

WESTOVER GREEN COMMUNITY SCHOOL

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

All staff, external agencies / visitors working with pupils as part of the curriculum or the school's pastoral support procedures, pupils and parents are all made aware of this policy. It is of particular importance to staff involved with the personal, social and health education of the children, including sex and relationships education and drug education.

This policy sets out guidance for all staff about pupils information that they can regard as confidential and that which they cannot. Any external agencies / visitors to the school who are teaching or working with groups of pupils must abide by this policy.

Procedures for confidentiality within the school

1. Any information that a pupil discloses to a member of staff or visitor should not be passed on to other colleagues indiscriminately but should only be passed on on a 'need to know basis'.
2. Members of staff should not offer pupils, or parents, blanket or unconditional confidentiality.
3. Any information concerning a pupil's behaviour or conduct that is likely to cause harm to themselves or to others should be passed on to the headteacher and / or other agencies.
4. The confidentiality policy will be made available to all parents via the school website, and all key stage 2 children will be made aware of this policy as part of their PSHCE programme.
5. When embarking on a lesson, or a programme of lessons, that may well touch on sensitive and / or controversial issues, teachers will clarify with pupils the issue of confidentiality. An unrealistic confidentiality agreement will not be offered to pupils. The classroom is a public place and confidentiality cannot be offered. However, teachers should establish ground rules with their teaching groups in order to avoid inappropriate questions and answers in class or in group sessions which may lead to personal disclosures. Teachers will ensure that pupils understand these rules when working with other staff and visitors.
6. Teachers are aware that effective sex and relationship education, which brings an understanding of what is and is not acceptable in a relationship, can lead to disclosure of a child protection issue. If a personal disclosure is made, the teacher will explain that such information can, and should, be kept confidential within the classroom but, that some information may need to be passed on to colleagues, and may well be in the interests of the pupil to do so.
7. Where a pupil discloses information about physical or sexual abuse, neglect or emotional abuse, the member of staff or visitor must follow the Local Safeguarding Children Board's (LSCB) procedures and pass this on to the designated teacher.

8. LSCB guidelines should be followed in respect of cases concerning child protection. If someone believes that a child may be suffering, or may be at risk of suffering significant harm, then he / she should always refer his / her concerns to the designated teacher. The school will seek, in general, to discuss any concerns with the family and where possible, seek their agreement to making referrals to Social Services. However, this should only be done where such discussion and agreement – seeking will not place a child at increased risk of significant harm.
9. If such disclosed information is to be passed on the pupil should be told of this, know who the information will be passed on to and why and who else in the school, or externally will have access to the information. The pupil should also be reassured that they will be offered appropriate, on-going support.
10. In the case of illegal activity of a non-child protection nature, any action that the school takes will always be in the best interests of the pupil. This does not always mean that the police will be informed. In such circumstances the authority's legal department can be consulted, as can the school's police liaison officer.
11. Some external agencies may be working in school offering specific advice and support directly to individual pupils. If this is the case their professional code of confidentiality must be shared with the school and any deviation from the school's policy must be agreed formally with the school and shared with the pupils concerned. Confidentiality must not be permitted where there are child protection concerns. Parents must also be informed that such agencies are working in school, that they will be providing pupils with an additional service that is not part of the school's curriculum and that they will not be bound by the school's confidentiality policy but by their own professional codes of confidentiality.
12. Members of staff are not obliged to pass on information about pupils to their parents. However, it is only in the most exceptional circumstances that a school would be in the position of having to handle information without parental knowledge. The reasons for not informing the parents should be recorded in writing. If a teacher believes a pupil to be in moral or physical risk, or in breach of the law, they must ensure that the pupil is aware of the risks and encourage him / her to tell her / his parents and seek support from them. The Headteacher or a senior member of staff should always be informed before parents are contacted.
13. Pupils should also be informed about where they might seek confidential help e.g the school nurse, Childline etc.

Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy will be monitored on a regular basis. The Headteacher is responsible for its implementation and the monitoring of its effectiveness.