



Wychwood School
OXFORD

Confidentiality Guidelines

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Obviously familiarity and the family atmosphere are characteristics of a small school and something that we can take pride in; however, **these guidelines are presented as a way to ensure that girls and staff are protected from breaches of confidentiality within this familiar environment.**

1 Staff to Staff

Certain confidential information will be disseminated on a 'need to know basis' at the discretion of the Head. It should not be assumed that sensitive information about girls or their circumstances has been made available to all staff.

Confidential information shared in staff meetings regarding Child Protection issues, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, EAL, academic performance and statistical data, as well as pastoral issues, matters of Council and the personal circumstances of girls and their families may never be discussed except between staff for professional purposes.

Such confidential information should **not be discussed between staff in public areas.** The staff-room may constitute a public area in certain circumstances and staff will need to be sensitive to this.

Any verbal exchange between staff should be kept between them. Staff should not discuss matters pertaining to the girls or other staff which can be regarded as in any way sensitive with other staff or girls beyond those who need to know. On no account should staff confide in pupils regarding verbal exchanges made whether in meetings or within the confines of the staff-room.

Confidential documents as well as staff meeting agendas (with lists of girls' names) must be kept away from the girls.

2 Staff to Pupil

The Staff have a duty of care to pupils.

Staff should not confide in girls of any age and they should not burden girls with information of a personal nature, either personal to them or personal to a third party.

Staff should not share personal opinions or information on other staff or girls, with girls.

3 Pupil to Staff

Possible Relevant Policies:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Whistle-Blowing Policy
- Allegations Against Staff Policy
- Worries and Complaints for Girls Policy
- Substance Use and Misuse Policy
- Self-Harm Policy
- Pupil ICT, network, Internet and Mobile Phone Acceptable Use Policy
- Acceptable Use guidelines for mobile phones, internet enabled tablets and other similar devices, Missing Persons Policy, Pupil Mental Health and Wellbeing policy
- Independent Listener policy
- A guide to Consent – Children and young people

If a pupil offers confidential information to staff, it is important to be aware of maintaining professional boundaries. Whilst being supportive, professional distance should be maintained and pupils encouraged to access support through the school pastoral system.

Pupils should also be encouraged to share their concerns with parents/guardians.

Staff must be clear to pupils that they cannot offer *unconditional* confidentiality as soon as a pupil begins to talk and there is an expectation of confidentiality.

Pupils should be made aware that if a member of staff believes there is a child protection issue then they are under a duty to inform the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (The Head) who may have to involve other agencies

If a pupil's confidence must be broken, staff must inform the pupil and reassure them that their best interests will be maintained.

The Gap assistants are in a particularly sensitive position. They will be advised on the importance of confidentiality through their induction and it will be expected that any sensitive information that becomes known to them, through whatever means, must be kept away from the girls under their charge. Should information shared with them by girls suggest the possibility of girls being at risk, they should follow 'Pupil to Staff' guidelines, informing the Head.