

CONFIDENTIALITY BETWEEN STUDENTS AND STAFF

There are different guidelines governing the work of College staff and outside agencies seeing students in the College. The purpose of this policy is to clarify the work of College staff.

1. Principles

- 1.1 It is important that students should be able to talk to staff about their concerns, but equally important that they realise there are limits to what can remain confidential.
- 1.2 Staff endeavour at all times to respect each individual's and family/carer's right to privacy.
- 1.3 It is only in the most exceptional cases that the College handles confidential information without parental/carer knowledge.

2. Procedures

- 2.1 Staff are not able to promise absolute confidentiality to a student, and are advised to forewarn students of this if they think it is likely that they are to be told something confidential. This does not mean that such information is broadcast widely; in normal circumstances, only those most immediately concerned with the student's welfare such as form tutor, year leader and senior staff are informed.
- 2.2. Staff at the College accept that our relationship with parents, carers & wider community is based upon trust and respect and endeavour to satisfy concerns raised. It is a partnership where good communication is essential and welcomed. Staff who live and socialise in the local community are careful not to discuss publicly students or staff in a way that could bring the College into disrepute.
- 2.2 Staff do not discuss in class explicit issues raised by an individual about him/herself during the teaching of sex education. Members of staff normally discuss such concerns only with the child's parents. They only speak to the child individually before consulting the parents/carers in exceptional circumstances, such as where a student appears to be in danger or distress, and then do so only in the company of another member of staff.

This means that a student who confides regarding a sexual matter - such as under-age sex, pregnancy or abortion - to a member of staff cannot expect the member of staff to keep the matter wholly confidential. Such a matter would be referred to a senior member of staff for advice, and we would normally expect to inform the student's parents/carers, having discussed with the student the best way and time to do so. That said, the matter would remain confidential to those people, and students can be assured that it would not be passed on to other staff or students as a result of the disclosure. This applies to members of the Sixth Form as well as those under 16.

- 2.3 Staff cannot give an individual student advice on contraception without the knowledge of parents/carers. If individual contraceptive advice is sought, students are encouraged to seek advice and support from their parents/carers and/or be referred to medical professionals or other agencies

who are able to keep confidence. As part of a Sex Education Programme, a member of staff teaches all students in a general way about all types of contraception and from where they can be obtained.

- 2.4 A member of staff must inform the designated Child Protection Officer if abuse is suspected or disclosed by a student, and other agencies are then informed in line with the College's policy on child protection.
- 2.5 A written record of conversations are kept when necessary, circulated in an envelope and initialled by appropriate staff before being kept safely in a locked cabinet separate from main student file for reasons of privacy.
- 2.6 A student has a right to disclose his/her own sexual orientation. If she/he discloses this matter to a member of staff, it remains confidential unless the student asks otherwise.
- 2.7 HIV and Hepatitis B. When it becomes known that a student is HIV positive or has Hepatitis B, this information is passed only to those with immediate care for the student as safety and first aid precautions already in place eliminate any risk of transmission to other students.
- 2.8 Please refer to the College Drugs Policy contained within the Behaviour Management Policy

3.0. Review of Policy

This policy is reviewed every three years by the Learning & Community Committee of the Governing Body.

**Ratified by the Learning Committee of the Governing Body
14th May 2012**