

# Hurworth School Maths and Computing College

## Confidentiality Policy

**Accepted by:** Governing Body – January 2009

**Senior Leadership Team Lead Reviewer:** James Keating

**Review Cycle:** 3 Years

**Date for Review:** January 2012

This confidentiality policy supports the Sex and Relationships Policy and will be discussed and reviewed with pupils, parents, teachers and governors along with the SRE policy and programme of study.

### Legal responsibilities

*There is no legislation relating specifically to confidentiality in schools. There is government guidance on confidentiality but this is not legally binding.*

### Aims

The aims of this confidentiality policy are

- To complement the SRE policy and make teachers aware that effective SRE education brings an understanding of what is and is not acceptable, this can sometimes lead to disclosure of a child protection issue.
- To provide guidance for all teachers, parents and governors when disclosures are made –reference should be made to the Child Protection Policy.
- To provide procedures that all teachers should follow in the event of a disclosure - reference should be made to the Child Protection Policy.
- To protect pupils' welfare and interests
- To protect teachers' welfare.

### Sources of support for pupils

Effective SRE should enable and encourage young people to talk to a trusted adult if they are having sexual intercourse or contemplating doing so. It is desirable, although not always possible, that person should be their parent or carer. The law allows health professionals to see and in some circumstances to treat young people confidentially, and part of this process includes counselling and discussion about talking to parents. In order to be able to take responsibility for their actions, young people need to be more generally aware of the law in relation to sexual activity and local confidential services.

Pupils should be made aware of these services through PSHCE lessons and afternoon tutorial. **(Teachers should note that when discussing sexual issues through the PSHCE curriculum, they should *negotiate and establish ground rules to prevent inappropriate disclosures.*** These services are also made available through:

- The school nurse - who is on site every Tuesday lunchtime for a drop in session;

- The counselling service, available one day a week – this is available for pupils to self refer;
- A notice board containing telephone numbers of a range of services.
- Notice boards on back of pupil toilet doors containing telephone numbers of a range of services.
- Safe Zone – a directory of services that is issued to all pupils in years 10, 11.

Nonetheless, there may be cases where a teacher learns from an under 16 year old that they are having or contemplating having, sexual intercourse. In these circumstances teachers should practise the following procedure:

### **Procedure in the event of a pupil disclosure – Please refer in detail to the Child Protection Policy**

When a pupil divulges information of a sensitive nature, the teacher must ensure that the pupil is aware that they *cannot offer unconditional confidentiality*. However, they should reassure pupils that, *if confidentiality has to be broken, they will inform them first*. The teacher should reassure the pupil that their best interests will be maintained and **they should encourage the pupil to talk to their parents or carers**.

If disclosure occurs at an inappropriate time or place, the teacher should talk to the pupil again before the end of the school day.

The issue must then be passed on to a senior member of staff (Head of Pastoral / Child Protection Officer). The teacher may be able to discuss the issue without giving the name of the pupil and the Head of Pastoral will assess the situation and make the decision whether or not to inform parents or pass the matter on as a child protection issue.

In the event of the information **not** being a child protection issue, the teacher with whom the pupil first made contact may continue support the child – assuming the teacher is completely comfortable doing so. *However, this must be done with the full knowledge and cooperation of the Head of Pastoral.*

In the event of this disclosure being from a child under 16 who is having or contemplating sexual intercourse, a teacher should sign post areas where support and advice can be gained. Primarily school nurse or their own doctor.

### **Child Protection**

If a member of the school staff suspects that a child is a victim of abuse or they have reason to believe that he/she is at risk of abuse, they should inform the Head of Pastoral / child protection officer as soon as possible. The school regularly updates staff on Child Protection Procedures and all staff have had the opportunity to complete level one training in this area.

## **Informing Parents**

It is only in *exceptional circumstances* that a teacher should be in a position of having to handle information without parental knowledge. The decision to inform parents is the responsibility of the Head of Pastoral – who must be informed of *any* disclosure. Where young pupils are concerned (11 – 15yrs old) this will be grounds for serious concern and child protection issues should be addressed. It is the responsibility of the Head of Pastoral to inform the head teacher and governors of circumstances when parents have not been informed.

**NB. If there is no child protection issue, schools do not have a legal responsibility to inform parents if the child is above the age of 12 yrs. This will be left to the discretion of the Head of Pastoral.**

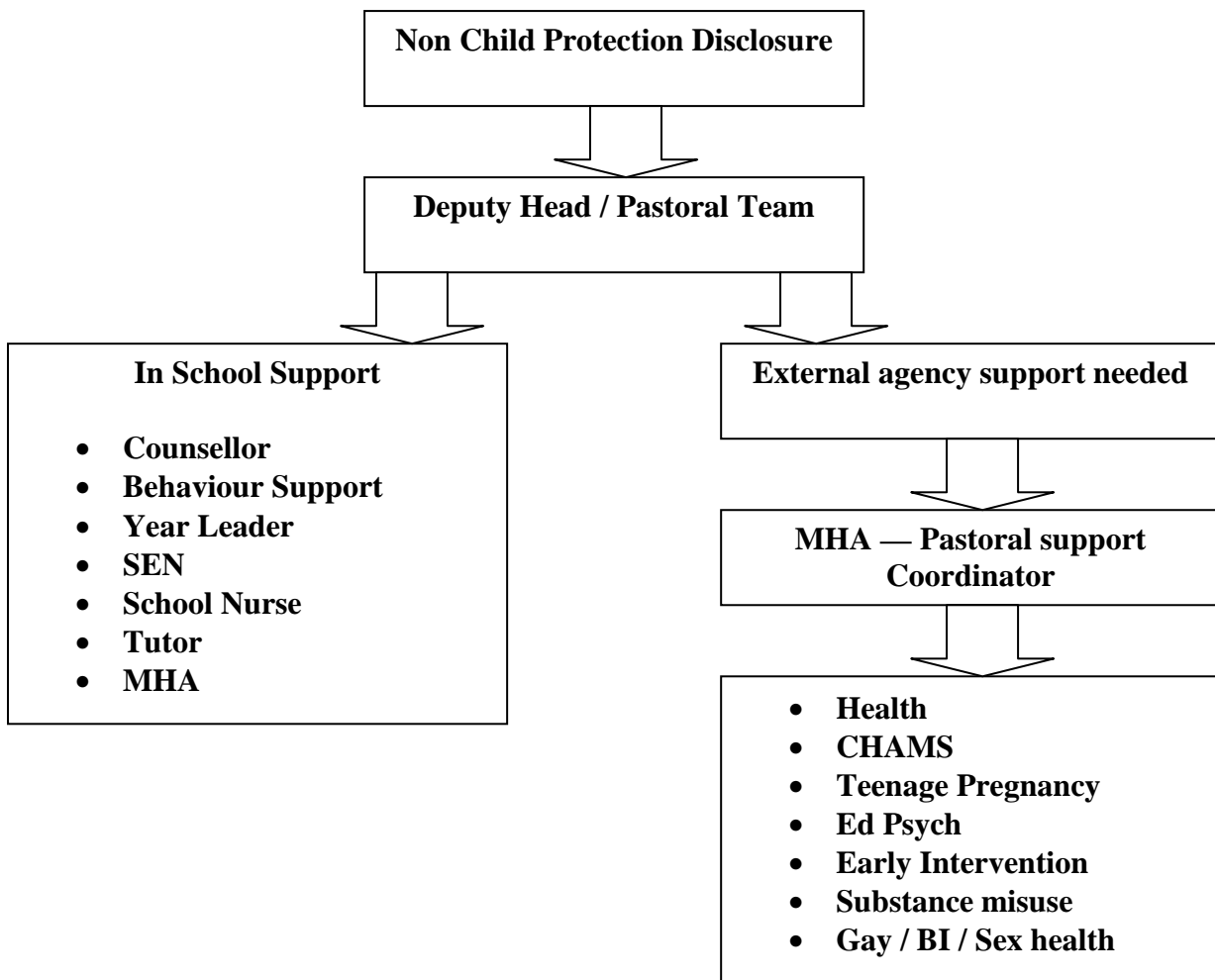
## **Head Teachers and governors**

The Head Teacher and governors should monitor the frequency of cases of non parental involvement and should be aware that this may indicate deficiencies of young people's awareness, or confidence in, sources of confidential medical advice. This issue should be put on the agenda at the next SRE review meeting.

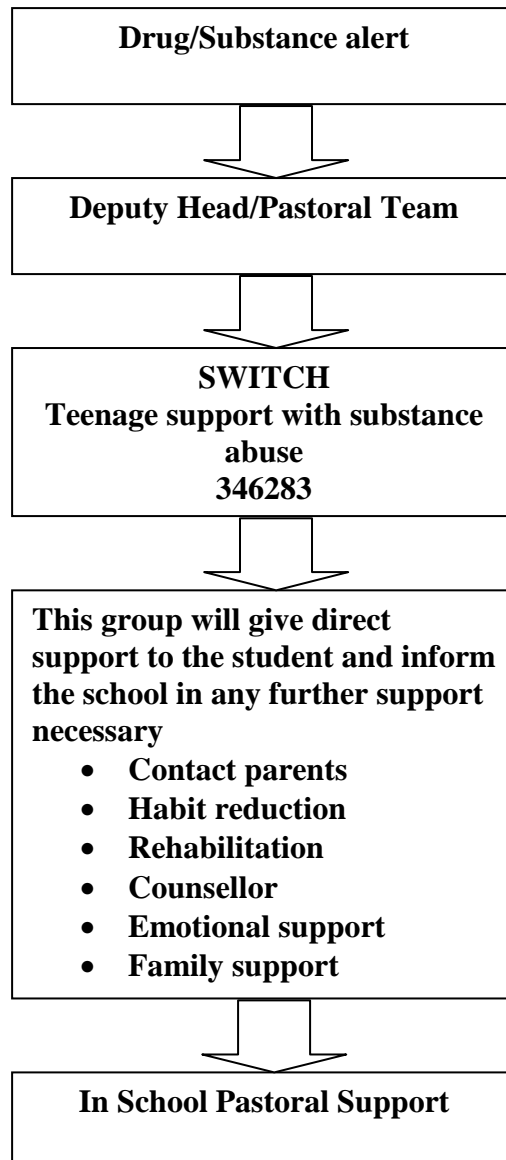
## **Health professionals**

Health professionals are bound by their professional codes of conduct to maintain confidentiality. In school, they will be bound by our SRE and Confidentiality policies and will be issued with copies of both. In a classroom situation they should prevent inappropriate personal disclosures by negotiating ground rules and using distancing techniques (See appendix B in SRE policy).

## Non Child Protection Disclosure Flowchart



## **Drug and Substance Flowchart**



## **Pregnancy Flowchart**

