



Confidentiality policy

Responsibilities

Status	Statutory
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Key school staff member & role	Kirby Woods – STLS Lead
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Version number	Date of version	Details of updates, changes or review
1.0	September 2024	Reviewed, updated and rebranded



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1. Purpose of this policy

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

2. Introduction

At Rowhill School we believe that the safety, wellbeing and protection of our pupils are the paramount considerations in all decisions made about confidentiality. The appropriate and legitimate sharing of information between school staff is an essential element in ensuring our pupils' wellbeing and safety.

Confidentiality is a whole school issue therefore it is important that all members of the school community follow the same policy.

It is an essential part of our ethos that trusting relationships are established between pupils and staff, and between staff and parents/carers, that enable the best and most appropriate support to be given to our pupils. Trusting relationships can only be established if staff, pupils and parents/carers are all clear about provisions and purpose of this Confidentiality policy and the clear boundaries that exist on the sharing of personal information.

It is particularly important that pupils, staff and parents/carers understand the boundaries of confidentiality in order that pupils feel safe and comfortable in discussing personal issues and concerns, including drugs and alcohol, health, sex, relationships and other personal matters with those who are caring for them at school.

All staff at the school receives basic training in child protection as part of their induction and are expected to follow the Schools' Child Protection policy and procedures.

Everyone in the school community needs to know that no-one can offer absolute confidentiality.

All staff, parents/carers, pupils, volunteers and visitors need to be aware that the school has a duty to report child protection issues.



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3. Sharing information with parents/carers

Rowhill School believes that it is essential to work in partnership with parents/carers. To that end the school endeavours to keep parents/carers abreast of their child's progress, including any concerns about their academic progress, well-being or behaviour. There will be occasions when information will not be discussed with parents/carers to safeguard the welfare and wellbeing of the pupil. Where a pupil does discuss a difficult personal matter with staff, they will be encouraged to also discuss the matter with their parents/carers. Pupils over the age of 18 have the right not to have personal information about their behaviour discussed with their parents/carers. However, when their behaviour jeopardises their place at the school in any way the consequences applied by the School will be shared with parents/carers.

4. The legal position for staff, visitors and volunteers

4.1 Sharing information

Confidentiality is an important principle that enables people to feel safe in sharing their concerns and to ask for help. However, the right to confidentiality is not absolute. Sharing relevant information with the right people at the right time is vital to good safeguarding practice. There is nothing in legislation which prevents the justifiable and lawful exchange of information for the protection of children or the prevention of a serious crime. The safety of the pupil takes precedence over the need to maintain appropriate confidentiality. A pupil's safety must not be compromised through the inappropriate sharing of information. You must have a clear and legitimate purpose for information sharing. It is ***not acceptable*** for staff, visitors and volunteers to do the following:

- Discuss issues of pupil confidentiality with colleagues, parents/carers, volunteers or visitors who have no legitimate concern or interest. If in any doubt you need to contact the DSL to discuss.
- Discuss issues of pupil confidentiality with other pupils who have no legitimate concern or interest.
- Discuss issues of pupil confidentiality in inappropriate social settings and circumstances.

Where a pupil's circumstances may be impacting on their progress and you wish to share this information to help them, consider what information you need to share. In general, people need to know how to help the pupil, not always necessarily what the cause is.



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4.2 Golden rules to sharing information

- The Data Protection Act 2018, GDPR and human rights law are not barriers to justified information sharing, but provide a framework to ensure that personal information about living individuals is shared appropriately.
- Be open and honest with the individual (and/or their family where appropriate) from the outset about why, what, how and with whom information will, or could be shared, and seek their agreement, unless it is unsafe or inappropriate to do so.
- Seek advice from the DSL if you are in any doubt about sharing the information concerned, without disclosing the identity of the individual where possible.
- Share with informed consent where appropriate and, where possible, respect the wishes of those who do not consent to share confidential information. You may still share information without consent if, in your judgement, there is good reason to do so, such as where safety or wellbeing may be at risk. You will need to base your judgement on the facts of the case.
- Keep a record of your decision and the reasons for it – whether not. If you decide to share, then record what you have shared, with whom and for what purpose.

See also: [Information Sharing - Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents/carers and carers May 2024](#)

5. Confidentiality processes and procedures

5.1 General processes and procedures

Rowhill School endeavours to ensure that:

- All information held in school is held to adhere to the School's Data Protection policy.
- All information on individual pupils is private and is shared with staff confidentially.
- All social services, medical and personal information about a pupil is held in a safe and secure place which cannot be accessed by individuals other than school staff.
- Pupils and parents/carers are welcomed into school to discuss issues causing concern.
- The school has two members of staff who are the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) **Geoff Bartrum and Cathy Webb** and several Deputy DSLs **Rick Jones, Sarah Griffey, Justin Hemsley, Keith Cooper, Daniel Owen-Taylor, Emily Nelson and Louise Channon**
- Child protection procedures are understood by staff, visitors and volunteers and training is undertaken on induction and/or at recommended intervals.



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- All staff are aware of some confidential matters in order to support individuals. Staff will respect the sensitivity of such cases and not divulge information to people unconnected professionally with the individual concerned.
- When volunteers and pupils are working in classes, they do not discuss educational matters including behaviour issues outside the classroom.
- Information about pupils is shared with parents/carers about their child. Parents/carers do not have access to any other pupil's books, marks and progress at any time. Information about a pupil will be shared with a receiving school when a pupil changes school.
- Governors do not divulge details about individuals to any person outside of the Governor meeting.
- At full governing body meetings matters such as pupil suspensions, exclusions, personnel issues and personal details of any member of the school community will be dealt with in the head teacher report. This is not for the knowledge of persons outside the meeting. Confidential minutes will be kept separately and are not published.
- Staff performance management/appraisal will be carried out privately. Targets for individuals, named lesson observation sheets and other performance data will be held by the Headteacher.
- Any confidential information which is communicated via email or letter, will be marked as CONFIDENTIAL and made clear who it is addressed to or has permission to view the contents.
- Any confidential information which needs to be shared temporarily, e.g. at a specific meeting, will be collected in afterwards by a designated member of staff and placed in the confidential waste bin immediately.
- 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.
- Photographs of pupils are not used without parents/carers' consent or pupils' consent, where appropriate.

5.2 In lessons

- Ground rules and distancing techniques are used where sensitive issues are being addressed. Strategies are in place and all pupils are aware of them for dealing with sensitive information which may fall outside the boundaries of child protection procedures. Staff are proactive so that pupils feel supported, but information is not unnecessarily revealed in a public arena.
- Staff, visitors and volunteers will not put pressure on pupils to disclose personal information and will discourage fellow pupils from applying such pressure.



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5.3 Personal disclosures

- If disclosures from pupils take place at an inappropriate place or time the member of staff will talk to the pupil concerned privately.
- The member of staff is encouraged to talk to a member of the safeguarding team for advice on suitable actions.
- For further information regarding practicalities related to disclosures, please see the School's Child Protection policy.

5.4 Disclosures to the school nurse, therapeutic or welfare professional operating a confidential service in the school.

School nurses and welfare staff 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/carers. However, the needs of the pupil are paramount and the staff will not insist that a pupil's parents/carers are informed about any advice or treatment they give.

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 under 16s).

All health professionals must follow their professional codes of practice and the law. This means that they must make every effort to protect confidentiality. It also means that no identifiable information about a patient is passed to anyone or any agency without the express permission of that patient, except when this is essential for providing care or necessary to protect somebody's health, safety or wellbeing.

5.5 Discussions including confidential and/or sensitive information

At times, it may be necessary for discussions to take place which include confidential and/or sensitive information. As a matter of course, all staff, visitors and volunteers are expected to ensure that:

- Where appropriate, remind those involved in the discussion that particular information is confidential and/or sensitive, signposting to the School's Confidentiality policy
- They respect the confidentiality of the information they hear



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- Only those who should be involved in the discussion are. If others are present who should not be there, a different location should be sought or others asked to vacate the space/room
- Discussions take place in a location where they cannot be overheard
- Doors/windows to offices/rooms/areas will be closed, to ensure privacy and avoid overhearing by others not seen, but within earshot
- They speak at an appropriate volume
- Phones are only placed on speaker phone at an appropriate volume

Posters which alert staff, visitors and volunteers to appropriate conduct regarding this matter are placed in and around the school to maintain raising awareness of this, see Appendix 1.

6. Equal opportunities

All pupils, staff, visitors and volunteers have the right to the same level of confidentiality irrespective of:

- age
- gender (including gender reassignment)
- sexual orientation
- race
- religion or belief
- pregnancy and maternity
- medical concerns
- marriage or civil partnership
- disability
- special educational needs

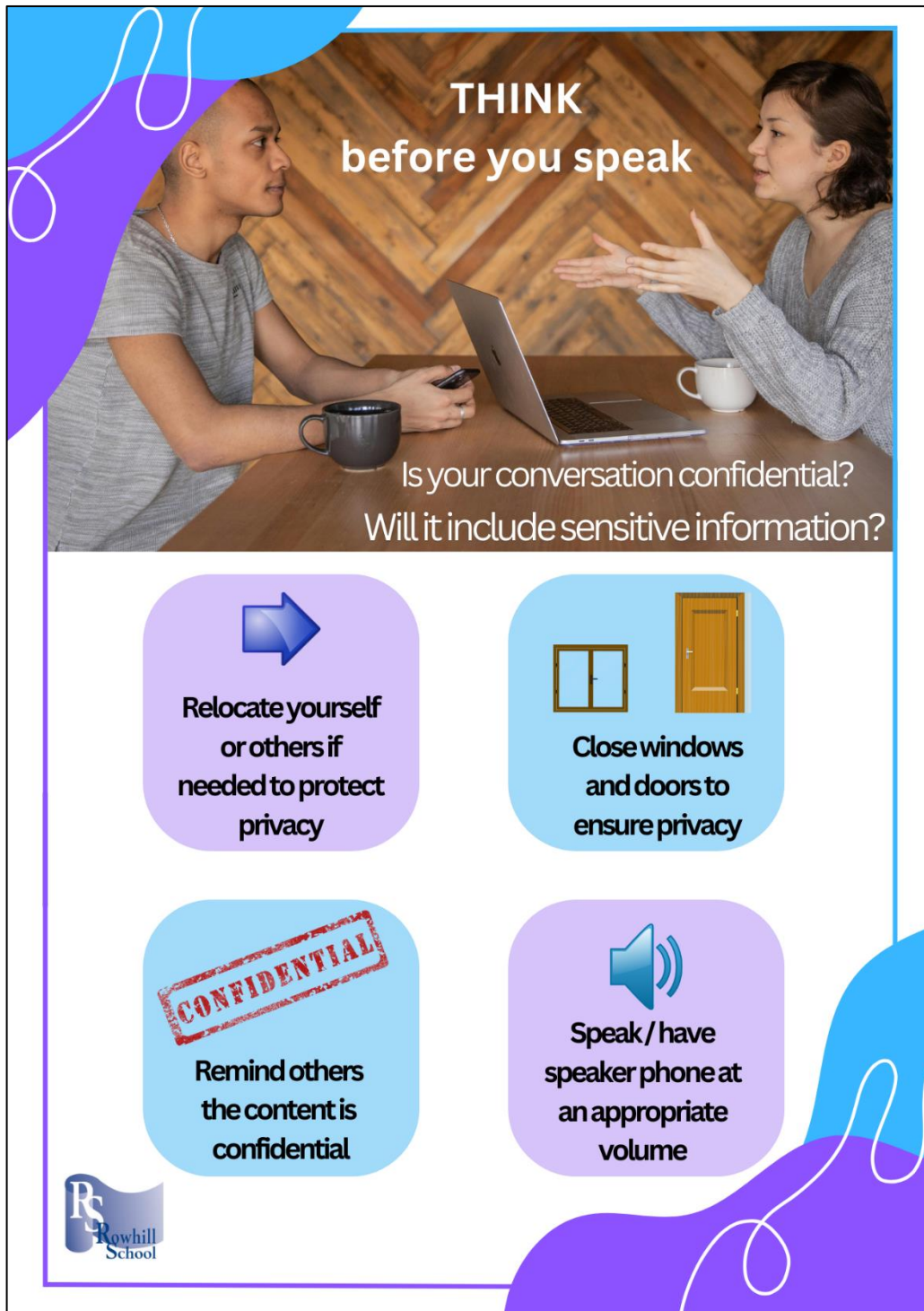
However, staff may need to discuss an individual case with others, e.g. for Health and Safety reasons. Permission to discuss an individual case or Risk Assessment with others who would not ordinarily be informed, should be sought from parents/carers or the staff member, volunteer or visitor first. For further information please see the School's Equality and diversity policy.

7. Related policies

Please refer also to the following related policies:





- Child Protection policy
- Data protection policy
- PSHE policy
- Drugs education policy
- Searching and confiscating policy
- Equality and diversity policy
- RSE policy
- Anti-bullying policy
- Whistleblowing policy
- Staff disciplinary policy
- Medicines policy


APPENDIX 1 – Confidentiality posters




THINK
before you speak

Is your conversation confidential?
Will it include sensitive information?


- 
Relocate yourself or others if needed to protect privacy
- 
Close windows and doors to ensure privacy
- 
Remind others the content is confidential
- 
Speak / have speaker phone at an appropriate volume






CHECK BEFORE YOU LEAVE OR OTHERS JOIN YOU

Lock your screen



Press the Windows sign and then the L key

Put away sensitive documents in a secure place



Maintain confidentiality and avoid a Data Protection breach

