

# Confidentiality Policy Guidance for Primary Schools

The following table outlines the key issues that need to be considered when developing a school's Confidentiality Policy.

\*deemed good practice

Issue	Suggestions and/or questions that need to be considered around what could be adopted as your confidentiality policy	Legal or contractual obligations
<b>Policy Statement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school respects everyone's right to privacy.*</li> <li>Everyone in the school is expected to work within the guidelines of this policy.*</li> <li>Care and due consideration is taken over decisions to break confidentiality.*</li> </ul>	
<b>Personal Disclosures – e.g. a child discloses that their parent/carer is taking illegal drugs</b>	<p>Any disclosures of sexual activity at primary school are automatically a child protection issue and CP procedures need to be followed.*</p> <p>Any action that is taken as a result of a disclosure will always have considered the best interests of the child first and foremost.*</p> <p>Upon a child disclosing information, will your school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not pass the information on to anyone if the child or anyone else is clearly not at risk from harm?*</li> <li>Discuss the information with the school's child protection officer if there is any doubt as to whether or not it is a child protection issue and CP procedures need to be initiated?*</li> <li>Inform and discuss the disclosure with head teacher and decide if further action is needed?</li> <li>Inform the police of any illegal activity?</li> </ul>	<p>No legal obligation to inform police of a parent/carer breaking the law.</p> <p>You can never offer complete confidentiality as if you suspect anyone may be at risk from harm, you have to pass the information on.</p>
<b>Having to break confidentiality</b>		
<b>When confidentiality is broken</b>	<p>When confidentiality has to be broken because someone may be at risk from harm:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children are told <b>when</b> the information has been passed on.*</li> <li>Children are kept informed about <b>what</b> will be done with the information.*</li> <li>Children are told <b>who</b> the information is given to, to alleviate their fears about everyone knowing. *</li> </ul>	
<b>Informing the head teacher</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are there particular circumstances where the head teacher wishes to be informed and is this for all or some circumstances of this kind?</li> </ul>	<p>If it is decided that certain information must be passed on to the Headteacher, then you are contractually obliged to do so</p>
<b>If, when and how</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the confidentiality policy make it clear if, when and how a member of staff communicates information about parents/carers and children?*</li> </ul>	
<b>Giving information to parents/carers about their children</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are there circumstances when parents/carers will be informed about their children? (e.g. health concerns, behaviour changes, accidents and injuries..etc)</li> </ul>	

<b>Confidentiality in the Classroom</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ground rules make it clear to pupils that personal questions or disclosures are inappropriate in classroom lessons.*</li> <li>• Pupils are dissuaded from exerting pressure on anyone to answer personal questions.*</li> <li>• When situations and issues are discussed, depersonalisation techniques are used (e.g. collecting group ideas, using case studies) so that issues can be explored without personal information being disclosed.*</li> </ul>	
<b>External visitors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outside agencies are made aware of the confidentiality policy and work within its limits when delivering any part of the PSHE curriculum.*</li> <li>• Other professionals work within their own codes of confidentiality when they deliver their services to individual children.*</li> </ul>	
<b>Passing on information indiscriminately</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All staff are aware that they should not pass on information about children or their parents/carers indiscriminately.*</li> <li>• Provision has been made for keeping information held in the school office confidential.* What is this provision?</li> <li>• Staff have considered the suitability of the surroundings and the presence of other people when they have conversations with children, parents or carers that may need to be kept confidential.*</li> <li>• Is talking about personal situations of staff, pupils and parents discouraged?*</li> </ul>	
<b>Dissemination of Policy</b>		
<b>Informing parents/carers of your school's confidentiality policy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are parents/carers aware of the school's confidentiality policy?*</li> <li>• How are parents/carers informed of policy?</li> <li>• If a level of confidentiality is offered, is provision made for parents/carers to speak confidentially to staff and are parents/carers made aware of this provision?*</li> <li>• Are parents/carers aware that you can never offer complete confidentiality if you deem that someone is at risk from harm?*</li> </ul>	You can never offer complete confidentiality as if you suspect anyone is at risk from harm, you have to pass the information on.
<b>Informing children of your school's confidentiality policy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are children aware that you cannot offer complete confidentiality – and that you will need to tell someone else if you deem that the child or someone else is at risk from harm?*</li> </ul>	

N.B. You do not need to have a separate confidentiality policy; it may be included as a subsection of another policy. e.g. PSHE policy