

Confidentiality Policy



Overview

- The safety, well-being and protection of our students are the paramount considerations in all decisions staff, at DMT, make about confidentiality. The appropriate sharing of information between staff is an essential element in ensuring our pupils' well-being and safety.
- It is an essential part of the ethos of DMT that trust is established to enable pupils, staff, and parents/carers to seek help both within and outside the company. We, therefore, minimise information sharing to those occasions which are appropriate to ensure students and staff are supported and safe.
- Students, parents/carers and staff need to know the boundaries of confidentiality in order to feel safe and comfortable in discussing personal issues and concerns.
- The companies' attitude to confidentiality is open and easily understood and everyone should be able to trust the boundaries of confidentiality operating within the company.
- Everyone in the DMT community needs to know that no one can offer absolute confidentiality and that there are limits of confidentiality that can be offered by individuals within the DMT community - so they can make informed decisions about the most appropriate person to talk to.

The expectation of Confidentiality

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 students and staff, ensuring there is an ethos of trust where students 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 staff should make clear at the beginning of the conversation that there are limits to confidentiality. 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 and will be encouraged to do this for themselves whenever this is possible.

Different levels of confidentiality are appropriate for different circumstances

1. In the classroom in the course of a lesson given by a member of teaching staff or an outside visitor.
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. (With regards to an outside visitor, s/he is working with the same boundaries of confidentiality as a regular teacher).
2. One to one disclosures to members of school staff (including voluntary staff). It is essential all members of staff know the limits of the confidentiality they can offer to both students and parents/carers, any required actions and sources of further support or help available, both for the student or parent/carer and for the staff member within the company. This includes support/advice from other agencies, where appropriate. All staff within the company encourage pupils to discuss difficult issues with their parents or carers. However, the needs of the students are paramount and company 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 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 Vincent Martin the Designated Safeguarding Lead 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 the Child Protection Policy.

The legal position for Company staff

Staff (including non-teaching and voluntary staff) should not promise confidentiality. Students 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 company'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 make about confidentiality. Company staff are not obliged to break confidentiality except where child protection is or may be an issue, however, at DMT we believe it is important 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. DMT staff should discuss such concerns with their line manager/supervisor or the DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead).

Teachers and Staff (including Voluntary staff)

Professional judgement is required by a teacher in considering whether he or she should indicate to a child that they 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 must consider the best interests of the child, including the need to both ensure trust to provide safeguards for our pupils and possible child protection issues.

All staff at DMT receive basic training in child protection as part of their induction to the company and are expected to follow the Child Protection Policy and procedures. Any concerns should be discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Parents/carers

DMT believes 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, 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 staff at school, they will be encouraged to also discuss the matter with their parent or carer themselves.

The safety, well-being and protection of our students is the paramount consideration in all decisions staff at the company make about confidentiality.

Complex cases: Where there are areas of doubt about the sharing of information, a consultation should be sought with the relevant West Sussex County Council Department (information available through the Designated Safeguarding Lead).

Declaration

On behalf of the Vincent Martin Company of Dance and Musical Theatre we the undersigned will oversee the implementation of the confidentiality policy and take all necessary steps to ensure it is adhered to.

Signed:

Name in print:

Position of person:

Date:

[The Vincent Martin School of Dance and Musical Theatre](#)

www.danceandmusicaltheatre.com

DMT.VMartin@outlook.com

01293 217 665