



Grimoldby Primary School

Confidentiality Policy

Date Approved: March 2024

Date for Review: March 2026

Rationale

At Grimoldby Primary School, we believe that:

- The safety, well-being and protection of our pupils are the paramount considerations in all decisions staff at this school make about confidentiality. The appropriate sharing of information between school staff is an essential element in ensuring our pupils well-being, protection and safety;
- It is an essential part of the ethos of our school that trust is established to enable pupils, staff and parents/carers to seek help both within and outside the school in order to minimise the number of situations when personal information is shared to ensure pupils and staff are supported and safe;
- Pupils, parents/carers and staff need to know the boundaries of confidentiality in order to feel safe and comfortable discussing personal issues and concerns, including sex and relationships;
- The school's attitude to confidentiality is easily understood and everyone should be able to trust the boundaries of confidentiality operating within the school;
- Issues concerning personal information including Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and other personal matters can arise at any time;
- Everyone in the school community needs to know that no-one can offer absolute confidentiality;
- Everyone in the school community needs to know the limits of confidentiality that can be offered by individuals within the school community so they can make informed decisions about the most appropriate person to talk to about any health, sex and relationship or other personal issue they want to discuss.

Definition of Confidentiality

Confidentiality is defined as 'something which is spoken or given in private, entrusted with another's secret affairs'.

The confider is asking for the content of the conversation to be kept secret. 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.

In practise there are no circumstances where absolute confidentiality is offered in our school. We strive 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, safeguarding issues and good practise are followed. This means that in all cases what is offered is limited confidentiality.

Limited confidentiality is defined as 'something which is spoken of or given in private which needs to be shared with a limited number of other people.

Disclosure of the content of a conversation could be discussed with professional colleagues, but the confider would not be identified except in certain circumstances. Staff should make it clear that there are limits to confidentiality at the beginning of the conversation. 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 be involved in the information sharing.

Different levels of confidentiality are appropriate for different circumstances:

1. In the classroom, in the course of a lesson given by a member of teaching staff or an outside visitor including health professionals.

Careful thought needs to be given to the content of the lesson setting the climate and establishing ground rules to ensure confidential disclosures are not made. It should be made clear to pupils that this is not the time or place to disclose confidential personal information. When a health professional is contributing to a school's health education programme in a classroom setting, they are working with the same boundaries of confidentiality as a teacher.

2. One-to-one disclosures to members of school staff.

It is essential all members of staff know the limits of the confidentiality they can offer to both pupils and parents and carers and any required actions and sources of further support or help available both for the pupil or parent/carer, within the school and from other agencies where appropriate. All staff at this school encourage pupils to discuss different issues with their parents or carers and vice versa. However, the needs of the pupil are paramount, and the school staff will not automatically share information about the pupil with his/her parents unless it is considered to be in the child's best interests.

Staff have a legal obligation to report certain disclosures, and are trained in knowing when to do so.

3. Disclosures to a counsellor, school nurse or health professional operating a confidential service in the school.

Health professionals such as school nurses can give confidential medical advice to pupils provided they are competent to do so and follow the Gillick competency and Fraser guidelines (June 2020). School nurses 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 or carers. However, the needs of the pupil are paramount and the school nurse will not insist that a pupil's parents or carers are informed about any advice or treatment they give.

The Role of School Staff

No member of the school staff should promise absolute confidentiality to a child. The safety and well-being of the children is our first priority, and any disclosures that constitute a safeguarding issue should be discussed with *Designated Safeguarding Leads* in school and recorded on CPOMs. See the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy for more information on this. If there is not a safeguarding issue, then school staff are not obliged to break confidentiality.

Professional judgement is required by a staff member in considering whether he or she should indicate to a child that the child could make a disclosure in confidence and whether such a confidence could then be maintained having heard the information. In exercising their professional judgement, the staff member must consider the best interests of the child, including the need to both ensure trust to provide safeguards for our children. All staff at this school receive training in safeguarding and are expected to follow the school's safeguarding policy and procedures.

Visitors and Governors

If a child makes a disclosure to a visitor to the school, or to a governor, then we expect that person to inform a member of staff who can then make a decision on the appropriate course of action. Visitors or governors should never tell a child that they can maintain confidentiality. Visitors or governors who are working in school regularly or frequently will be provided with a copy of this policy and our safeguarding policy and will have the opportunity to discuss them with a member of staff.

If a visitor or governor visiting the school overhears sensitive information about a child they know in a personal capacity, the school expects this information to be kept confidential and not discussed with family or friends outside of the school environment.

If a visitor or governor visiting the school overhears sensitive or personal information about a member of staff or another visitor, then that person will be expected to keep the information confidential.

Parents and Carers

We believe that it is essential to work in partnership with parents and carers and we endeavour to keep parents/carers informed of their child's progress at school, including any concerns about their academic progress or behaviour. However, we also need to maintain a balance so that our pupils can share any concerns and ask for help when they need it. Where a pupil does discuss a difficult personal issue with a staff member, they will be encouraged to also discuss the matter with their parents or carers and may be supported to do so where it is appropriate. The safety, well-being and protection of our pupils is the paramount consideration in all decisions staff at this school make about confidentiality.

If a parent or carer is working in school in a voluntary or a professional capacity, and they overhear sensitive information about any child, visitor or a member of staff, the school expects this information to be kept confidential and not discussed with family or friends outside of the school environment.

Dissemination and implementation

This policy is shared with all new members of staff as part of the induction process, and with visitors to the school upon initial meeting.