

Date of Issue: May 2003
Procedure Identification Code: S11-2



Confidentiality Policy

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

Definition

The term CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION is defined as personal information that will only be shared with other appropriate people who need to know. The “test” for the “need to know” is whether the interests of the individual, or others will be adversely affected if the information remains unshared.

The word CONFIDENTIAL is used in connection with personal information. Learners need to be aware that solely personal matters shared with a member of staff will be respected and remain confidential. However, in some cases, information will need to be shared with other staff, work places or others.

General Principles

The College regards data about individual learners as confidential and will not release confidential data to a third party, or publish data on individuals without the express permission of the originator. The originator is taken to be the individual to whom the data relates. Data will be held in both paper and computerised form for College use only.

Data Collection and Data Exchange

It is necessary for the College to collect personal data on individuals for monitoring and funding purposes. We are required to publish statistical data to the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). This is normally supplied in order to subject the data to further analysis.

Named data about individual learners will not normally be released to any person or persons other than College staff and the LSC. The DfES and LSC will be provided with a copy of anonymised individual data about learners or staff solely for their own use.

To ensure that individual confidentiality is protected, analysis using data defining learners by ethnicity, disability, age or date of birth, qualifications on entry, qualifications obtained on leaving will not be released where groupings contain fewer than five individuals.

Data Protection Act

The data holdings and general interests of the College are registered under the Data Protection Act (DPA) 1984.

An individual learner (the originator) has the right to request a copy of the confidential data held by the College about them. Such data will be released on receipt of a written request from the individual to the College within 5 working days. Proof of identity may be required.

Oral Information

Students wishing to speak to a member of staff in confidence should be aware that if the information disclosed is such that:

- the well-being of the learner
- the well-being of the staff or fellow learners
- the well-being of staff or fellow learners at a work placement

may be at risk, then the member of staff to whom such disclosures are made will be at liberty, with the student's knowledge wherever possible, to refer to:-

- a more senior member of staff at College
- the appropriate member of staff at work placement.

Tutors need to be able to discuss with a colleague, or their manager/s, information about learners as and when necessary.

Work Placement

Learners should be aware that information given to either a tutor or placement officer visiting the work placement for the purpose of specific or general assessment may be disclosed to either:-

- a more senior member of staff at College
- a fellow course tutor or member of the Work Based Learning Team

Access to Staff Information

Requests for personal information about staff, e.g. telephone numbers, will not be given out without their permission.

Monitoring of Confidentiality Process

The College will undertake a monitoring process to evaluate the success of this policy. Any specific concern should be brought to the attention of a member of staff as soon as possible so that it can be resolved.