



Hiltingbury Infant School: Confidentiality Policy

Name of School:	Hiltingbury Infant School
Name of Responsible Headteacher:	Mrs Phillipa Longman
Date agreed	Summer 2023
Date of review	Summer 2026

Rationale

The following policy is based on the principles that:

- Each person has a right to be treated with respect, dignity and integrity.
- Each person has the right to personal growth and development as stated within the United Nations Convention on Human Rights and the Rights of the Child.
- There is a professional ethical responsibility within the school establishment to respect an individual's right to control personal information and access to it.

The following policies are linked and supported by this Confidentiality Policy:

- Child Protection
- Health and Safety
- RHE

Purpose

- To ensure that all members of staff (including those from external agencies) are clear about the levels of confidentiality that they can offer to the school community and expect themselves.
- To ensure that the school and staff within it are clear about the boundaries of their legal and professional roles and responsibilities, and where these are linked to Child Protection procedures.
- To ensure that parents and helpers are clear about their position and the boundaries regarding confidentiality.

Where and to whom the policy applies:

- Teaching and non-teaching staff
- Visitors working with pupils e.g. Volunteer helpers, work experience students
- Staff from external agencies delivering services on the school site e.g. School nurse, police liaison, story tellers.

Staff support and training;

- Inset training in Child Protection

- Training by Hampshire Children's Services e.g. Sex and Relationship Policy documentation, Information sharing and assessment
- Induction of new staff
- Service Level agreements with visiting agencies
- Healthy Schools network meetings and Governor support training e.g. confidentiality.

Guidelines

Children

We recognise that there are occasions when pupils are worried about something and feel they cannot talk about it to their parents/carer. This can result in stress for the individual that impacts on their education and health. Some pupils may feel they can turn to teachers or other support staff members for help. Staff should adhere to these guidelines:

- When talking to pupils, it is important to be aware of maintaining professional boundaries.
- In talking to pupils, encourage them to talk to their parent/carer about issues that are concerning them and support in doing this should be offered where appropriate.
- Make it clear to the pupil that you cannot offer confidentiality when a pupil begins to talk about something where confidentiality may become an issue.
- Pupils should be warned that **if there is a child protection issue, you are under an obligation to inform the School's Child Protection Officer who may have to involve other agencies.** **Refer to school child protection procedures.*
- It is important that this is done sensitively, and the pupil understands that the staff member is only informing the people who need to know so they can help the pupil.
- School staff cannot offer confidentiality to pupils if illegal activities are involved e.g., knowledge of illegal drug selling, arson, etc. If the conversation moves to this kind of issue, the pupil must be warned that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.
- In all cases where staff feel they need to break confidentiality with the pupil, they must inform the pupil and assure them that the pupils' best interests will be maintained.

Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSAs): Confidentiality and pupils

ELSAs may be approached by pupils for a confidential discussion. Sometimes teaching staff may refer pupils to ELSAs for discussion. They **cannot offer confidentiality over a child protection issue or an illegal activity** but because sometimes it is necessary for a pupil to talk about a deep-seated issues in order to help the pupil through their situation, they need only to inform senior staff if it is in the child's best interests to do so or if there is a significant risk to the child. Information will be shared with appropriate people such as the pupil's teacher on a need-to-know basis.

External Agencies / Work Experience students/ Helpers in school; Confidentiality and pupils

Adults working with /helping the children;

- Are not allowed to promise to keep secrets
- Must tell the child's teacher / HT if a pupil says anything about abuse or anything else that might make them worry about the pupil's safety.
- If a pupil is about to talk about this sort of information, the adult must tell them that they need to accompany them to a teacher so they can help them.

- If an adult has a concern about the content of a discussion with a pupil, they are encouraged to discuss it with the class teacher or HT – it will only go further if it is in the child’s best interests to do so.

Parents, families /or Carers: Confidentiality

The school recognises that there may sometimes be family issues which might affect a pupil and which a family will only disclose to us if they can be sure the information will be treated confidentially. We will respect the wishes of the family and where it is felt necessary to share information given to us, this will be discussed with the parent first unless a child is considered to be at immediate risk and /or there is an overriding child protection concern.

Adults

Staff and Governors: Personal Confidentiality

All staff and Governors can normally expect that their personal situations and health will remain confidential unless:

- It impinges on their terms of contract
- Endangers pupils or other staff members
- There is a legal obligation to disclose such information
- It is necessary for legal proceedings
- Despite the duty of confidence, the staff member’s interest or the wider public interest justifies disclosure.

APPENDIX 1. SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT FOR USE WITH OUTSIDE AGENCIES WORKING WITH PUPILS

As a visitor I understand that the school staff are responsible for the pupils whilst they are in school:

- *any materials to be given out should be shared/discussed with school staff*
- *the school has important policies, such as the Confidentiality policy and Equal Opportunities Policy that visitors should be aware of and read*

Organisation.....

Named Contact.....

I have had /am willing to undergo a police check.

Reason for Visit.....

Year Group..... Class/Classes.....No. of pupils.....

The teacher will be responsible for the behaviour of the pupils.

Aim of sessions

-
-
-

Expected Learning Outcomes:

-
-
-

Before the visit the school will:

Before the session the visitor will:

Equipment required on the day.....

Date of sessions:.....

Signed –school.....Date

Signed-organisation..... Date

APPENDIX 2

Statement for Parents/Carers concerned with confidentiality and pupils.

There is increased national concern for the emotional health and well-being of children growing up in today's society. We recognise that parent/carers want to do all they can to support their child but, even in the most supportive of relationships where there is excellent communication between parents/carer and child, there can be occasions when children are worried about something and do not share it with you but instead express their concerns to someone within school. Sometimes children's concerns put them under stress which can impact on their education, health and behaviour. Whilst we recognise that parents and carers will naturally be disappointed if their child chooses to talk to someone else about what is troubling them, we feel it is important that pupils are not left to cope with an issue themselves. On this basis we have agreed the following:

School staff

Our staff will be supportive to pupils who approach them with concerns but make it clear that they can not keep confidentiality (what a pupil says as a shared secret) on any issue where the child might need child protection, be at risk from harm or be an innocent party to something illegal.

Staff will support pupils to share with their parent/carer issues that are concerning them, as appropriate.

Senior Staff will liaise with parents/carers in cases where a staff member feels that seeking additional support for the pupil, in the child's best interests, may require them to break confidentiality with the pupil.

Guidance for pupils concerning confidentiality.

We understand that there may be times when there are things which might worry you.

Mummy, Daddy or someone else in your family might be able to help you but, if not, teachers and other people in school will do their best to help you if you don't know who else to talk to.

- Teachers or other people in school cannot promise to keep everything you tell them to themselves. If you tell them about something serious like someone hurting you, or stealing, they will have to speak to the head teacher in school who might then have to speak to your parents/carer or someone else who can help you.
- If the person you told your worries to feels they need to talk to someone else about the things you have told them, they will tell you first and help you to sort it out, perhaps helping you to talk to your mummy/daddy/carer or someone else in your family if you want to.