



Harbour View Federation
CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

Rationale and statement on the importance of confidentiality

At Twins Sails Infant School & Nursery and Hamworthy Park Junior School we believe in the following points

- The safety, well-being and protection of our pupils are 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' overall well-being and safety.
- It is an essential part of the ethos of our schools that trust is established to enable pupils, staff, and parents/carers to seek help both within and outside the schools; we will minimise the number of situations where personal information is shared to ensure pupils and staff are supported and kept safe.
- Pupils, parents/carers and staff need to know the boundaries of confidentiality in order to feel safe and comfortable when discussing personal issues and concerns.
- The schools' attitude to confidentiality is open and easily understood. Everyone should be able to trust the boundaries of confidentiality that operate within the schools.
- Issues concerning personal information can arise at any time.
- Everyone in the schools need 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 regarding any personal issue they want to discuss.
- Confidentiality applies to both verbal and written information.

Definition of Confidentiality

The dictionary definition of confidential is "something which is spoken or given in confidence; private, entrusted with another's secret affairs"

When speaking confidentially to someone the confider has the belief that the confidant will not discuss the content of the conversation with another. The confider is asking for the content of the conversation to be kept secret. Anyone offering absolute confidentiality to someone else would be offering to keep the content of their conversation completely secret and discuss it with no one.

In practice there are few situations where absolute confidentiality is offered in Twin Sails Infant School & Nursery and Hamworthy Park Junior School. We have tried 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, whilst ensuring that when it is essential to share personal information, safeguarding children and good practice are followed.

This means that in most cases what is on offer is limited confidentiality. Disclosure of the content of a conversation could be discussed with professional colleagues but the confider would not be identified except in certain circumstances.

The general rule is that staff should, at the beginning of a conversation make clear that there are limits to confidentiality. These limits relate to ensuring children's safety and well-being.

The pupil will be informed that a confidence cannot be offered because adults may need to share information if it concerns the child's safety etc. We will encourage the child to share information for themselves whenever this is possible.

Levels of confidentiality as appropriate for different circumstances.

1. **In the classroom (in the course of a lesson) given by a member of teaching staff or an outside visitor, including health professionals**

Careful thought needs to be given to the content of the lesson, setting the climate and establishing ground rules to ensure confidential disclosures are not made. It should be made clear to pupils that this is not the time or place to disclose confidential, personal information. When a health professional is contributing to a school personal, social, health and citizenship education programme within a classroom setting, s/he is working with the same boundaries of confidentiality as a teacher.

2. **On a one to one basis**

It is essential that all members of staff know the limits of the confidentiality they can offer to both pupils and parents/carers (see note below). They must be able to identify any required actions and sources of further support or help available, both for the pupil or parent/carer within the schools and from other agencies, where appropriate.

All staff at the schools encourage pupils to discuss difficult issues with their parents or carers, and vice versa. However, the needs of the pupil are paramount and school staff will not automatically share information about the pupil with the child's parents/carers unless it is considered not to be in their best interest.

Note: when concerns for a child or young person come to the attention of staff, for example through observation of behaviour or injuries or disclosure, however insignificant this might appear to be, the member of staff should discuss this with the Designated teacher for safeguarding children (please refer to back page for who are the Designated Safeguarding Team) as soon as is practically possible. If the Designated Safeguarding Team are out of school then the information should be shared with Andrea Williams, Head of School at Twin Sails Infant School & Nursery and Anita Brown, Pastoral Care Manager at Hamworthy Park Junior School or another member of the Designated Safeguarding Team. More serious concerns must be reported immediately to ensure that any intervention necessary to protect the child is accessed as early as possible (please see the schools' Safeguarding Children Policy).

3. **Disclosures to a counsellor, school nurse or health professional operating a confidential service in the school.**

Health professionals, such as school nurses, can give confidential medical advice to pupils provided they are competent to do so and follow the Fraser Guidelines (guidelines for doctors and other health professionals on giving medical advice to children under 16 years of age). School nurses are skilled in discussing issues and possible actions with young people and always have in mind the need to encourage pupils to discuss issues with their parents or carers. However, the needs of the pupil are paramount and the school nurse will not insist that a pupil's parents or carers are informed about any advice or treatment they give.

Confidentiality and the legal position for school staff

School staff (including non-teaching and voluntary staff) should not promise confidentiality. Pupils do not have the right to expect that incidents will not be reported to their parents/carers and may not, in the absence of an explicit promise, assume that information conveyed outside that context is private. No member of this school's staff can or should give such a promise. It is the safety, well-being and protection of the child which is paramount during the consideration of all decisions which staff will make about confidentiality.

Staff at school are NOT obliged to break confidentiality except where safeguarding a child is or may be an issue. However, we believe that it is important for staff to be able to share their concerns about pupils with colleagues in a professional and supportive manner, on a need to know basis. This ensures that staff receive the guidance and support they need and the pupils' safety and well-being is maintained. In the first instance, staff should discuss such concerns with their Senior Leadership Team link person.

Pastoral Care Worker (PCW), Emotional Well-being Assistants and Health Professionals

In both schools we offer pupils the support of school Pastoral Care Workers, ELSAs and the school nursing service operate a drop-in service for pupils. These services are confidential between each of the professionals and the individual pupil. Some information may be shared by the PCW and ELSA workers with school staff, as discussed with the particular child, particularly where it impacts on the progress in learning. Some information will not be shared, except as defined in the schools' Safeguarding Children policy.

Visitors and non-teaching staff

At Twin Sails Infant School & Nursery and Hamworthy Park Junior School we expect all non-teaching staff, including volunteers (except those identified in the paragraph above), to report any disclosures by pupils or parents/carers of a concerning, personal nature to the Designated Teacher for Safeguarding Children as soon as possible after the disclosure and in an appropriate setting so others cannot overhear. This is to ensure the safety, protection and well-being of all our pupils and staff. The Designated Teacher will decide what, if any, further action needs to be taken, both to ensure the pupil gets the help and support they need and that the member of staff also gets the support and supervision they may need.

Parents/carers

Twin Sails Infant School & Nursery and Hamworthy Park Junior School believe that it is essential to work in partnership with parents/carers and we endeavour to keep them informed about their child's progress at school, including any concerns about this or their behaviour. However, we also need to maintain a balance so that our pupils can share any concerns and ask for help when they need it. Where a pupil does discuss a difficult personal matter with staff at school, they will be encouraged to also discuss the matter with their parent/carer themselves.

Confidentiality and written information regarding sensitive or personal issues

There are many instances where there is written information regarding sensitive or personal issues about a child and their family. Whilst we are bound by the Data Protection Act, it is vital that all due care and diligence is taken with information about children and their families. Any written information must be kept within a locked filing cabinet with only named people having access as appropriate. Any electronic information must be sent by a secure method to an approved recipient – the parent will have given permission for this information to be shared as a part of the Local Authority procedure on sharing information.

Complex cases

Where there are areas of doubt about the sharing of information, consultation should be sought with the local Borough of Poole Children's Safeguarding Service Child Protection Co-ordinator.

This policy is intended to be used in conjunction with the school's policies for:

GDPR Policy
PSHE (Personal, Social & Health Education)
Sex and Relationships
Safeguarding Children
Positive Behaviour

When confidentiality should be broken and procedures for doing this

See the Safeguarding Children Policy for details.

Where this does not apply and you are still concerned and unsure as to whether or not the information should be passed on or other action taken, you should speak to the Head of School.

If the Executive Headteacher or Heads of School issue instructions that s/he should be kept informed, all staff must comply. There is always a good reason for this, which you may not know about.

The principles we follow at Twin Sails Infant School & Nursery and Hamworthy Park Junior School are that, in all cases, we will follow the protocol below.

- Ensure the time and place are appropriate. When they are not we reassure the child that we understand they need to discuss something very important and that it warrants time, space and privacy.
- See the child (normally and always in cases of neglect or abuse) before the end of the school day. More serious concerns must be reported immediately to ensure that any intervention necessary to protect the child is activated as early as possible.
- Tell the child we cannot guarantee confidentiality if we think they will hurt themselves, hurt someone else or they tell us that someone is hurting them or others.
- Do not interrogate the child or ask leading questions
- Do not put children in the position of having to repeat distressing matters to several people.
- Inform the pupil first before any confidential information is shared, with the reasons for this.
- Whenever possible encourage the pupil to confide in his/her own parents/carers, except in situations where other agencies would wish to interview the parent/carer first, or this might increase risk to the child.

Support for staff

Staff may have support needs themselves in dealing with some of the personal issues of our pupils. At Twin Sails Infant School & Nursery and Hamworthy Park Junior School we prefer staff to ask for help rather than possibly making a poor decision because they do not have all the facts or the necessary training. There are agencies to which we can refer staff for additional support. We all work together as part of a team to support our pupils. Asking for help is a way the teaching staff should discuss any concerns about pupils with their Senior Leadership Team link. Any unresolved issues should be discussed with the Designated Teacher for Safeguarding and/or the Head of School.

Onward referral

The Executive Headteacher (Mr D Hewitt), the Heads of School (Mrs A Williams and Mr J Lumber), Deputy Heads of School (Mrs S Coulter and Mrs K Amabile) and the Pastoral Care Teams (Mrs H Henstridge & Mrs A Dyson and Mrs A Brown and Mrs L Miller) are responsible for referring pupils to outside agencies. Staff should not make referrals themselves unless they believe a child protection referral to the police or Social Services Duty Team is necessary where the Designated Teacher does not agree and the Senior Leadership Team are not available to discuss the matter.

Dissemination and implementation

This policy was distributed to all teaching, non-teaching staff and governors, including volunteers for specific activities, school council members and parents as part of a whole school consultation.

All new staff, including volunteers, receive a copy of the policy, together with basic training on the school's Safeguarding Children Policy and procedures from the Designated Teacher for Safeguarding Children or from the Pastoral Care Teams. Safeguarding training by and accredited trainer is carried out biannually in school.

Review

This policy is reviewed every year or whenever deemed necessary by the Executive Headteacher and Governors in the light of events and changes in the law.

Current Designated Teacher for Safeguarding Children

Twin Sails Infant School & Nursery

Sara Coulter – Deputy Head of School

Deputies:

Andrea Williams

Katie Walker

Damian Hewitt

Anna Dyson

Helen Henstridge

Hamworthy Park Junior School

James Lumber - Head of School

Deputies:

Kerry Amabile – Deputy Head of School

Anita Brown – Pastoral Care Manager