



Mill Lane Community Primary School & The Windmill Community Nursery

Growing, Thriving, Flying

Confidentiality Policy

This policy applies to Mill Lane Community Primary School and the attached Windmill Community Nursery as well as the extended services provision provided by Mill Lane.

Information

Confidential information means information which is not trivial and not in the public domain. The dictionary definition of confidential is 'said or given in confidence; private; entrusted with another's secret affairs.'

The overall meaning of a confidential relationship is openness and agreement about what will happen to information disclosed between two or more people. It may not have to take the form of total secrecy.

There are few situations where absolute confidentiality is offered. In most cases only limited confidentiality can be offered. The boundaries of confidentiality must be made clear at the beginning of the conversation. No one in the school community can offer or guarantee absolute confidentiality; never the less gossip about school issues and rumours should be avoided at all times. Everyone must know the limits of confidentiality that can be offered by the school community so that they can make informed decisions.

Aims

- All members of staff working on the school site are clear about the levels of confidentiality that they can offer to the school community and expect themselves.
- To build trust and enable pupils to confide in the appropriate members of staff or to seek outside help.
- To enable the school to be fair to all its community

Objectives

- For staff, governors, pupils and parents to understand the varying levels of confidentiality which might be offered in different circumstances.
- For children and adults in school to enjoy privacy from gossip

Levels of confidentiality

The following examples are used to help establish the different levels of confidentiality used at school.

- In the classroom in the course of a lesson – careful thought should be given to the content of the lesson, setting the climate and establishing ground rules to ensure confidential disclosures are not made.
- One - to - one disclosure to members of staff – staff should make clear at the beginning of the conversation the limits of confidentiality and reiterate the likely outcomes of disclosure, who may be informed and how this would be done.
- Disclosures to a school health nurse / health professional / home school link worker in the context of a confidential drop-in session on school premises – the school has a responsibility

to provide an area which respects confidentiality. The limits of confidentiality would be stated to the individual when they attended the session.

- When staff are discussing individual children and families, care should be taken as to where and when this conversation takes place.

Guidelines

Confidentiality and pupils

- Staff will not discuss details of individual cases to any person without a direct professional connection to and interest in the welfare and education of the individual concerned.
- Staff will not enter into detailed discussions about a child with other children or their parents.
- Matters of Child Protection are made known to the designated safeguarding lead and to other staff on a need to know basis.
- Staff may need to know some confidential information 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.

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 stress for the individual which impacts on their education and health. Some pupils 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 potential difficulties in being supportive. When dealing with such instances the following points must be followed:

- 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.
- Warn pupils that if there is a child protection issue where the pupils, or others, are likely to be at risk of significant harm, you are legally required to inform the school's designated teacher who may have to involve other agencies. (Please refer to the school's safeguarding procedures for further advice on this aspect.)
- In all cases where you feel that you have to break confidentiality with the pupil, you must inform the pupil 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.
- Pupils should be made aware of the specialist confidential services that maybe available in the school community e.g. school health nurse, doctor.

Confidentiality and staff and governors

- 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 staff.
- Governors will not divulge details about individuals (be they staff, families or individual children) to any person outside the meeting.
- At full Governing body meetings confidential matters will be made known and minuted separately and these minutes will not be published.

Confidentiality and families

We recognise that sometimes there may be family issues which might affect a pupil and which the family will only disclose to us if they are 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 only be discussed with the parent first unless a pupil is considered to be at immediate risk and/or there is an overriding child protection concern.

Visitors to school and confidentiality

A 'Visitor' in this context is any person who works in school either in a paid or a voluntary capacity. In some instances, the visitor may become privy to personal information regarding pupils, parents and staff that is of a confidential nature. There is an agreement between the Governing Body and everyone who works in school to sign a declaration not to use any such information outside the school context and to share relevant information with other agencies in situations of child protection. (See appendix A)

Lines of responsibility and referral

If a member of the school community receives information where they believe a child protection issue is addressed, they should refer the case to the designated safeguarding lead. The person must make it clear to the pupil that they will be passing on the information but that the information will remain confidential between them and the designated teacher. If confidentiality has been broken, the child must be informed first.

A teacher does not have a general duty to inform the head teacher of disclosures by a pupil. The decision as to whether to do so must be a matter for a teacher's discretion, having regard for child protection issues.

Agreed by Full Governing Body of Mill Lane Community School

Signed by the Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S A Watkinson', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

S A Watkinson

Date of Review: November 2023

Next Review: November 2025



Appendix A

Agreement for Mill Lane Community Primary School

This is an agreement between the Governing Body and everyone who works in school either in a paid or a voluntary capacity.

I understand that in the course of my work in school, I may be party to personal information regarding pupils, parents and staff that is of a confidential nature.

I agree not to use any such information outside the school context and at all times I agree not to participate or encourage idle gossip and rumours in matters regarding the school.

I agree not to engage in matters regarding the school using social networking sites or other electronic means.

I agree to share relevant information with the designated child protection office (the head teacher) in situations of child protection.

I understand that should I break the confidentiality agreement in any way disciplinary procedures will follow in line with the school's policy.

Signature of member of staff / volunteer worker / governor

.....

Print name _____

Date:.....

Signed by:..... on behalf of the Governing Body.

Those working in school either paid or voluntarily will be asked to sign the agreement annually.