Barnsley Safeguarding Children Board Child Protection Procedures.
- Name of the school child protection co-ordinator.
- Any concerns about child protection issues must be reported to the child protection co-ordinator.
- Statement explaining that staff should never give an absolute guarantee of confidentiality to a student.
- All staff should have a copy of the policy.

There are no statutory requirements for schools around issues of confidentiality and as such no statutory requirement to always inform parents/guardians. Clear guidance will have to be given here about what the school expects staff to do in given situations. It is suggested that you keep directions about reporting to parents as flexible as possible

- Who has access to information about a student - who needs to know in the school?
- How will the school ensure that the appropriate people have information?
- Statement explaining that staff should ask other colleagues for support and advice. Staff should not be left in a situation of having a difficult issue to deal with alone.
- Staff should feel confident that they will be supported by the Headteacher & Governing Body.

Continuous Professional Development and Training

- The school recognises and is committed to the professional development of its staff.
- Staff will need to be given some time to look at issues of confidentiality. Give examples of professional development opportunities.

The Use of External Support

- A brief statement explaining how the school makes outside professionals aware of the school policy and procedures.

- A brief statement recognising the fact some outside professionals working in school may have their own codes of confidentiality.
- A brief statement regarding the arrangements for individual students accessing health related appointments off site, following discussion with a health professional

The School and Parents

Brief points explaining how the school aims to work in partnership with parents. Explain how parents are made aware of the contents of the policy. How are parents involved in developing and reviewing the policy?

Responsibility for the Students & School Staff Confidentiality Policy

The Headteacher takes overall responsibility for the policy and its implementation in school. This responsibility includes liaison with the Governing Body, parents and the LEA.

The Governing Body agreed the policy on

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How Was The Policy Put Together?

Give very brief details of how the policy was put together and who was included?

Date for review

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The Process for Developing a School Confidentiality Policy

Identify a representative group to develop the policy

You could use your healthy schools task group.
EG, Pupils, parent, Governor, school staff, school nurse

Send this guidance and either primary or secondary school confidentiality advice to members of the group

Identify other relevant school policies

See guidance above

Identify relevant issues to the school and its population

EG, Faith school, ethnic mix, age range, health issues such as teenage pregnancy rates, incidence of substance misuse, crime rates

Draft the policy

Consult with pupils, parent, staff and the school community.

Utilise the representative group to consult on the draft. Involve agencies who work in school, EG, School nurse, Connexions, youth service

Revise draft following feedback from consultation

Send to Governors for approval

Disseminate policy, brief staff

Monitor and review