



# READING BLUE COAT SCHOOL

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## Interviewing Pupils Policy

### Introduction

Reading Blue Coat School recognises that in any interview the safety and well-being of the pupil or pupils are paramount, and that every possible account must be taken of their rights and needs. This Policy offers guidance on measures to protect the rights of the pupil, and also on how to avoid misunderstanding and complaints against the member(s) of staff undertaking the interview. In addition, staff should endeavour to follow best practice as outlined below, including making contemporaneous written records of the interview which should have explanations for any divergence from these procedures. Whenever staff interview pupils the advice given in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy must be followed.

### Procedures

While at school pupils could be interviewed by staff for a variety of reasons, these interviews being called by either staff or pupils. It would be impractical to outline procedures to cover all possibilities. Instead, the following procedures offer advice based on the overarching principles outlined in the Policy Statement.

#### Academic interviews:

If the interview is one-to-one then staff should ensure that the venue is sufficiently public and the time of day during normal school hours. Leave doors open; ideally have a desk in between pupil(s) and staff; it is sensible to make a record in your planner/diary of the time of the meeting and the people involved.

#### Pastoral/tutorial interviews:

As above if the discussion is about everyday matters. You are advised to take notes of the meeting as a record. These should be filed with the Head of Year as appropriate.

#### Pastoral/personal interviews:

If you feel that the interview may stray into personal issues, you may be tempted to offer greater privacy (e.g. closed doors). This is not good practice. If the pupil has his/her back to an open door and you are further into the room (ideally the other side of a desk - 'for taking notes') but able to see out to the corridor then experience suggests they will feel sufficiently private, and you are protected. Offering them another person to be with them (or an additional member of staff) is sensible – they can only say 'no, thank you'. Take notes. Do not offer confidentiality. In almost all cases the notes should subsequently be shared with Head of Year, Deputy Head – Pastoral or the Second Master. In the case of a

Child Protection matter the Deputy Head – Pastoral, who is the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or the DSLs, Miss Natalie Evans and Mrs Lisa Bennett, must be informed.

## Disciplinary interviews or interviewing pupils following an incident.

The guiding principle is that we should do our best to ensure that any pupil is interviewed only once about an incident, whether as witness or alleged perpetrator. This means that it will need planning. The interview should be carried out by the Head of Year or a member of Senior Leadership.

For serious offences two members of staff should always be in the interview.

The member of staff conducting the interview should concentrate on ascertaining the facts and resolving inconsistencies. The decision on any punishment/action will in most cases be taken after the interview in consultation between staff, and the pupil(s) then advised subsequently.

Detailed notes must be taken, either at the time or immediately after, and distributed to the Tutor, Head of Year, Deputy Head – Pastoral, the Second Master, Headmaster and a copy sent to the Second Master's Secretary so it can be placed on SIMS.

A member of staff not in the pastoral leadership team coming across an incident should seek to investigate only as far as finding out the nature of the incident before passing the matter on, and taking any pupils involved, as quickly as possible to the relevant Head of Year or a member of senior leadership if it is at all serious.

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