



COTTESMORE SCHOOL

Independent Listener Policy

Introduction

The school has a system whereby any child who wishes to talk to an independent adult can do so. Cottesmore's Independent Listener is a daughter of one of the Governance Advisors.

The Independent listener system is confidential and the independent listener is under no obligation to inform the school of any calls. The school also has access to a local counsellor.

Notes on Independent Listeners

The National Minimum Standards for Boarding Standards (NMS) requires schools to appoint an independent listener, as a possible 'safety valve' for pupils with concerns or problems.

The following procedure is to be followed in any appointments:

1. Appointment procedures to follow the NMS Staff recruitment standards.
2. The position is subject to the usual child protection, welfare and 'whistle-blowing' requirements
3. Offer an appropriate job description and briefing / induction
4. Make it clear that the position, which is an unpaid and voluntary role, is independent of the main lines of school management, but still subject to the school's specification and organisation
5. Ensure Independent Listener's knowledge of 'school norms and expectations'
6. There needs to be an awareness of perception of Independent Listener's other roles (eg policewoman, governor, doctor, vicar, counsellor, local dignitary)
7. There must be clear rules on confidentiality – and duty to breach if informed of safeguarding risk to pupil or other pupils and there must be no absolute guarantees of secrecy
8. Clarify relationship with his / her own other professional expectations and codes – religious, medical
9. Increase pupils awareness – person, role, rules, access