Leesland C of E Federation

Confidentiality Policy

"Two Schools, One Vision"

Approval By: **Review Frequency:** **Last Reviewed:** **Next Review Due:**	Resources Committee Annually Summer 2026 Summer 2027
Review Approved (signature):   **Date Approved: 5th May 2026**	EXECUTIVE HEADTEACHER ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNING BODY

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

*Through our Core Christian values, we aim to create an environment in which everybody feels **loved** enough to aspire to greatness, **respected** enough to build a community, and **gracious** enough to include everyone in our journey to achieve a bright future.*

The aim of this policy is that all members of staff working on the Federation of Leesland School sites are clear about the levels of confidentiality that they can offer to the school community and expect themselves.

The objective of this policy is for everyone to understand the varying levels of confidentiality which might be offered in different circumstances.

- A clear, explicit and well publicised confidentiality policy ensures good practice throughout the school which staff, (including staff from external agencies), parents/carers and pupils can easily understand.
- The school needs to be clear about the boundaries of their legal and professional roles and responsibilities e.g. Child Protection procedures.
- To avoid situations where staff and pupils may be confused, make clear that different professionals may offer varying levels of confidentiality in different circumstances.
- Sometimes parents/carers and families may wish to disclose information confidentially to the school. Schools need to be clear about their position.
- It is important for the school to share information so that pupils can be safe, healthy, enjoy life and reach their potential but we need to do this in a way which meets our legal requirements and is understood by the school community.

This policy refers to:

- All teaching and non-teaching staff employed by either school.
- All Federation Governors
- 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 the school site e.g. Youth Service and Voluntary Organisations
- All volunteer staff – including work experience and placements.

To support this policy training will be delivered through:

- INSET training.
- training offered by Hampshire Children's Service e.g. Relationships & Sex Education, Information Sharing & Assessment
- induction of new staff
- Service Level Agreements with visiting agencies.

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 health. 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.

Staff should adhere to the following policy:

- When talking with pupils, it is important for you to be aware of maintaining your professional boundaries. Whilst being supportive where you can, distancing techniques should be used when appropriate and pupils encouraged or supported to speak to a member of staff including the Counsellor or Family Support Worker. Remember to use TED – Tell me, explain, describe
- **You must 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 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 Lead who may have to involve other agencies.** (Please refer to the school's child protection 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.
- 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.
- Pupils should be made aware of the specialist confidential services that may be available on the school site or in the school community e.g. school nurse, counsellor, doctor or young people's drop-in service.

Pastoral and Learning Support (PALS) team (including Seals)

- Effective liaison with other staff is an expected part of the PALs role. All members of the team should act in line with school policies at all times. It is better to think in terms of respect for a pupil's and family's privacy when sharing information. This suggests sharing general guidance about a pupil's difficulties/needs rather than passing on intimate details of conversations, unless there are safeguarding concerns. Members of the PALs team should discuss with the pupil and get their agreement about what to share and with whom, in order to preserve a relationship of trust. If in doubt colleagues should discuss with their line manager how and what information should be shared.

The school nurse and school-based health service:
The government has recognised that for some young people, unless they are able to speak to someone confidentially away from their family, their health and well-being can be at great risk. Health services (including doctors, our school nurse and health drop-in) can offer confidential health services to pupils under the age of 16 providing they follow the Fraser Guidelines which require:

- The young person understands the advice and has sufficient maturity to appreciate what is involved in terms of moral, legal, social and emotional implications for themselves.
- They cannot be persuaded to tell their parents/carers, or allow them to be informed.
- The young person's physical or mental health is likely to suffer unless they receive advice or treatment.
- It is in the young person's best interests to give advice or treatment.

The requirement to offer a confidential service is 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 issue in discussions with a young person.

Parents/Carers 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 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

All staff and governors can normally expect that their personal situations and health will remain confidential unless:

- it endangers pupils or other members of staff
- there is a legal obligation to disclose such information
- it is necessary for legal proceedings
- despite the duty of confidence, the staff member's interest or the wider public interest justifies disclosure.

All Governors are expected to be mindful of the levels of confidentiality required when in knowledge of matters relating to staff and children within school that may have been discussed in Governor meetings.

Breaches of Confidentiality
Any breaches of confidentiality will be treated seriously and investigated by a senior member of staff or officer of the Governing body as appropriate.

Dissemination
This policy should be widely publicised to all in the school community

- with job details to applicants
- through agreements with other agencies working on the school site
- on the school website
- by emphasising links to the to the school's anti-bullying policy and child protection policy and procedures.
- The policy will be written in such a way as to be accessible to pupils, teachers, parents/carers and the wider community.

The following documents may also be referred to in support of this policy. These include:

- **Working together to safeguard children**
- **Keeping children safe in education**
- **Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health**
- **What to do if you are worried a child is being abused**
- **Information Sharing - HIPS Procedures**

APPENDIX 1 – Suggested Service Level Agreement for use with agencies working with pupils.

Organisation……School:……

Named contact:……..

Telephone: …… Fax:……..

Reason for visit: ……

Year Group:…… Class……No. of pupils…….

Aim of sessions:

-
-
-

Expected learning outcomes:

-
-
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BEFORE THE VISIT	
The school will:	The visitor will

- The teacher will be responsible for the behaviour of the pupils.
- The visitor should be aware that the school staff are responsible for the pupils whilst they are in school:
- any materials to be given out should be shared with school staff
- the school had important policies that visitors should be aware of and read such as the confidentiality policy and equal opportunities policy

Equipment required on the day:…….

Date of sessions:…….

Signed – school…… Date: …….

I have had/am willing to undergo a police check.

Signed – organisation ……. Date:…….

APPENDIX 2: 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, 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:

School staff
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. If appropriate we will also support pupils to speak to our Emotional, Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA).

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

School nurse & school health drop-in:
The government has recognised that for some young people, unless they are able to speak to someone confidentially away from their family, their health and well-being can be at great risk. Health services (including doctors, our school nurse and health drop-in) can offer confidential health services (including contraception) to pupils under the age of 16 providing they follow the Fraser Guidelines which require:

• The young person understands the advice and has sufficient maturity to appreciate what is involved in terms of moral, legal, social and emotional implications for themselves.
• They cannot be persuaded to tell their parents/carers, or allow them to be informed.
• The young person's physical or mental health is likely to suffer unless they receive advice or treatment.
• It is in the young person's best interests to give advice or treatment.

The requirement to offer a confidential service is 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 issue in discussions with a young person.

APPENDIX 3: A statement for pupils concerning confidentiality.

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 the Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA). 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 selling drugs or stealing, they will have to speak to one of the senior teachers 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 school counsellor, nurse or Connexions Personal Adviser 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.