



## WHOLE COLLEGE CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

This policy sits in conjunction with the college's policies on Child Protection, Sex and Relationships Education and Drug Education. It has been developed and implemented in consultation with the college community.

### Introduction

All schools are asked on occasion to keep information confidential. This can relate to a variety of issues including under age sexual activity, drugs use, abuse or other dangerous or illegal activities. It is important that the whole college follows the same clear and explicit policy. Students, parents and carers need to be made aware of this and how it works in practice.

### Aims

- To give clear guidance to all members of the college around 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.

### In lessons

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

### Personal disclosures

Disclosures from students may take place at an inappropriate place or time. If this happens, the member of staff should talk again individually to the student before the end of the college day. The member of staff may be able to discuss the issue with an appropriate colleague, to decide on suitable action, without giving the name of the student.

### Key Points:

- Students should be reassured that their best interests will be maintained.
- Students should know that staff cannot offer unconditional confidentiality.
- Students should be reassured that, if confidentiality has to be broken, they will be informed first and then supported appropriately.
- Students should be informed of sources of confidential help, for example, the college nurse, counsellor, GP or local young person's advice service.
- 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 to a designated teacher or child protection officer following a discussion with the young person involved.
- Students should be encouraged to talk to their parents or carers and be given support to do so whenever possible.

- Government guidance requires professionals to consult as much as possible with parents about their children when referring to another agency. In general, parents should be asked if they wish to be referred, UNLESS THERE IS REASON TO THINK THAT OBTAINING SUCH CONSENT MAY PUT THE YOUNG PERSON AT RISK. If your referral is about child abuse (or the risk of it) rather than 'children in need', it is good practice to consult Social Services BEFORE discussing the issue with parents, unless a parent has asked you to make the referral and is already aware of it.

### **Further Guidance**

For all students, staff members and governors to enjoy privacy from gossip, for the college to be fair to all its community, and for students and adults to have disciplinary matters dealt with according to the college's own procedures and out of the eye of the wider college 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 student's behaviour in the presence of another student in college;
- staff do not enter into detailed discussion about a student's behaviour with other students or their parents;
- governors, in particular those sitting on Disciplinary Committees, do not divulge details about individuals (be they staff, families or individual students) to any person outside the meeting;
- parents in college, working as volunteers or in any other capacity, do not report cases of poor behaviour or student discipline to other parents in the college; this allows teachers to deal with such matters in line with college policy.
- at full Governing Body meetings matters such as student exclusion, personnel issues and personal details of any member of the college community will be dealt as confidential items. These matters are not for the knowledge of persons outside the Governing Body meeting and will be minuted separately; the minutes will not be published.
- matters of Child Protection are made known to staff on a need to know basis;
- 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 college are working in classes, they do not discuss educational matters outside the classroom, for example the specific use of teaching assistant time for particular students or groups of students. Teaching assistants have different roles within a class, including the support of children with special educational needs. The provision and work with these children is for the teacher to discuss with the relevant parents or carers.
- volunteers, students and supply teachers are asked to read this policy before working in college.

### **Equal Opportunities**

Staff may wish to discuss an individual case with a class or group. For instance, it can support the inclusion of a student with Asperger's Syndrome or Autism if their peers are made aware of the condition and so have some idea of what to expect. Similarly a student with visual impairment can be supported if his/her friends know how to look out for them in the playground. In such cases permission will be sought from the child and his/her carers.

### **Health professionals and Agencies**

Health professionals and other external agencies 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 college policies. In line with best practice guidance, like other college staff, they will

seek to protect privacy and prevent inappropriate personal disclosures in a classroom setting, by negotiating ground rules and using distancing techniques.