

Medstead C of E (Controlled) Primary School
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Headteacher: Mr Ian Waine

September 2009

Confidentiality Policy

This policy forms a part of our school's PSHE Policy. It is linked to our Drugs and Substance Abuse, Sex and Relationships, Bullying, Child Protection and Health and Safety policies and should be read in conjunction with the school's Child Protection Policy Statement for staff and volunteers.

Dissemination

This policy will be publicised to the school community through:

- Induction procedures for all new members of staff.
- By agreement with the school nurse and police liaison officer
- Circulation on paper to parents - including a statement for parents / carers concerning confidentiality.
- The staff handbook.

Aims and Objectives

At Medstead School, we believe:

A school is an area where confidential details concerning children - their educational ability, their family circumstances, school based incidents, etc. are discussed on a regular basis and which form an important part of a teacher's ability to teach the children effectively. It is important that those adults privy to this information treat it with complete confidence and do not take this information out of school and outside the professional perimeter.

The aim of this policy is to ensure that all members of staff and visitors to the school are clear about the levels of confidentiality that they can offer to the school community and expect themselves.

This policy will make clear the varying levels of confidentiality which might be offered in different circumstances.

The policy was formulated by members of the Healthy Schools Team, including teaching and non-teaching members of staff, parents and governors. The school nurse and police school liaison officer were consulted.

The following statements detail appropriate procedures to be followed in cases where confidentiality is an issue:



For all staff:

When talking with pupils, it is important that all staff be aware that they should maintain professional boundaries.

Staff must be clear that they cannot offer unconditional confidentiality when a pupil first begins to talk about something where confidentiality may become an issue.

In all cases, if confidentiality has to be broken, pupils should be informed and reassured that their best interests will be maintained.

Pupils should be encouraged, wherever possible, to discuss matters with their parents / carers.

If it is felt appropriate for pupils to speak to the school nurse, Staff should refer the issue to the Head teacher who may contact the school nursing service. The nurse will decide whether to gain parental permission before speaking to pupils.

New government guidance requires professional to consult as much as possible with parents / carers when referring to an outside agency. Parents should be asked if they wish to be referred, unless there is reason to think that obtaining such consent may put the young person at risk.

Confidentiality cannot be kept if a child protection issue is disclosed. (Refer to child protection policy)

All staff and governors can expect that their personal situations and health will remain confidential unless it impinges on their terms of contract or endangers pupils or other members of staff.

For parents and families:

The school will respect family wishes in cases where information relating to a pupil is shared. The family will always be contacted before sharing any information unless there is an overriding child protection concern.

Statement for parents and carers concerning confidentiality and pupils at Medstead Primary School

There is increasing national concern for the emotional health and well-being of young people growing up in today's society. At Medstead School we recognise that parents and carers want to do all they can to support their child but even in the most supportive of relationships where there is excellent communication between parent / carer and child, there can be occasions when children are worried about something and feel that they cannot talk about it with you. This may result in enormous stress which can impact on a child's health, education and behaviour. Whilst we recognise that parents and carers will naturally be disappointed if their child does not choose to talk to you about what is troubling them, we feel there could be even more distress if the pupil is unable to cope with the issue themselves. On this basis we have agreed the following:



School staff will be supportive to pupils who approach them with concerns but will make it clear that they cannot offer confidentiality to the pupil on anything that is a potential child protection issue where the pupil or others are likely to be at risk of significant harm.

The Head teacher will liaise with parents / carers as appropriate in cases where a staff member has reported an issue over which they cannot offer confidentiality.

Staff will support pupils to inform their parents / carers about issues that are troubling them as appropriate.

Review: September 2012

Reference documents of use in issues relating to confidentiality:

Guidance to schools on Sex and Relationships Education (Ref DfES 0116/2000)

What to do if you are worried a child is being abused (Ref 31553)

Developing sex and relationships education in schools - guidance and training for school governors (Sex Education Forum - National Children's Bureau, 2003)

HIV in Schools - good practice guide to supporting children infected by HIV (National Children's Bureau, 2003)

Sex and Relationships Education in Pupils Referral Units (Sex Education Forum National Children's Bureau, 2004)

National Healthy School Status - A Guide for Schools
www.wiredforhealth.gov.uk August 2005