

Ore Village Primary Academy



Confidentiality Procedure

Ratified by governors: February 2017
Review: February 2019

OVPA Confidentiality Policy

Rationale

At Ore Village Primary Academy we believe that:

- The safety, well being and protection of our pupils are the paramount considerations in all decisions staff at the academy make about confidentiality. The appropriate sharing of information between academy staff is an essential element in ensuring our pupils wellbeing and safety.
- It is an essential part of the ethos of our academy that trust is established to enable pupil, staff and parents/carers to seek help both within and outside the academy and minimize 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 in discussing personal issues and concerns, including sex and relationships.
- The academy's attitude to confidentiality is open and easily understood, and everyone should be able to trust the boundaries of confidentiality operating within the academy.
- Issues concerning personal information, including sex and relationships and other personal matters, can arise at any time.
- Everyone in the academy community needs to know that no one can offer absolute confidentiality. This is especially important to establish where child protection issues are concerned.
- Everyone in the academy community needs to know the limits of confidentiality that can be offered by individuals within the academy community, so that they can make informed decisions about the most appropriate person to talk to about any health, sex and relationship or other personal issues they want to discuss.

Definition of Confidentiality

The dictionary definition of confidential is "something which is spoken or given in confidence; private, entrusted with another's secret affairs"

When speaking confidentially to someone the confider has the belief that the confident will not discuss the content of the conversation with another. 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 practice there are few situations where absolute confidentiality is offered in a school. We try to strike a balance between ensuring the safety, well being and protection of our pupils and staff, and an ethos of trust where pupils and staff can ask for help when they need it. We aim to ensure that where it is essential to share personal information, for example in child protection matters, good practice is followed.

The general rule is that staff should make it clear that there are limits to confidentiality at the beginning of a conversation. These limits relate to ensuring children's safety and wellbeing.

Different levels of confidentiality are appropriate for different circumstances:

1. In the classroom, careful thought needs to be given to the content of the lesson, setting the climate and establishing the ground rules to ensure that confidential disclosures are not made at a time which is difficult to manage supportively – for example a child protection disclosure during circle time, and in front of the whole class. It should be made clear to pupils that this is not the time or place to disclose personal or confidential information.
2. In a one to one discussion, pupils, parents/carers and staff should be aware that information given may need to be passed on to, for example the Child Protection co-ordinator or Social Services, to ensure the safety and wellbeing of those concerned.
3. Health professionals, such as school nurses, are able to give confidential medical advice provided they are competent to do so and follow the Fraser guidelines (guidelines for health professionals giving health advice to children under the age of 16). Under these circumstances the safety and wellbeing of the pupil are paramount.
4. During Counselling, the counselor makes it clear from the outset that whilst the information given to her is confidential, the counselor will still make referrals to other agencies where a child or adults safety or wellbeing are at risk.

Voluntary helpers working in school

Information concerning children at the academy should only be passed to parents through academy staff. We make it very clear that 'gossiping' about a child's progress, behaviour, cleanliness etc from helpers within the academy is unacceptable; and helpers will be challenged about this, and asked to leave should this happen. We like to make it very clear that pupils, staff and parents have the right to be treated respectfully by all whilst on our premises.

Parents and Carers

OVPA's staff believe that it is essential to work in partnership with parents and carers, and we endeavour to keep parents/ carers abreast of their child's progress at school, including concerns about their progress or behaviour. However, we also need to keep a balance so that our pupils are able to share their concerns and ask for help when they need it. Where a pupil does discuss a difficult personal matter with staff, they will be encouraged to also discuss the matter with their parents.

Links to other policies

This policy is intended to be used in conjunction with the following policies:

PSHE

Drugs education

Sex and relationship education

Child Protection

Anti-Bullying

Behaviour

Onward Referral

The Inclusions Manager is the Designated Child Protection Co-ordinator. The Inclusions Manager is responsible for the referral of children to counseling and Social Services, from the academy.

Review

This policy will be reviewed in February 2016