

Finchale Primary is a learning centred school which aspires to enhance the learning experience of our whole school community. To this end we invite and involve a number of individuals in the life of our school eg. parents, students, governors, representatives from outside agencies. We believe that these individuals can maximise the effectiveness of both learning and teaching at Finchale through their ability to:

- provide expert knowledge and skills
- support on-going work
- strengthen the community dimension.

In addition, they can be used as:

- experts who can provide specialist information
- a resource for evidence and opinions
- an outside speaker to motivate and provide a different perspective.

We firmly believe that visitors to the classroom enhance the curriculum. To ensure that confidentiality within school can be maintained, this policy has been devised by a working party from the Curriculum and Standards Committee of the Governing Body and will be shared with relevant parties at an appropriate time (eg. with students as part of their induction procedure).

1. Aims and Objectives

The purpose of this policy is to:

- ensure clear advice and guidance on the rules of confidentiality in the school for pupils, staff, students, parents/carers, and visitors
- encourage young people to talk to a trusted adult if they are having problems
- give staff confidence to deal with sensitive issues
- put the child at the heart of the learning process and to provide a safe and secure learning environment
- seek to implement the underlying principles of our school ethos and to address the issues which may arise about confidentiality.

In relation to confidentiality within the school, our objectives are to

- foster an ethos of trust within the school
- ensure that staff, parents and pupils are aware of the school's confidentiality, policy and procedures
- reassure pupils that the school always acts in their best interests
- encourage pupils to talk to their parents and carers
- ensure that pupils and parents/carers know that school staff cannot offer unconditional confidentiality
- ensure that there is equality of provision and access for all including rigorous monitoring of cultural, gender and special educational needs
- provide consistent messages in school regarding the handling of information about children once it has been received
- ensure that if there is a child protection issue then the correct procedure is followed
- ensure that confidentiality is a whole school issue and that in lessons ground rules are set for the protection of all
- understand that health professionals are bound by different code of conduct
- 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

- make pupils aware of the specialist confidential services that are available within the school community e.g. school nurse, counsellor, Anti-bullying services etc.
- reassure pupils that if confidentiality has to be broken, they will be informed first and then supported appropriately.

2. Rationale

It is becoming increasingly important for schools to have a comprehensive confidentiality policy which gives clarity to parents, pupils, students, staff and visitors about levels of confidentiality that can be offered in different circumstances. Also the following DfE documents: *Relationships and Sex Education Guidance (2021)*, *the ACPO Drug Advice for Schools (2012)*, *the Healthy Schools Rating Scheme (2022)* and *Promoting Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing (2021)* all advise that schools should have a clear, explicit confidentiality policy which should be well advertised to the school community. In addition, those working within school needs to be clear about the boundaries of their legal and professional roles and responsibilities, eg. in relation to child protection issues.

3. Guidelines

Confidentiality is a whole school issue and is relevant to all those working within the school regardless of their role eg. including teachers, students, cleaners and parent helpers etc. In order to ensure that the aims and objectives of this confidentiality policy can be met, consideration should be given to the following:

- 1) Any policy on confidentiality should make it clear that child protection procedures must be followed if any of your work with pupils and young people leads to a disclosure which makes you suspect that a child is a victim of abuse or is at risk of abuse or neglect.
- 2) All information about individual children is private and should only be shared with those staff that have a need to know.
- 3) 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 key members of staff.
- 4) When visitors or health professionals are used to help deliver aspects of the curriculum, they should also follow the school's confidentiality policy. However, in a one-to-one situation with individual pupils they are bound by their own professional codes of conduct.
- 5) Schools need to give careful thought to how their confidentiality policies apply in situations where they are employing staff to work in a counselling role.
- 6) Confidentiality is a whole school issue.
- 7) Ground rules and distancing techniques should be used where sensitive issues are to be addressed.
- 8) Staff should not put pressure on pupils to disclose personal information and should discourage fellow pupils from applying any such pressure.
- 9) The school prides itself 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. The school encourages children to talk to parents/carers about issues causing them concern and may in some cases support the children to talk to their parents. The school would share with parents any child protection disclosure before going on to inform the correct authorities.
- 10) 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.
- 11) Photographs of children should not be used without parents/carers permission especially in the press and internet. At no time should the child's name be used with a photograph so that they can be identified. The school gives clear guidance to parents about the use of cameras and videos during public school events. (Ref to LA Guidelines).
- 12) Information about children will be shared with parents only about their child. Parents should not have access to any other child's books, marks and progress grades at any time especially at parents' evening. However parents should be aware that information about their child will be shared with the receiving school when they change school.

13) Business in Governors' meetings relating to individual pupils or staff should be confidential at all times.

Further guidance for the involvement of visitors within the school community can be found in our Visitors into School Policy.

4. Governing Body Meetings

All discussions held within Governing Body/Committee meetings are confidential although the resolutions (outcomes) are not unless the item is minuted as being 'confidential'. It is the Governing Body who decide on the confidentiality of an item of business. All minutes of meetings of the Governing Body/Committees are confidential until they have been signed at the Chair at the next meeting. After this approval, and apart from any item which is noted as 'confidential', the minutes should be available for anyone who wishes to read them.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation

The policy will be reviewed by the Curriculum Development Group on a regular basis. When reviewing the policy, the Curriculum Development Group will give serious consideration to any issue or comments raised by pupils, parents, visitors and the wider community with regard to issues of confidentiality. The Curriculum Development Group will also amend the policy in light of any legislative changes, new procedures or County guidance.

6. Other Related Policies

Visitors into School Policy, RSE Policy, PSHE Policy, Marking Policy, Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy, Discipline Policy, Reporting of Racist Incidents, Drug Education & Incident Management Policy.

Signed:



Miss N Ward, Head Teacher)

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