

HARBOURSIDE LEARNING *Partnership*

Confidentiality Policy

Committee:	Achievement & Standards
Policy Ratified:	28 th November 2017
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Additional School Procedure	
Committee:	N/A
Procedure Adopted:	N/A
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CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

1. Aims

- To protect the child at all times and to give all staff involved clear, unambiguous guidance as to their legal and professional roles and;
- To ensure good practice throughout the school which is understood by pupils, parents/carers and staff.

2. Rationale

2.1 Harbourside Learning Partnership puts the child at the heart of the learning process and provides a safe and secure learning environment, addressing issues which may arise about confidentiality. We are committed to developing creative and positive ways for the child's voice to be heard whilst recognising the responsibility to use, hold and safeguard information received.

2.2 Harbourside Learning Partnership is mindful that it is placed in a position of trust by all stakeholders and there is a general expectation that a professional approach will be used in all matters of confidentiality. This policy should be read in conjunction with our Data Protection Policy.

2.3 All members of staff, regular visitors and volunteers are required to sign a statement relating to confidentiality.

3. Definition of Confidentiality

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

3.2 When speaking confidentially to someone, the confider has the belief that the confidant will not discuss the content of the conversation with another. Anyone offering absolute confidentiality to someone else would be offering to keep the content of his or her conversation completely secret and discuss it with no one.

3.3 In practice there are few situations where absolute confidentiality is offered. We have 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 - and ensuring that when it is essential to share personal information, child protection procedures and good practice are followed.

3.4 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.

3.5 The general rule is that staff should make clear at the beginning of the conversation that there are limits to confidentiality. These limits relate to ensuring children's safety and well-being. The pupil will be informed when a confidence has to be broken for this reason and will be encouraged to do this for themselves whenever this is possible.

4. Objectives:

- i. To provide consistent messages in schools about handling information about children once it has been received.
- ii. To foster an ethos of trust within our schools.
- iii. To ensure that staff, parents and pupils are aware of schools' confidentiality policy and procedures.
- iv. To ensure that parents have a right of access to any records the school may hold on their child but not to any other child that they do not have parental responsibility for.
- v. To reassure pupils that their best interests will be maintained.
- vi. To encourage children to talk to their parents and carers.
- vii. To ensure that confidentiality is a whole school issue and that in lessons ground rules are set for the protection of all.
- viii. To ensure that there is equality of provision and access for all including rigorous monitoring of cultural, gender and special educational needs.
- ix. To ensure that if there are child protection issues then the correct procedure is followed.
- x. To understand that health professionals are bound by a different code of conduct.

5 Guidelines

- i. All information about individual children is confidential and is only shared with those staff that have a need to know.
- ii. All social services, medical and personal information about a child should be held in a safe and secure place which cannot be accessed by individuals other than school staff.
- iii. The schools continue to actively promote a positive ethos and respect for the individual:
 - a. Schools have appointed a designated senior lead for safeguarding and child protection who receives regular training.
 - b. There is clear guidance for the handling of child protection incidents. All staff have regular training on child protection issues.
 - c. There is clear guidance for procedures if a member of staff is accused of abuse.
 - d. Staff 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.

- e. Any intolerance about gender, faith, race, culture or sexuality is unacceptable and should follow the schools discipline policy.
 - f. Information collected for one purpose should not be used for another.
- iv. Parents/carers and children need to be aware that schools cannot guarantee total confidentiality and the school has a duty to report child protection issues.
 - v. Schools pride themselves on good communication with parents and carers and staff are always available to talk to both children and parents/carers about issues that are causing concern. Schools encourage children to talk to parents/carers about issues causing them concern and may in some cases support the children to talk to their parents. Schools would share with parents any child protection disclosure if the correct authorities advised this to be appropriate.
 - vi. All children have a right to the same level of confidentiality irrespective of gender, race, religion, medical concerns and special educational needs. A lot of data is generated in schools by these categories but individual children should not be able to be identified.
 - vii. Confidentiality is a whole school issue. Clear ground rules must be set for any classroom work such as circle time and other PHSCE session dealing with sensitive issues such as sex and relationship and drugs. Strategies are in place, and all children are aware of them, for dealing with sensitive information which may fall outside the boundaries of child protection procedures. Schools need to be proactive so children feel supported but information is not unnecessarily revealed in a public arena. Even when sensitive information appears to be widely known it should not be assumed by those immediately involved that it is appropriate to discuss or share this information further.
 - viii. Health professionals have their own code of conduct for dealing with confidentiality. Staff should be aware of children with medical needs but information should not be on general view to other parents/carers and children.
 - ix. Photographs of children should not be used without parents/carers permission especially in the press and internet. Schools give clear guidance to parents about the use of cameras and videos during public school events.
 - x. Information about children will be shared with parents but only about their child. Parents should not have access to any other child's books, marks and progress grades at any time.
 - xi. Parents should be aware that information about their child will be shared with the receiving school when they change school. All personal information about children including social services records should be regarded as confidential. Information regarding health reports such as speech therapy, medical reports, SEN reports, SEN minutes of meetings and social services minutes of meetings and reports will be circulated in envelopes and once read should be returned for secure filing.

- xii. Logs of administration of medication to children should be kept secure.
- xiii. Addresses and telephone numbers of parents and children will not be passed on except in exceptional circumstances or to a receiving school.
- xiv. Governors and Trustees need to be mindful that from time to time issues are discussed or brought to their attention about staff and children. All such papers should be marked as confidential. The original confidential papers will be retained securely but all copies should be destroyed after the meeting. Governors and Trustees must observe complete confidentiality when asked to do so by the Governing Body/Trust Board, especially in relation to matters concerning individual staff, pupils or parents. Although decisions reached at meetings are normally made public through the minutes or otherwise, the discussions on which decisions are based should be regarded as confidential. Governors and Trustees should exercise the highest degree of prudence when discussion of potentially contentious issues arises outside the Governing Body/Trust Board.
- xv. Volunteer helpers are expected to keep anything that they see or hear about pupils, families and staff whilst working in school confidential. Any breach of this would negate them being able to work in school.
- xvi. Staff laptops must be password protected

6 Conclusion

Harbourside Learning Partnership has a duty of care and responsibility towards pupils, parents/carers and staff. It also needs to work with a range of outside agencies and share information on a professional basis. The care and safety of the individual is the key issue behind this document.



Statement of Confidentiality

All members of staff, regular visitors and volunteers are required to sign the following statement relating to confidentiality:

I have read and understood the Confidentiality Policy and agree to adhere to this during my time at the school and after I have left.

I recognise that I am in a position whereby, at certain times, I may have access to information concerning individual stakeholders.

I agree to only discuss information on a 'need to know' basis, as defined in the policy.

I agree not to post or share information online through any means, including all areas of social media, eg Facebook, Twitter, which relates to any individual stakeholder or brings the School or Partnership into disrepute.

As a volunteer I understand that the school decides when and where I will be volunteering in school, that I am responsible to the teacher I am placed with and I should discuss with them any concerns or information that needs to be shared about stakeholders.

I agree to refer all requests for information by an outside agency or the media to the Headteacher.

Signed:

Date:

Name (please print):

Role in school: