



Nourishing the fitrah of each unique child

Confidentiality Policy

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

"When a man tells something and then notices (around to see if anyone is listening), it (i.e., his words) is an amanah (trust)."

(Sunan Abu Dawud, Hadith No. 4868)

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Confidentiality Policy

At Unique Academy, we believe that the individual child is at the centre of the learning process. With this in mind, we are committed to providing a secure school environment. Unique Academy is committed to upholding and safeguarding the information it receives and there is an expectation that a professional approach will be implemented in matters of confidentiality.

Aim

At Unique Academy, we aim to:

- Protect the child at all times and give all staff and volunteers clear, unambiguous guidance as to their legal and professional roles, and ensure good practice throughout the school which is understood by pupils, parents/carers and staff
- Ensure that staff, parents and pupils are aware of the school's Confidentiality Policy and procedures.
- Reassure pupils that their best interests will be maintained
- Encourage children to talk to their teachers
- Ensure that pupils and parents/carers know that school staff cannot offer unconditional confidentiality.
- Ensure that if there is a child protection issue then the correct procedure is followed
- Ensure 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
- Ensure that all staff and volunteers adhere to the school Confidentiality policy which is underpinned by the school's Islamic ethos

Definition of Confidentiality

The dictionary definition of confidential is "something which is spoken or given in confidence, private, entrusted with another's secret affairs".

When speaking confidentially to someone, the confider has the belief that the confidant will not discuss the content of the conversation with another. The confider is asking for the content of the conversation to be kept secret. Anyone offering absolute confidentiality to someone else would be offering to keep the content of his or her conversation completely secret and discuss it with no one.

In practice, there are few situations where absolute confidentiality is offered. We have to strike a balance between ensuring the safety, well-being and protection of our pupils and staff, ensuring there is an ethos of trust where pupils and staff can ask for help when they need it - and ensuring that when it is essential to share personal information, child protection procedures and good practice are followed.

This means that in most cases what is on offer is limited confidentiality. Disclosure of the content of a conversation could be discussed with professional colleagues but the confider would not be identified except in certain circumstances.

The general rule is that all staff and volunteers must regard private discussions as confidential. Private conversations must not be disclosed to other members of staff or parents/guardians. However, matters which pertain to children's safety and well-being must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL), Hounslow LADO or police, as appropriate – see the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. In which case, the pupil must be informed when a confidence has to be broken for the child's own safety.

Different Levels Of Confidentiality Are Appropriate For Different Circumstances

1. In the classroom during the course of a lesson given by a member of teaching staff or an outside visitor, including health professionals.

Careful thought needs to be given to the content of the lesson, setting the climate and establishing ground rules to ensure confidential disclosures are not made. It should be made clear to pupils that this is not the time or place to disclose confidential, personal information. When a health professional is contributing to a school health education programme in a classroom setting, s/he is working with the same boundaries of confidentiality as a teacher.

2. One-to-one disclosure to members of school staff (including voluntary staff).

It is essential that all members of staff know the limits of the confidentiality they can offer to both pupils and parents/carers and any required actions and sources of further support or help available, both for the pupil or parent/carer and for the staff member within the school. This includes support/advice from other agencies, where appropriate. All staff at Unique Academy should encourage pupils to discuss difficult issues with their parents or carers, and vice versa. However, the needs of the pupil are paramount and school staff will not automatically share information about the pupil with his/her parents/carers unless it is considered to be in the child's best interests.

Note: when concerns for a child or young person come to the attention of staff, for example through observation of behaviour or injuries or disclosure, however insignificant this might appear to be, the member of staff should discuss this with one of the Designated Safeguarding Leads as soon as possible. More serious concerns must be reported immediately to ensure that any intervention necessary to protect the child is accessed as early as possible. Please see Unique Academy's Safeguarding Policy.

The Legal Position For School Staff

School staff (including non-teaching and voluntary staff) should not promise confidentiality. Pupils do not have the right to expect that incidents will not be reported to his/her parents/carers and may not, in the absence of an explicit promise, assume that information conveyed outside that context is private. No member of this school's staff can or should give such a promise. The safety, well-being and protection of the child is the paramount consideration in all decisions staff at Unique Academy make about confidentiality. School staff are not obliged to break confidentiality except where child protection is or may be an issue, however, we believe it is important staff are able to share their concerns about pupils with colleagues in a professional and supportive way, on a need-to-know basis, to ensure staff receive the guidance and support they need and the pupils' safety and well-being is maintained. Unique Academy staff should discuss such concerns with the DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead).

Teachers And Health Professionals

Professional judgement is required by a teacher or health professional in considering whether he or she should indicate to a child that the child could make a disclosure in confidence and whether such a confidence could then be maintained having heard the information. In exercising their professional judgement, the teacher, or health professional must consider the best interests of the child including the need to both ensure trust to provide safeguards for our children and possible child protection issues. All staff at Unique Academy receive basic training in safeguarding and child protection as part of their induction and are expected to follow the Safeguarding Policy and procedures. Any concerns should be discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Visitors And Non-Teaching Staff

At Unique Academy, we expect all non-teaching staff, including voluntary staff, to report any disclosures by pupils or parents/carers, of a concerning personal nature to the Designated Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible after the disclosure and in an appropriate setting, so others cannot overhear. This is to ensure the safety, protection and well-being of all our pupils and staff. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will decide what, if any, further action needs to be taken, both to ensure the pupil gets the help and support they need and that the member of staff also gets the support and supervision they need.

Parents

At Unique Academy, we believe that it is essential to work in partnership with parents and carers and we endeavour to keep parents/carers abreast of their child's progress at school, including any concerns about their progress or behaviour. However, we also need to maintain a balance so that our pupils can share any concerns and ask for help when they need it. Where a pupil does discuss a difficult personal matter, staff at school, will be encouraged to also discuss the matter with their parents or carer themselves. The safety, well-being and protection of our pupils is the paramount consideration in all decisions staff at this school make about confidentiality.

When Confidentiality Should Be Broken And Procedures For Doing This

- See the Safeguarding Policy – generally any situation where the health, well-being or safety of a child is in question.
- Where this does not apply, and you are still concerned and unsure of whether the information should be passed on or other action taken you should speak to the Headteacher
- If the Headteacher issues instructions that they should be kept informed, all staff must comply. There is always a good reason for this, which you may not know about.

Principles Of Confidential Discussion

- Ensure the time and place for a discussion are appropriate. When they are not, we reassure the child that we understand that they need to discuss something very important and that it warrants time, space and privacy. See the child normally (and always in cases of neglect, or abuse) before the end of the school day. More serious concerns must be reported immediately to ensure that any intervention necessary to protect the child is accessed as early as possible.
- Tell the child we cannot guarantee confidentiality if we think they will:
 - hurt themselves
 - hurt someone else
 - or they tell us that someone is hurting them or others
- Do not interrogate the child or ask leading questions.
- Do not put children in the position of having to repeat distressing matters to several people but we will inform the pupil first before any confidential information is shared, with the reasons for this.
- Encourage the pupil, whenever possible, to confide in his/her own parents/carers

Ground Rules To Be Used In Lessons

We adopt ground rules to ensure a safe environment for teaching, in particular during PSHE/RSE lessons when topics pertain to personal safety and/or safeguarding. This reduces anxiety among pupils and staff and minimises unconsidered, unintended personal disclosures.

- We won't ask each other or the teacher any personal questions
- We will respect each other and not laugh, tease or hurt others
- We won't say things we want to keep confidential (private)
- We can pass or opt out of something if it makes us feel uncomfortable
- If we do find out things about other pupils, which are personal and private, we won't talk about it outside the lesson, but
- If we are worried about someone else's safety we tell a teacher

Support For Staff

Staff may have support needs themselves in dealing with some of the personal issues of our pupils. At Unique Academy, we prefer you to ask for help rather than possibly make a poor decision because you don't have all the facts or the necessary training or take worries about pupils' homes with you. There are many agencies we can refer pupils to who need additional support and we have procedures to ensure this happens. We all work together as part of a team to support our pupils and asking for help is a way we ensure certain staff have supervision sessions to support them.

Onward Referral

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is normally responsible for referring pupils to outside agencies. If there is an emergency safeguarding concern, following a discussion, the DSL is unavailable, advice should be sought from the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL).