

Denby Dale First and Nursery School

Confidentiality Policy

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding Policy for Schools.

Rationale

At Denby Dale First & Nursery School we believe that:-

- The safety, well-being and protection of our children 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 children's well-being and safety;
- Pupils, parents/ carers, staff and governors need to know the boundaries of confidentiality in order to feel safe and comfortable discussing personal issues and concerns;
- Issues concerning personal information can arise at any time;
- Everyone in the school community needs to know that no-one can offer absolute confidentiality.

Confidentiality

Anyone offering absolute confidentiality to someone else would be offering to keep the content of his or her conversation completely secret and to discuss it with no-one. In practice, 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 children and our staff, ensuring there is an ethos of trust where pupils and staff can ask for help when they need it.

It is recognised that there are occasions when information that is divulged may reveal child protection issues and in these cases immediate action is to be taken and good practice is to be followed. This means that, in some cases, what is offered is limited confidentiality. Disclosure of the content of a conversation could be discussed with professional colleagues on a need to know basis.

School Staff

All staff working at Denby Dale First and Nursery School are made aware of the policies and procedures with regard to confidentiality. Information regarding the Confidentiality Policy will form part of all new staff induction training.

It is recognised 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 health. Some children may feel that they can turn to teachers or other members of staff for support and advice and it is therefore important that all staff are aware of the course of action where the information being provided by the child is one which impacts upon their health, well being or safety.

Staff at Denby Dale First and Nursery School adhere to the policy by:

- maintaining professional boundaries when talking to children;
- making it clear to children that unconditional confidentiality cannot be offered;
- not working in isolation and taking action without having discussed the matter with the head teacher. Where any allegation includes the head teacher, the Chair of Governors should be informed (the school's Whistle Blowing Policy refers);

- informing a child that the member of staff is under a duty to inform the Designated Senior Person for Safeguarding) if the child is at risk of harm. Such matters will be dealt with sensitively and it will be explained to the child that the appropriate people will be informed so that they can help the child. The Designated Senior Person for Safeguarding may make the decision to consult with outside professional agencies who are able to offer further protection and advice regarding children at risk of significant harm, without consulting parents.

It is important that class teachers and support staff are aware of some confidential matters in order to support individuals. These staff will respect the sensitivity of such cases and not divulge information to people unconnected professionally with the individual concerned.

Additionally, staff at Denby Dale First and Nursery School adhere to the policy by:

- Not discussing details of individual cases arising in school to any person without direct professional connection to individual concerned.
- Not discussing individual child's behaviour in the presence of another child in school.
- Not entering into detailed discussion about another with other children parents.
- Parents in school, working as volunteers do not report cases of poor behaviour or pupil discipline to other parents in the school.

Pupils

- Pupils should be reassured that their best interests will be maintained
- Pupils should know that staff cannot offer unconditional confidentiality
- Pupils should be reassured that, if confidentiality has to be broken, they will be informed first and then supported appropriately
- Pupils should be informed of sources of confidential help, for example, the school nurse, counsellor, GP or local young person's advice service

Student and Volunteers in School

Information regarding the Confidentiality Policy will form part of all new student and volunteers' induction training.

Volunteers at Denby Dale First and Nursery School adhere to the policy by

- not discussing details of an individual or group of pupils, behaviour or conversation arising in school to any person outside school
- Parents in school, working as volunteers do not report cases of poor behaviour or pupil discipline to other parents in the school.

A separate sheet giving information for students and volunteers working in school including clear guide lines on confidentiality issues is provided to volunteers and students.

Parents/ carers and Families

The school aims to work in partnership with parents. It is recognised that there may be family issues which may affect a pupil and which the family will only disclose if they are sure that the information will be treated confidentially. The wishes of the family will be respected and, where it is felt necessary to share the information provided, this will be discussed with the parents/ carers first

unless a child is considered to be at immediate risk and/ or there is an overriding child protection concern.

Health professionals

Health professionals are bound by their professional codes of conduct to maintain confidentiality when working in a one to one situation. When working in a classroom, they are bound by relevant school policies. In line with best practice guidance, like other school staff, they will seek to protect privacy and prevent inappropriate personal disclosures in a classroom setting, by negotiating ground rules and using distancing techniques.