

Confidentiality Policy



Policy

Reviewed: March 2024
To be reviewed: March 2027

St John's CE Primary School

Confidentiality Policy

Rationale:

At St. John's C.E. (C) School we are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our pupils so that they can learn following our Christian ethos. Part of our caring and safe environment is the respect we have for each other by keeping data and information confidential. This policy has links to the Safeguarding Policy and also Data Protection policies.

Definition of Confidentiality:

At St John's CE (C) Primary School we define confidentiality as

"Something which is spoken or given in confidence; private, entrusted with another's secret affairs."

When speaking confidentially to someone the confider has the belief that the confidant will not discuss the content of the conversation with another. The confider is asking for the content of the conversation to be kept a secret. Anyone offering absolute confidentiality to someone else would be offering to keep the content of his/her conversation completely secret and discuss it with no one.

In practice there are few situations where absolute confidentiality can be offered at St. John's CE (C) Primary School. We have tried to strike a balance between ensuring the safety, well-being and protection of our children and staff and promoting an ethos of trust where children and adults can ask for help when they need it. However, we must be aware that there will be times when it is vital to share personal information or child protection issues; at these times it is essential that the correct procedures are followed.

This means that in most cases we can offer a limited confidentiality to our children and staff where disclosure of the content of a conversation could be discussed with professional colleagues on a 'need to know' basis.

The general rule is that staff should make clear that there are limits to confidentiality at the beginning of a conversation. These limits relate to ensuring the safety and well being of the children. A child will be informed when a confidence has been broken for this reason and will be encouraged to do this themselves whenever it is possible.

Aims and Objectives:

At St. John's CE (C) Primary School we believe that:

- The safety, wellbeing and protection of our children are the main considerations when making decisions regarding confidentiality. The appropriate sharing of information between school staff is essential in ensuring this.
- Establishing trust between pupils, staff and parents is an important part of our School ethos. This enables all parties to seek help while minimising the

number of situations where personal information is to be shared, ensuring everyone is supported and safe.

- Pupils, parents and staff need to know the boundaries of confidentiality in order to feel safe and comfortable in discussing personal issues and concerns, including sex and relationships.
- St John's School's attitude to confidentiality is open and easily understood. Everyone should be able to trust the boundaries of confidentiality operating within the school.
- Issues concerning personal information including sex and relationships and other personal matters can arise at any time.
- All members of the school community need to know that no one can offer absolute confidentiality.
- All members of the school community need to know the limits of confidentiality that can be offered by individuals. This will help them make informed decisions about the most appropriate person to talk to.

Practice and Procedures:

Different levels of confidentiality are appropriate for different circumstances;

1. In the classroom during the lesson given by a member of teaching staff or an outside visitor including Health Professionals.

At St. John's School we recognise that children may make confidential disclosures at any time during the school day including during lessons. As members of staff we will respond to these disclosures sensitively. Depending on the level of concern and seriousness of the comment we may follow up the discussion with the child at a more appropriate time. When a health professional is supporting learning in the classroom he/she is working under the same boundaries of confidentiality as the teacher.

2. One to one disclosure to members of school staff (including voluntary).

At St. Johns CE (C) Primary School we recognise that our children may disclose confidential information to any member of staff at any time. Therefore it is essential that all members of staff know the limits of confidentiality and at no point guarantee that a secret can be kept. The needs of the child are paramount and school staff will not automatically share information about the child with his/her parents unless it is considered to be in the child's best interests.

When a concern is brought to the attention of any member of staff, this should be discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) as soon as is practically possible. An accurate account of the report must be put in writing and given to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) ideally via CPOMS or if this is not possible for a valid reason a hand written account.

3. Disclosures to a counsellor, school nurse or other health professional

At St John's CE (C) Primary School we understand that there is a possibility that children may disclose confidential information to Health Professionals such as school nurses. Although we recognise that these professionals can give confidential medical advice to pupils, due to the age of the children in our school we feel it is necessary for Health Professionals to report any disclosures to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in the same way as teaching staff would. We feel this is important so that professionals can work together to build a picture of the child.

The legal position for school staff;

School staff (including non-teaching and voluntary staff) should not promise confidentiality. Therefore children should not expect that the information they share will be kept private, nor that incidents will not be reported to parents/carers.

The safety, wellbeing and protection of the child is the paramount consideration in all decisions made about confidentiality. However, it is important that all staff are able to share their concerns about pupils with colleagues in a professional and supportive way. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will listen to any concern.

Teachers, councillors and health professionals;

Professional judgement is required by a teacher, councillor or health professional in deciding whether a confidence can be maintained once a child has disclosed information. In exercising this professional judgement the best interests of the child should be considered.

All teaching and support staff at St John's CE (C) Primary School have completed basic training in safeguarding and are expected to follow the schools' Child Protection/Safeguarding policy and procedures.

At our school we have access to a school nurse through Locala who comes into school to check the development of the children, but can also come in by arrangement if a member of staff feels this is necessary. Although these services are confidential, the school nurse should use their professional judgement to share information with parents and staff on a need to know basis, where the child's best interests are at the heart of the decision.

Visitors and Non-teaching Staff;

All non-teaching staff are expected to report all concerns about/ disclosures by pupils or parents/carers to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) as soon as possible in a confidential setting.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL);

Once a disclosure/ concern has been reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) they will decide what, if any, further action needs to be taken. This will include providing the child involved with any help and support as well as supporting the member of staff involved if necessary.

Parents/ Carers;

St John's CE (C) Primary School believes that it is essential to work in partnership with parents/ carers and we endeavour to keep them updated about their child's progress at school, including concerns about learning, development or behaviour. However we also want to create a climate where our children feel safe to share concerns and ask for help. We recognise that there will be times when we feel that it is not in the child's best interest to inform parents/ carers of concerns or disclosures made. This will be the decision of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and in complex cases will be made in consultation with other Kirklees agencies.

Procedures for breaking confidentiality;

In all cases we will:

- Report concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and discuss with other staff on a need to know basis.
- Follow up concerns/ disclosures the same day (or in serious cases immediately).
- Tell the child that we are unable to keep a secret if we think someone is being hurt.
- Not ask leading questions or interrogate children.
- Aim to prevent children having to repeat distressing matters several times.

Onward referrals:

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) are responsible for making referrals to outside agencies. It is only the responsibility of other staff to make a referral to the police or Social Services when they believe it is necessary and the designated people do not agree.

Dissemination and implementation:

This policy will be distributed to all staff (teaching and non-teaching), including volunteers. New staff will receive a copy of the policy as part of their induction with the Head Teacher.

This policy will be reviewed as part of the Schools 3 year review cycle or whenever deemed necessary by the Head Teacher and Governors in light of events or changes in the law.

Inclusion and Equality

In line with our duties under the Equality Act (2010) and as set out in our Equality Policy we are committed to providing a teaching environment conducive to learning. Everybody is valued, respected and challenged regardless of race, gender, religion, social background, culture or disability.

Policy Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed following the 3-year Policy Review Cycle of the school or when there are significant changes to the curriculum that warrant it. It may also be reviewed earlier should it no longer comply with school practice or the legal requirements of schools.

Policy produced by Aidan Blackburn

Date: 15.03.2024

Approved by Governing Body **Date**

Review Date March 2027

If you need further copies of this document, or would like the document in another format, such as enlarged print, audio tape or another language, please contact Sarmilla Dhangar, Bursar, at the school.

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