

Thornley Primary School

Confidentiality Policy



Updated September 2013

Thornley Primary School

Confidentiality Policy

Introduction & Aims

Thornley Primary School recognises the need to have a comprehensive confidentiality policy which gives clarity to parents/carers, pupils and staff about levels of confidentiality that can be offered by the school in a range of different circumstances.

Why the policy was developed

The issue of confidentiality in schools is becoming increasingly complex as the integration of human rights legislation develops. Schools are being encouraged to develop policies in response to the Change for Children programme and the legislation regarding Information Sharing.

A school confidentiality policy is now a requirement for the Enhanced Healthy Schools status which the school gained in July 2007.

Staff support and training

Information regarding the confidentiality policy will form part of all new staffs induction training.

This policy applies to all staff working in Thornley Primary School.

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Confidentiality and pupils

In Thornley Primary School, we recognise that there are occasions when pupils are worried about something and feel that they cannot talk about it to their parents/carers. This can result in enormous stress for the individual which impacts on their education and even their health. Some pupils may feel that they can turn to teachers and other staff members for support. In this situation, we want to be as helpful as we can whilst at the same time recognising that there may be some potential difficulties in being supportive.

Staff of Thornley Primary School should adhere to the following policy and procedures regarding confidentiality:

- When talking with pupils, it is important for staff to be aware of maintaining their professional boundaries.
- Staff must be clear to pupils that they cannot offer unconditional confidentiality when a pupil first begins to talk about something where confidentiality may become an issue.
- Pupils should be warned that if there is a child protection issue where the pupil, or others, is likely to be at risk of significant harm, staff are under a duty to inform the school's Headteacher/Child Protection Liaison Officer who may have to involve other agencies. It is important that each member of staff deals with this sensitively and explains to the pupil that they must inform the appropriate people who can help the child, but that they will only tell those who need to know in order to help.
- In all cases where staff feel that they have to break confidentiality with the pupil, then the pupil must be informed, (unless there is a good reason not to inform them e.g. risk of harm) and reassure them that their best interests will be maintained.
- In talking with pupils, staff need to encourage them to talk to their parents/carers about the issue that may be troubling them and support in doing this should be offered where appropriate. If they will need to take it to the Headteacher who is the Child Protection Liaison Officer.

Parents/Carers and Families

We recognise that sometimes there may be family issues which may affect a pupil and which the family will only disclose to us if they can be sure the information will be treated confidentially. We will respect the wishes of the family and where it is felt necessary to share the information given to us, this will be discussed with the parents/carers first unless a pupil is considered to be at immediate risk and /or there is an overriding child protection concern.

Staff and Governors

All staff can normally 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 or
- There is a legal obligation to disclose such information or
- It is necessary for legal proceedings or
- Despite the duty of confidence, the staff member's interest or the wider public interest justifies disclosure.

Linked policies

The following policies are linked and supported by the confidentiality policy:

Behaviour/ anti-bullying policy

Child protection policy

Health and safety policy

PSHE policy (Personal, Social, Health Education policy)

Drug incidents policy

Sex and Relationships policy

Dissemination

This policy is publicised to all in the school community through:

- Access to the school policy file
- Staff training and induction
- Assemblies/ circle time discussions as appropriate – by emphasising links to the school's anti-bullying policy and child protection policy and procedures.

Policy Adopted by Governing Body on _____

Signed _____

Chair of Governors

Statement for parents and carers concerning confidentiality and pupils.

There is increasing national concern for the emotional health and well-being of young people growing up in today's society. 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 they are worried about something and feel that they cannot talk about it with you. This may result in enormous stress for the pupil which can impact on their education, health and behaviour, unfortunately self-harm and even suicide in the most extreme cases. Whilst we recognise that parents and carers will naturally be disappointed if their child does not choose to talk with 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:

Statement for school staff concerning confidentiality and pupils

- Our 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 involves an illegal activity or anything that is a potential child protection issue where the pupil or others are likely to be at risk of significant harm.

- Senior staff in the school will liaise with parents/carers as appropriate in case 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.

Statement for pupils concerning confidentiality

All staff in school understand that there may be times when there are things which may be worrying you but you can't talk about them with your family. Teachers and other members of school staff will do all we can to help you but need to know the following:

- If you really want to talk to someone confidentially, (without anyone else knowing what you have said) you can speak to any adult that you trust and know. This will most likely be your class teacher or your teaching assistant.

The Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher are always happy to listen to you and hear your worries.

- The teachers and other members of staff in the school will often be able to help you with many of the things that may be worrying you but they cannot promise to keep everything to themselves. For example if you tell them about some things like stealing, they will have to speak to the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher who might then have to speak to your parents.

- If the staff member feels that they have to tell someone else what you have talked about, they will normally tell you first and help you sort it out, perhaps helping you to speak to your parents/carers if you want this.

- Very rarely there are things which you talk about that can be very dangerous for you or for other young people e.g. someone trying to harm you. The Staff member may have to tell someone else about what you have said, but they will normally tell you first and always help you to sort things out.