



**RUDHAM and WEASENHAM
CHURCH of ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOLS
FEDERATION**



CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

At Rudham/Weasenham Schools we respect every individual and family's right to privacy. All our staff and visitors are therefore expected to work within the guidelines of this policy which conform to recent legislation and government guidelines and which protect confidentiality.

The Confidentiality Policy at Rudham/Weasenham Primary Schools reflects the ethos of each school and demonstrates and encourages the following values:

- Respect for self
- Respect for others
- Responsibility for their own actions
- Responsibility for their family, friends, schools and wider community.
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Objectives

This policy provides guidance and information on confidentiality procedures in the school for staff, pupils, parents/carers and governors.

In practice this means:

- making it clear that gossip is strongly discouraged
- keeping personal records of behaviour confidential
- not discussing pupil or family personal matters in a general way
- using teaching methods which protect confidentiality
- always encouraging pupils to talk to their parents or carers about any anxieties they may have, while at the same time offering support for individuals and families from staff specialising in pastoral care.
- Ensure confidential staff issues are shared with relevant personnel only

However, on a few occasions, in spite of this approach, some young people may, for various reasons, at first feel unable to involve their parents. Over the years the school has found that under these circumstances parents feel it is important for the health and safety of their children that there should be a trusted adult to whom they can turn for early help before the situation gets possibly worse. The school therefore has in place a system whereby staff can offer children help in a limited 'confidential' way.

Other related policies and documents include the Sex & Relationship Education (SRE) Policy, PSHCE Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Drug Education Policy, Child Protection Policy and the Promoting Equalities documents.

Personal Disclosures

Pupils will be made aware that some information cannot be held confidentially and made to understand that if certain disclosures are made, certain actions will follow. At the same time, pupils will be offered sensitive and appropriate support. The following procedures will be adhered to by all adults:

1. Disclosures or suspicion of possible abuse – the school's child protection procedures will be invoked (see relevant policy).

Confidentiality in the classroom

All teaching will be done in a way that reaffirms respect for everyone in the school and associated with it. The following strategies for maintaining confidentiality in a class situation will be used in this school:

1. Setting ground rules

Teaching staff will work with pupils to develop 'ground rules' for lessons and discussions and show why these need to be agreed and respected by everybody. These rules mirror Circle Time procedures. For example:

- no-one – teachers or pupils – will have to answer a personal question or disclose any personal details; explain that this is a basic way of protecting ourselves and is not negotiable
- everyone has the right to 'pass' on a question if they want to
- no-one will be forced to take part in a discussion
- everyone has the right to be listened to and have their views respected
- no teasing, jeering or bullying of any kind
- no sexual harassment will be tolerated
- if you don't want anyone to know something either talk about it as though it was someone else or don't bring it up.

2. Depersonalising

Teaching staff will protect pupils' privacy in the class by always depersonalising discussions. Pupils can then explore the issues being raised without having their personal lives or those of their families implicated or invaded and 'used' inappropriately by other pupils. For example:

- use the 'third person' to allow pupils to keep a distance ('If you were Jamie/Sara what would you do?' rather than 'What would you do?')
- collect answers anonymously on pieces of paper so that pupils can express their feelings without risking exposure
- collect 'group' ideas without identifying individuals
- use sensitive role play to help pupils 'act out' situations and people they can identify within a 'contained' and safe way (always 'de-role' afterwards)
- provide appropriate videos and written scenarios with invented characters to encourage pupils to imagine how the people would feel, and discuss what they would do in their shoes
- organise planned visits with theatre in education groups – they provide a vehicle for probing sensitive issues, with actors expressing the emotions which pupils may be experiencing and answering questions 'in role'
- making sure that pupils are informed of sources of confidential help, for example, the school health adviser, school based services, school counsellor, GP or local young person's advice services.

Many of the above points are supported by the SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning) curriculum which is the foundation for the teaching of PSHCE.

Other Professionals Working in School

Pupils may come in contact with a number of other professionals within the school, both those who work in the school and those visiting from outside. For example:

- Dental Service
- School Health Advisers
- Special Needs Support Team

The involvement of these professionals raises a number of confidentiality issues:

Parents/Volunteers Working in School

All parent helpers and volunteers are given a copy of our Safeguarding leaflet when they first come into school. They are also given a copy of this policy and sign it once they have read it.

1. Maintaining confidentiality in a classroom

Other professionals may need some support in working with groups in a way that protects confidentiality. In a one-to-one setting it is good practice for other professionals to talk to a pupil personally, to make sure that their concerns are identified, and that they understand the advice they are given. In a classroom setting it is not appropriate to talk directly to individuals about their personal experiences.

2. Professional Codes of Conduct

Whereas teachers are bound by their terms of contract and cannot promise pupils absolute confidentiality, other professionals – *when working with individual pupils* – are bound by their professional codes of conduct which tend to give pupils the right to confidentiality and it would be unreasonable to expect a professional to act outside his/her professional code within a school setting. Confidentiality, in these situations, should only be breached in exceptional cases and not without first informing the pupil.

In a classroom situation, including small group work, the school's policies and procedures apply to teachers and other professionals alike.

Data Protection

Confidentiality does not just relate to disclosures of information which could have legal implications such as abuse. Staff members should not handle *any* confidential information carelessly as pupils and other members of staff may regard this as the norm and respond in a similar manner if a confidence is passed to them.

The following measures are in place to ensure confidential information is dealt with appropriately:

- Pupil records and staff appointment and contract information is kept in a filing cabinet in the School Office. Most pupil files are retained whilst pupils are at the school and then passed on at transfer to another school in the U.K. If the records contain SEN statements or exclusion details we follow Norfolk County Council's Retention Schedule guidance.
- Personal pupil information is not stored in the staffroom and is not displayed on notice boards.
- All school staff have access to a private space where personal telephone calls can be made or taken.
- Discussing pupil, family or other staff members' personal matters in a general way is discouraged.

Equal Opportunities Statement

As a staff we endeavour to maintain an awareness of, and to provide for equal opportunities for all our pupils. We aim to take into account and respond to the diversity of children's cultures, faiths and family backgrounds, gender and Special Needs, both in our teaching attitudes and in the published materials we use with our pupils.

Dissemination

All staff members, governors and parents receive a copy of the policy. Training is regularly delivered to staff on the policy content. A short summary of the policy is included in the school brochure.

The Headteacher facilitates the gathering of policy feedback from parents, staff and pupils every three years.

Member(s) of staff responsible: Mrs. B. Allen (Executive Headteacher)

Policy Agreed by Staff: May 2006

Policy Agreed by Governors: May 2006

Reviewed: June 2009 May 2012, May 2015

Next Review Due: May 2018