



RYECROFT C. E. (C) MIDDLE SCHOOL

POLICY STATEMENT

CONFIDENTIALITY

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Ryecroft aims to protect children attending the school at all times and to give all staff involved clear, unambiguous guidance as to their legal and professional roles. It will also strive to ensure good practice throughout the school which is understood by pupils, parents/carers and staff.

1.2 Ryecroft seeks to put the child at the heart of the learning process and to provide a safe and secure learning environment. It seeks to implement the underlying principles of the Every Child Matters agenda and to address the issues, which may arise about confidentiality. We are committed to developing ways for the child's voice to be heard whilst recognising the responsibility to use, hold and safeguard information received.

1.3 Sharing information unnecessarily is an erosion of trust.

1.4 The school is mindful that it is placed in a position of trust by all stakeholders and there is a general expectation that a professional approach will be used in all matters of confidentiality.

1.5 The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states that:

'the wishes of a young person must be taken into account when considering their best interests.'

1.6 It is recognised that children at Ryecroft span the age range of 9-13 years. When considering making a judgement about their best interests, the member of staff should also take into account the age and maturity of the student and subsequently, their ability to make an informed decision about their life.

2. THE SCHOOL

2.1 The principles of confidentiality rest upon :

1. providing messages in school about handling information about children once it has been received.
2. fostering an ethos of trust within the school.
- 3 ensuring that staff, parents and pupils are aware of the school's confidentiality policy and procedures.
4. reassuring pupils that their best interests will be maintained.
5. encouraging children to talk to their parents and carers.
6. ensuring that pupils and parents/carers know that school staff cannot offer unconditional confidentiality.
7. ensuring that if there are child protection issues then the correct procedure is followed.
8. ensuring that confidentiality is a whole school issue and that in lessons ground rules are set for the protection of all.
- 9 understanding that health professionals are bound by a different code of conduct.
10. ensuring that parents have a right of access to any records the school may hold on their child but not to any other child that they do not have parental responsibility for.

2.2 The school's Mission Statement identifies us as a community which develops a positive atmosphere in which young people learn to value themselves, each other and the world in which they live. As such:

1. Every child has a right to be treated with respect and dignity, as do the adults who work with them. They have a right to privacy, a safe environment and where appropriate, should be consulted and given the opportunity to express their views about decisions which may affect their lives.

2. We recognise that without these rights, pupils may be unable or unwilling to talk about things which are frightening, worrying or hurting them and that confidentiality is fundamental to them feeling respected and safe.
3. At all times we will aim to adopt a non-judgmental approach in our work with them.
4. We recognise that the duty of confidentiality owed to a person under the age of 16 is as great as the duty owed to any other person. We believe that all children are entitled to request a confidential meeting with any adult employed by the school.
5. Staff do not have to agree to such a request but should bear in mind that the child may not feel comfortable talking to any other adult at that particular time and that they may have been chosen as a confidante for a particular reason.
6. Children must be made aware that staff cannot offer or guarantee unconditional confidentiality. This includes any information relating to a Child Protection issue or which places doubt about a person's health and safety.

3. STAFF

3.1 The school has appointed a senior lead teacher for child protection and a deputy officer, who receive regular training. There is clear guidance for the handling of child protection incidents. With regard to the disclosure of information, the policy is always to seek the consent of the child wherever possible and to discuss with them the exact course of action to be taken. However, the child will be informed that even without their consent, the member of staff has a duty to refer information where necessary. Whenever a member of staff feels it may be necessary to breach confidentiality, this should first be discussed with the Child Protection Officer (the Headteacher) or the Deputy Child Protection Officer.

3.2 There is clear guidance for procedures if a member of staff is accused of abuse (see policy Allegations against Staff).

3.3 There is a programme for sex and relationship education, which brings an understanding of what is and is not acceptable in a relationship and can lead to disclosure of a child protection issue.

3.4 Staff are aware of the need to handle all issues about different types of families in a sensitive manner.

3.5 Any intolerance about gender, faith, race, culture or sexuality is unacceptable and follow-up action will adhere to the school's Behaviour Policy.

3.6 Information collected for one purpose should not be used for another. All children have a right to the same level of confidentiality irrespective of gender, race, religion, medical concerns and special educational needs. Photographs of children are not used without parents/carers permission.

3.7 Staff cannot guarantee total confidentiality and the school has a duty to report child protection issues.

3.8 The school has a good and rapid system for communication with parents and carers and staff are always available to talk to both children and parents/carers about issues that are causing concern. The school encourages children to talk to parents/carers about issues causing them concern and may in some cases support the child(ren) to talk to their parents. The school may share with parents a child protection disclosure before going on to inform the correct authorities.

3.9 Confidentiality is a whole school issue. Clear ground rules must be set for any classroom work such as circle time and other PHSCE sessions dealing with sensitive issues such as sex and relationship and drugs. Strategies are in place and all children are aware of them for dealing with sensitive information which may fall outside the boundaries of child protection procedures.

3.10 Information regarding health reports such as speech therapy, medical reports, SEN reports, SEN minutes of meetings and social services minutes of meetings are kept in a secure place.

4. PROCEDURES

4.1 Teachers are not obliged to pass on all information about children to their parents. Staff should seek advice from the Child Protection Officer (Headteacher) as to whether or not parents need to be informed about an issue. Where a member of staff believes the pupil to be at moral or physical risk, or in breach of the law, they must ensure that the pupil is aware of the risks and encourage them to seek support from their parents / guardians.

5. PARENTS

5.1 Parents/carers and children should feel reassured that in exceptional circumstances confidentiality will be broken.

5.2 Parents are entitled to have a confidential discussion with a member of staff regarding concerns about their child and the child does not have to be informed that this is taking place. In keeping with our policy however, the parent should be encouraged to talk to their child about their concerns.

5.3 During any discussion, staff are not able to offer unconditional confidentiality to parents and if they are informed during the course of the discussion of some behaviour of the parents [or of anyone else], which is likely to cause harm to their child or to other young persons, the member of staff must follow the school's Child Protection procedures. If there is a concern regarding neglect or emotional abuse of the child, the policy is for them to discuss their concerns with the Headteacher (Child Protection Officer) in the first instance.

5.4 Information about children will be shared with parents but only about their child. Parents should not have access to any other child's books, marks and progress grades. However parents will be made aware that information about their child will be shared with the receiving school when they change school.

6. REQUESTS FOR CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

6.1 The Data Protection Act 1998, requires that personal information is 'obtained and processed fairly and lawfully; only disclosed in appropriate circumstances; is accurate, relevant, not held longer than necessary and is kept securely.' There may be occasions when a request for confidential information regarding a particular child is made, from an individual, an agency or an organisation. The usual course of action would be to seek advice from the Child Protection Officer (Headteacher) before any information is shared.

6.2 Where information is released, this should usually be in the form of a written report, limited to relevant information only. Where possible the report should be shared with the student, except where doing so may compromise the safety and welfare of the student.

6.3 If a student leaves for another school, the Child Protection file and any other confidential documentation which may not necessarily be of a Child Protection nature, should be sent directly to the Child Protection Officer at the new school. The school will seek written confirmation for receipt of the file (**Appendix A**). Verbal contact should take place between the headteacher at Ryecroft and the new Child Protection Officer prior to this happening.

7. GOVERNORS

7.1 Governors need to be mindful that from time to time issues are discussed or brought to their attention about staff and children. All such papers should be identified as confidential and should be copied onto different coloured paper. These confidential papers should be collected in and destroyed after the meeting.

7.2 Governors must observe complete confidentiality when asked to do so by the governing body especially in relation to matters concerning individual staff, pupils or parents. Although decisions reached at governors' meetings are normally made public through the minutes, the discussions on which decisions are based should be regarded as confidential. Governors should exercise the highest degree of prudence when discussion of potentially contentious issues arises outside of the governing body.

Signed on behalf of the Governing Body:

Chair

Date

Linked Policies:

- Allegations Against Staff
- Child Protection
- Gender Equality
- Behaviour
- Racial Equality
- Safeguarding
- Safeguarding – Recruitment
- Safeguarding – Whistleblowing
- Sex and Relationships Education
- Special Educational Needs
- Equal Opportunities
- E-Safety
- Looked After Children

Appendix A



Ryecroft C.E. (C) Middle School

Denstone Road, Rocester, Staffordshire, ST14 5JR
Telephone: 01889 590394 Fax: 01889 591483
Headteacher: Mr S Bardon B.Ed (Hons), NPQH

Transfer of Child Protection Records within Educational Establishments Receipt

Name of Child

Date of Birth

Unique reference number

Name of current Child Protection Lead

Date file exchanged by hand **OR**

Date file posted by recorded delivery

Signature of current CP Lead

Name of receiving school

Address of receiving school

Date file received by hand **OR**

Date received by recorded delivery

I confirm receipt of file on behalf of receiving school

Name..... Position

Signature.....

Please ensure this completed form is returned to the originating school without delay.

Email: headteacher@ryecroft.staffs.sch.uk

office@ryecroft.staffs.sch.uk

Website: www.ryecroft.staffs.sch.uk

