

# CONFIDENTIALITY

---

## Definition of Confidentiality

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

We have tried to strike a balance between ensuring the safety, well being and protection of our students and staff, ensuring there is an ethos of trust where students, staff and Parents/Carers can ask for help when they need it and ensuring that when it is essential to share personal information child protection protocols and good practice are followed.

## At Thomas Estley Community College we believe that:

- The safety, well being and protection of our students are the paramount consideration in all decisions staff make about confidentiality.
- College staff (including support and voluntary staff) **should not promise confidentiality**. However, staff are NOT obliged to break confidentiality except where child protection is or may be an issue.
- The sharing of personal information should be kept to a **minimum**. However, it is important in some situations that staff are able to share their concerns about students 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 students' safety and well being is maintained.
- Everyone in the College needs to know the limits of confidentiality that can be offered by individuals within the College community so that they know the most appropriate person to talk to about any health, sex and relationship or other personal issue they want to discuss.
- **The general rule is that staff should make clear that there are limits to confidentiality, at the beginning of the conversation. These limits relate to ensuring children's safety and well being. The student will be informed when a confidence has to be broken for this reason.**
- 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 College, including any concerns about their progress or behaviour. However, we also need to maintain a balance so that our students can share any concerns and ask for help when they need it. Where a student does discuss a difficult personal matter with staff at Thomas Estley Community College, they will be encouraged to also discuss the matter with their parent or carer themselves. It is the professional and privileged position of all staff that they are aware that they must not discuss out of College privileged information.
- If a **child protection** issue arises – refer to:  
  
Any Team Leader – all are Child Protection trained  
Cathy Cornelius, Vice Principal and Designated Child Protection Officer  
  
If unavailable refer to:  
  
Mandi Collins - Principal  
Richard Fegan - Vice Principal

# CONFIDENTIALITY

---

## **Guidance**

Staff may need support in dealing with some of the personal issues of our students. At Thomas Estley Community College we prefer you to ask for help rather than being unsure about a decision or taking worries about students home with you. We all work together as part of a team to support our students and asking for help is a way to ensure Thomas Estley Community College is a happy and safe learning environment.

Different levels of confidentiality are appropriate for different circumstances.

### **In the classroom**

- In the course of a lesson given by a member of teaching staff or an outside visitor, including health professionals, it should be made clear to students 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.

### **One to One** (Disclosures to Members of College Staff including Voluntary Staff)

- All members of staff know the limits of the confidentiality they can offer to both students and parents/carers and any required actions and sources of further support or help available both for the students or parent/carer and for the staff member within the College and from other agencies, where appropriate.
- All staff at this College encourage students to discuss difficult issues with their parents or carers, and vice versa.
- The needs of the student are paramount and College staff will not automatically share information about the student with his/her parents/carers unless it is considered to be in the child's best interest.

### **Disclosure to a Counsellor, School Nurse or Health Professional Operating a Confidential Service in the College**

- Health professionals such as school nurses can give confidential medical advice to students provided they are competent to do so and follow the Fraser Guidelines (guidelines for doctors and other health professionals on giving medical advice to under 16s).
- School nurses are skilled in discussing issues and possible actions with young people and always have in mind the need to encourage students to discuss issues with their parents or carers.
- The needs of the student are paramount and the school nurse will not insist that a student's parents or carers are informed about any advice or treatment they give.

### **Contraceptive Advice and Pregnancy**

The DoH has issued guidance (July 2004) which clarifies and confirms that health professionals owe young people under 16 the same duty of care and confidentiality as older patients. It sets out principles of good practice in providing contraception and sexual health advice to under 16s. The duty of care and confidentiality applies to all under 16s. Whether a young person is competent to consent to treatment or is in serious danger is judged by the health professional on the circumstances of each individual case, not solely on the age of the patient. However, the younger the patient the greater the concern that they may be being abused or exploited. The Guidance makes it clear that health professionals must make time to explore whether there may be coercion or abuse. Cases of concern would be referred through child protection procedures. The Government Guidance, "Working Together to Safeguard Children" was updated in April 2014.

# CONFIDENTIALITY

---

## **Involvement of the Staff, Students, Parents/Carers, School Nurse and Governors in Developing this Confidentiality Policy**

- Staff, students, parents/carers, school nurse and governors were consulted to establish this policy.
- It forms part of the induction of all new staff, including voluntary staff and will be reviewed on a regular basis.
- Guidelines during induction on confidentiality and sharing information through appropriate channels.

## **Links to Other College Policies and Procedures**

This policy is intended to be used in conjunction with the following policies:

Child Protection  
Personal Development  
Drugs Education  
Sex and Relationships  
Anti-Bullying  
Behaviour Management  
Individual Educational Needs  
Data Protection/Freedom of Information

## **Equality Monitoring**

Thomas Estley Community College's commitment to equality and diversity means that this policy, via an Equality Impact Assessment, has been screened in relation to the use of gender-neutral language, recognition of the needs of disabled people, promotion of the positive duty in relation to race, age, disability and avoidance of stereotypes.

Based on the Equality Impact Assessment findings, this policy is judged to be of low impact against the equality strands of Race, Gender, Religion, Disability Sexual Orientation and Age. A copy of the Equality Impact Assessment of this policy is available from the Principal's PA.

This Policy is available in alternative formats on request. If you think we can improve the fairness of this Policy, please contact the individual who has responsibility for its update.