

West Park School

Confidentiality Policy



Date approved by Governors:	
Policy Owner:	Safeguarding Lead
Date of last Review:	August 2024
Date of next Review:	August 2025

Confidentiality Policy

Rationale

At West Park school we believe that:

- The safety, well-being and protection of our pupils are the paramount consideration 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 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 sex and relationships 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.

Policy Development

A wide consultation has taken place with the whole school community, including our partner agencies. The final policy was agreed by the Leadership Team and the school's governing body, and has been widely disseminated to staff, pupils, parents/ carers and partner agencies.

The policy is disseminated to all new staff joining the school.

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 few 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, child protection issues and good practise are followed. This means that in most cases what is offered is limited confidentiality.

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 their parents unless it is considered to be in the child's best interests.

The Legal Position for School Staff

All school staff should not promise confidentiality. Pupils do not have the right to expect they will not be reported to their parents or carers and may not, in the absence of an explicit promise, assume that information conveyed outside that context is private. No member of this school's staff can or should give such a promise.

The safety, well-being and protection of the child is the paramount consideration in all decisions staff at this school make about confidentiality.

School staff are NOT obliged to break confidentiality except where child protection is or may be an issue, however at West Park school we believe it is important staff are able to share their concerns about pupils' safety and well-being is maintained.

Teachers, Counsellors and Health Professionals

Professional judgement is required by a teacher, counsellor or health professional 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 teacher, counsellor or health professional must consider the best interests of the child, including the need to both ensure trust to provide safeguards for our children and possible child protection issues.

All teachers at this school receive basic training in safeguarding as part of their induction to this school and are expected to follow the school's safeguarding policy and procedures.

Visitors and non-teaching staff

At West Park we expect all non-teaching staff to report any disclosures by pupils or parents/carers of a concerning nature to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or their team as soon as possible after the disclosure and in an appropriate setting, so others cannot overhear.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead or their team will decide what, if any, further action needs to be taken.

Counsellors and Health Professionals

At West Park School we offer pupils the support of a school counsellor. The school nursing service operate a drop-in service for pupils. These services are confidential between the counsellor or health professional and the individual pupil. No information is shared with school staff except as defined in the school's safeguarding policy. This is essential to maintain the trust needed for these services to meet the needs of our pupils.

Parents/Carers

West Park School believes 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 any concerns about their 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, staff at West Park, 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.

Complex Cases

Where there are areas of doubt about the sharing of information, West Park school will consult with the local area Safeguarding Board.

When Confidentiality should be broken and the Procedures for doing this

See the school Safeguarding Policy. The school Designated Safeguarding Lead is Deborah Sheffield. Her contact details are:

Tel. 01332 662337

Email. Deborah.Sheffield@westpark.derby.sch.uk

Links with Other Policies

This policy has links with the following school policies:

- Safeguarding
- PSHE
- Sex and Relationships
- Drug Education
- Anti Bullying

Dissemination and Implementation

This policy has been distributed to all teaching and non-teaching staff as part of whole school training on safeguarding.

A copy of the policy can always be found the school's VLE. All new staff receive a copy of the policy when they join the school.