

Confidentiality Policy

Introduction

It is our intention to respect the privacy of governors, staff, pupils and their parents.

At Holbrook Primary School we believe that:

- 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.
- The number of situations where personal information is shared is kept to a minimum.
- Information is stored securely.
- Pupils, parents and staff need to know the boundaries of confidentiality in order to feel safe and comfortable in discussing personal issues and concerns.
- The school's attitude to confidentiality is open and easily understood and everyone should be able to trust the boundaries of confidentiality operating within the school.
- Everyone in the school community needs to know that no one can offer absolute confidentiality.

Aims

To give clear guidance to all members of the school about confidentiality

To encourage young people to talk to a trusted adult if they are having problems

To give staff confidence to deal with sensitive issues

General Guidelines

For all pupils, staff members and governors to enjoy privacy from gossip, for the school to be fair to all its community, and for children and adults to have disciplinary matters dealt with according to the school's own procedures and out of the eye of the wider school community, it is important that:

- Staff do not discuss details of individual cases arising in staff meetings to any person without direct professional connection to and interest in the welfare and education of the individual concerned.
- No member of staff discusses an individual child's behaviour or learning in the presence of another child in school.

- Staff do not enter into detailed discussion about a child's behaviour or learning with other children or their parents.
- Governors, do 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, or as part of the PTA, do not report cases of poor behaviour or pupil discipline to other parents in the school. This allows teachers to deal with such matters in line with school policy.
- 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 within the Headteacher's Report. This is not for the knowledge of persons outside the Governing body meeting.
- 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.
- When volunteers, such as parents and friends of the school are working in classes, they do not discuss educational matters outside the classroom.

Sensitive Issues:

Pupils should know that staff cannot offer unconditional confidentiality

- Pupils should be reassured that, if confidentiality has to be broken, they will be informed first and then supported appropriately
- Pupils should be informed of sources of confidential help including appropriate help lines
- Any personal information should be regarded as private and not passed on indiscriminately (for example in the staff room)
- If a member of staff receives information that leads them to believe that there is a child protection issue, they should refer the case directly to the designated child protection teacher following a discussion with the young person involved
- Pupils should be encouraged to talk to their parents and be given support to do so

In lessons:

- Ground rules should be used where sensitive issues are to be addressed
- Staff should not put pressure on pupils to disclose personal information and should discourage fellow pupils from applying any such pressure

Health Professionals

Health professionals are bound by their professional codes of conduct to maintain confidentiality when working in a one to one situation. When working in a classroom, they are bound by relevant school policies. In line with best practice guidance, like other school staff, they will seek to protect privacy and

prevent inappropriate personal disclosures in a classroom setting, by negotiating ground rules.

Requests for confidential information

The Data Protection Act 1998, requires that personal information is “obtained and processed fairly and lawfully; only disclosed in appropriate circumstances; is accurate, relevant, not held longer than necessary and is kept securely.”

There may be occasions when a request for confidential information regarding a particular pupil is made, from an individual, an agency or an organisation. The usual course of action would be to seek advice from the Headteacher. However, there are specific circumstances where exceptions may have to be made:

1. Where the student has agreed to the sharing of specific, relevant information with a particular individual, agency or organisation.
2. Where the request is part of Child Protection procedures.
3. Where information is required as part of legal proceedings.

Where information is released, this should usually be in the form of a written report, limited to relevant information only. Where possible the report should be shared with the pupil, except where doing so may compromise the safety and welfare of the pupil.

Conclusion

This policy will be reviewed in line with the governing body’s schedule of policy review and will be amended in light of experience. This policy should be considered alongside other relevant policy statements, such as Sex and Relationship Education and Child Protection.