

Chalk Ridge Primary School



Reviewed in May 2024 by the Resources Committee

Next review May 2027

Headteacher: Miss Sue Jackson

This is a school policy.

Confidentiality Policy

A dictionary definition of confidentiality: *“something which is spoken or given in confidence; private, entrusted with another’s secret affairs”*

At Chalk Ridge Primary School, we believe that the welfare, safety and security of our whole school community, regardless of their gender, race, religion medical concerns or SEND, are of the utmost importance. We value support and inclusion of our community including outside agencies within the school, and recognise the importance of an agreed policy for ensuring whole school confidentiality. We understand that there are clear limits to confidentiality relating to ensuring safety and wellbeing of children, parents, staff, governors and outside agencies.

This policy applies to

- All teaching and non-teaching staff employed by the school.
- All visiting staff working with young people on the school site during the school day.
- Depending on their contractual arrangements staff from external agencies delivering services on site.
- Volunteers working with children and/or on the school site.
- Governors.

Aim

The aim of this policy is to ensure the safety, well-being and protection of all our pupils and staff. This policy also aims to:

- Ensure that the school’s attitude to confidentiality is easily understood and that there is trust in the boundaries of confidentiality operating within the school.
- Allow children and adults in school to enjoy privacy.
- Enable the school to be fair to all its community.

All school staff members

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 wellbeing. Some pupils may feel that they can turn to teachers and other staff members for support and we want to be as helpful as we can whilst recognising that there may be some potential difficulties in being supportive. All staff should adhere to the following:

- Be clear to pupils that you 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/ safeguarding issue where the pupil, or others, are likely to be at risk of significant harm, you are under a duty to inform the school’s Designated Safeguarding Officers who may have to involve other agencies. (Please refer to the school’s child protection/ safeguarding procedures for further advice

on this aspect). 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.

- School staff can only offer confidentiality to pupils on issues that do not involve significant illegal activities e.g. drug trafficking, arson, etc. If the conversation begins to move to this kind of issue, the pupil must be warned that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.
- In all cases where you feel that you have to break confidentiality with the pupil, you must inform the pupil, (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, you 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.

Any member of staff can be approached by any pupil for a confidential discussion. Sometimes we may also refer pupils to the Thrive Practitioners, ELSA and TALA. Staff cannot offer confidentiality over a child protection/safeguarding issue but because sometimes it is necessary for a pupil to be able to talk about their worries in order to help the pupil through their situation, we require our staff to inform the Senior Management Team about illegal activities whether or not there is a child protection/ safeguarding issue or other significant risk.

A 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. While 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:

Children's records

All information about individual children is private and is only shared with those staff that have a need to know. All social services, medical and personal information about a child is held in a safe and secure place (CPOMS) which cannot be accessed by individuals other than appropriate and relevant school staff.

Photographing and videoing of children

When joining the school, a child's parent or guardian is required to sign a consent form allowing the use of a child's photograph. The school has an expectation of no use of video cameras during school productions and assemblies and this is always shared with parents and carers prior to an event.

Parents/Carers and Families

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

Governors and Staff

All staff 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 the school community or
- There is a legal obligation to disclose such information or
- It is necessary for legal proceedings or Governors Policy Document
- Despite the duty of confidence, the staff member's interest or the wider public interest justifies disclosure

Governors observe complete confidentiality in relation to matters involving individual staff, parents or children. Although decisions reached at governing meetings are made public through minutes or otherwise, the discussions on which decisions are based are regarded as confidential. Governors exercise the highest degree of prudence when discussion of potentially contentious issues arises outside the governing body. Any confidential matters are discussed with governors as appropriate, and non-public minutes are stored securely

School nurse

School nurses are required to offer a confidential service within the professional Code of Practice for school nurses and other health service staff. The government has also signed up to international legislation and charters which entitle young people to access health services. However, health professionals like everyone else, must inform appropriate services if they become aware of a child protection/ safeguarding issue in discussions with a young person.

A statement for pupils concerning confidentiality

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/ safeguarding issue where the pupil or others are likely to be at risk of significant harm.

We understand that there may be times when there are things which may be worrying you but you feel that 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 you 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 of the school staff. We might also be able to help you find someone else outside of school if you think this is better for you.
- 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. If you tell them about some things like using drugs or stealing, they will have to speak to one of the senior leaders in the school who might then have to speak to your parents/carers or the police or Children's Services.
- 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. Even the staff 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.

Linked policies

Staff Code of Conduct, Behaviour and Relationships, Anti-Bullying, Child Protection, Drugs, Health and Safety, PSHE, Relationships and Sex Education and the Single Equality Scheme.

We can check that this is working by:

- Talking to children and staff about how these issues are handled on a day-to-day basis
- Governor visits – is there an ethos of trust, respect and care observed?