

St. John's C of E Primary School



Policy for Confidentiality

Legal Requirements

Human Rights Act 1998

Gives everyone the right to “respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence”, unless this is overridden: by the pupil interest, for reasons of child protection, for the protection of public safety, pupil order, health or morals or for the rights and freedoms of others.

Data Protection Act 1998

Applies to personal data of living, identified viable individuals, not anonymised data, manual and electronic records. Schools need to be clear, when collecting personal data, what purposes it will be used for and schools should have policies to clarify this to staff, pupils and parents.

Freedom of Information Act 2000

Amends the Data Protection Act. Gives everyone the right to request any records a public body, including schools, holds about them. A school may withhold information it has if it is considered the information may damage the recipient, if disclosed. School data or record keeping policy should also cover the requirements of this act.

Children's Act 2004

The Children's Act, 2004, sets out the following objectives under the every child matters agenda:

- Children and Young People are mentally and emotionally healthy
- Children and Young People are sexually healthy
- Children and Young People choose not to take illegal drugs
- Children and Young People are safe from maltreatment, neglect, violence and sexual exploitation
- Children and Young People have security, stability and be cared for

Aims of the Confidentiality Policy

- To provide clear guidance to all members of the school community around confidentiality.
- To encourage children to talk to a trusted adult if they are having problems.
- To ensure all adults working in school deal confidently with sensitive issues.

This Confidentiality Policy impacts upon every other school policy.

Moral and Values Framework

The moral and values framework within which confidentiality is addressed should be consistent with the overarching aims of the school and should be easily translated into practice in terms of:

- The curriculum content
- The teaching methods
- The relationships within the school

Equal Opportunities Statement

St. John's C of E Primary School is committed towards equal opportunities in all aspects of school life.

Specific Issues

All adults working in our school

- Implement the Child Protection Policy.

- Encourage children to be open with their parents/carers.
- Must maintain professional standards of confidentiality about anything seen or heard within the school.
- Who has a concern about a child, but does not feel they know the child's circumstances well enough to make a judgement about procedure, that adult should discuss their concerns with the child's class teacher who will have greater knowledge of the child, at an appropriate place and time.
- Should adhere to and enforce the school's procedures for the taking of and use of photographs and video recording in school.
- No child's personal details will be given out over the telephone until the validity of the request has been ascertained via a returned call.
- Unconditional confidentiality should never be given.
- If an adult receives external information that leads them to believe there is a child protection issue, they could refer the information to the child protection coordinator.
- Adults should be sensitive when discussing an individual child's behaviour in the presence of another child.
- No adult should enter into detailed discussion about a child's behaviour or academic progress with other children or their parents.

Governors' Meetings

- Governors, in particular those sitting on discipline committees, will not divulge details about individuals (be they staff, families or individual children) to any person outside of the meeting.
- Governors need to be mindful that from time to time issues are discussed or brought to their attention about staff and children. Governors must observe complete confidentiality when asked to do so by the governing body, especially in relation to matters concerning individual staff, children or parents/carers. Although decisions reached at governors' meetings are normally made public through the minutes or otherwise, the discussions on which decisions are based should be confidential.

Information held about children

- Information about children will be shared with parents/carers but only about their child. Parents/carers will not have access to any other child's marks and progress grades at any time. However, parents/carers should be aware that information about their child will be shared with the receiving school, if and when they change school.
- All personal information about children including social services records are regarded as confidential. The Headteacher will decide who will have access, and whether those concerned have access to all, or only selected information.
- Information regarding health reports such as speech therapy, medical reports, SN reports, SN minutes of meetings, Social Care and Health Services will be kept securely.

In the classroom

- Ground rules and distancing techniques will be used where sensitive issues are to be addressed e.g. drugs education, sex and relationships education.
- All adults should not put pressure on children to disclose personal information and should discourage from applying any such pressure.
- All adults will remind children that some information they share in the classroom may need to be shared with other adults for their protection.
- Children will be reassured that, if information has to be shared, they will be informed first and then supported appropriately.
- If a child and his/her parent/carer wish to highlight an issue to a peer group then this will be carried out sensitively by the class teacher/Headteacher e.g. bereavement.

Dissemination of the Policy

All staff members, governors and adults working in the school (including voluntary helpers) will receive a copy of this Policy. Several copies are available to view at the school office upon request, and a short summary of this Policy will be included in the school prospectus. A copy of the Policy is also available on the school web site.

Monitoring and review

The Child Protection Coordinator will monitor the effectiveness of the Policy throughout the year in consultation with the governor with responsibility for child protection.