

## **CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY**

This policy will be reviewed annually or in response to changes in legislation		
Created	February 2008	Vice Principal
Last Review	August 2022	Compliance Manager
Approved	September 2022	Principals and Heads
Next Review	September 2023	Compliance Manager

This Policy applies to all year groups at Thomas's Schools, including the EYFS. This Policy should be read in conjunction with Thomas's Data Protection Policy, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, PSHE Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, RSE Policy, Terms and Conditions.

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Thomas's aims to provide a secure and safe environment in which children feel that they can express themselves confidently and freely. It is committed to using creative and positive ways for the child's voice to be heard whilst recognising the responsibility to use, hold and safeguard information received, and to address the issues which may arise about confidentiality.

### **2. AIMS**

- To protect and maintain the best interests of the child at all times, irrespective of gender, race, religion, medical concerns or special educational needs and to give all staff involved clear, unambiguous guidance as to their legal and professional roles.
- To provide consistent messages in school about handling information about a child once it has been received.
- To ensure that confidentiality is a whole school issue and that in lessons ground rules set are for the protection of all
- To ensure good practice through the Thomas's community, which is understood by pupils, parents/carers and staff.

### **3. PROCEDURES**

#### **3.1 Ground rules**

Teachers must understand that in lessons where personal issues are discussed, such as RSE or PSHE sessions, this can lead to disclosures that need sensitive handling and, in some cases, may be a safeguarding matter. Ground rules, established at the beginning of the lesson, are essential. These can include:

- no intimate personal questions are to be asked of pupil, teacher or visiting speaker

- no disclosure of intimate personal details in the classroom setting; case studies or distancing techniques may be used to examine situations and choices.
- no gossiping about personal matters by pupils or teachers outside the lessons
- if the teacher feels a question is inappropriate for the setting he/she will attend to it later on an individual basis

In addition children are made aware of the contents of the Confidentiality Policy, in terms appropriate to their age, each year at the beginning of the RSE teaching programme.

### *3.2 Personal disclosures*

- All members of staff must be prepared to listen to pupils' disclosures sympathetically and without making judgements. However:
  - no member of staff can guarantee unconditional confidentiality to pupils and pupils must be made aware of this
  - if it is considered necessary to breach confidentiality in the best interests of the child, the pupil will be informed first and given appropriate support
  - pupils will be encouraged to talk to their parents
  - the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy will be followed if there is any possibility of abuse
- If a disclosure from a pupil takes place at an inappropriate time or place, the teacher should arrange to see the pupil individually before the end of the school day.
- In all but the most exceptional circumstances parents will be informed and the pupil will be encouraged to talk to the parents.
- The teacher may be able to discuss the issue with an appropriate colleague without mentioning the child's name.
- If the teacher considers that any aspect of a disclosure may be a safeguarding issue the following action should be taken:
  - The teacher should consult the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
  - The DSL, in discussion with the pupil, must see that the Head and where appropriate inform the parents
  - The DSL should follow the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and ensure that help and support are available for the pupil and the family.
- If a pupil tells a teacher that he or she is sexually active or is thinking of becoming so, this should be regarded as a safeguarding issue and the correct procedure followed.

## **4. MONITORING**

The DSL and the Head will monitor the number and type of disclosures requiring breach of confidentiality in order to assess the implications for the School's PSHE and RSE programme.

## **5. LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE**

This Policy bears due regard to the following statutory guidance and other advice.

DfE statutory guidance 'Keeping children safe in education (September 2022)

HM Gov guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (July 2018),

DfE advice 'The Prevent Duty' (June 2015) from The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (2015)

DfE advice 'Information Sharing' (March 2015)