



Confidentiality Policy

Date: May 2020

Review date: May 2021

Approved by the Advisory Board: July 2020

Linked with other policies:

- Anti-Bullying
- Complaints
- Relationship & Sex Education (SRE)
- Whole School Policy for Safeguarding incorporating Child Protection
- Prevention off Extremism and Radicalisation
- The Equality Statement
- Whistleblowing

Signed:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to be 'S. Day'. The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned below the 'Signed:' label.

Aims and Objectives

This policy provides guidance and information on confidentiality procedures in the school for staff, students and parents/carers. To be accessible to all of these groups the document needs to be available on request and presented in a way that is easy to understand.

Moral and Values Framework

The Confidentiality Policy at All Saints School reflects the school ethos and demonstrates and encourages the following values:

- Respect for self
- Respect for others
- Responsibility for own actions
- Responsibility for family, friends, schools and wider community.

Policy Statement

This school always operates in a way that respects every individual and family's right to privacy. All our staff and visitors are therefore expected to work within the guidelines of this policy which conforms to recent legislation and government guidelines and which protect confidentiality.

In practice this means:

- making it clear that gossip is discouraged among or about students and staff, including discussing personal details about members of staff. (e.g. reasons for absence)
- Before sharing any information about staff or students, ensure that the sharing is necessary. (Does this person need to know?)
- keeping personal records of behaviour confidential
- not discussing student or family personal matters in a general way
- using teaching methods which protect confidentiality
- always encouraging students to talk to their parents or carers about any anxieties they may have, while at the same time, offering support for individuals and families from staff specialising in pastoral care.

However, on a few occasions, in spite of this approach, some young people may, for various reasons, at first feel unable to involve their parents. Over the years, the school has found that under these circumstances, parents feel it is important for the health and safety of their children that there should be a trusted adult to whom they can turn for early help before the situation gets possibly worse.

Each student has a key adult whom they know they can confide in. This may be their form tutor, a teaching assistant or the Headteacher. The school therefore has in place a system whereby staff can offer students help in a limited 'confidential' way.

Other related policies and documents include the Curriculum Policy, Sex & Relationship Education (SRE) Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Complaints Policy, Whole School Policy for Safeguarding incorporating Child Protection, the Equality Statement and Whistleblowing Policy.

Personal Disclosures

Students will be made aware that some information cannot be held confidentially and that if certain disclosures are made, certain actions will ensue. At the same time, students will be offered sensitive and appropriate support.

The following procedures will be adhered to by all adults:

- Disclosures or suspicion of possible abuse – the school’s child protection procedures will be invoked (see relevant policy). **If a student approaches a member of staff and says that they want to tell them a ‘secret’, staff need to make it clear to the student that if what they are saying shows that they are at risk, they will have to tell someone else in order to get help for the student.**
- Disclosures of pregnancy or advice on contraception – it is hoped that the following procedure will ensure that students who are in difficulty know that they can talk to an adult in the school and that they will be supported. Professional information and guidance will always be sought from a health professional. The school will always encourage students to talk to parents/carers first:
- Students should be **told to tell** their parent(s) or carers and asked whether they want help in doing so. If this takes place, subsequent responsibility then lies with the parent(s) or carers. It will need to be confirmed with the parent/carer.
- If students refuse to tell their parent(s) or carers, the adult should refer them to a health professional. If confidentiality has to be broken at any time, students will be informed first and then supported as appropriate.
- The adult should record and file the incident confidentially in school.

Confidentiality in the classroom

All teaching will be done in a way that reaffirms respect for everyone in the school and associated with it. The following strategies for maintaining confidentiality in a classroom situation will be used in this school:

Setting ground rules

Teaching staff will work with students to develop ‘ground rules’ for lessons and discussions and show why these need to be agreed and respected by everybody. For example:

- no-one – teachers or students – will have to answer a personal question or disclose any personal details; explain that this is a basic way of protecting ourselves and is not negotiable
- no-one - staff or students -will discuss anything personal about any other staff or student; their private lives, why a member of staff is not there etc.
- everyone has the right to ‘pass’ on a question if they want to
- no-one will be forced to take part in a discussion
- everyone has the right to be listened to and have their views respected
- no teasing, jeering or bullying of any kind
- no sexual harassment will be tolerated
- if you don’t want anyone to know something, either talk about it as though it was someone else or don’t bring it up.

Depersonalising

Teaching staff will protect students' privacy in the class by always depersonalising discussions. Students can then explore the issues being raised without having their personal lives or those of their families implicated or invaded and 'used' inappropriately by other students.

For example:

- use the 'third person' to allow students to keep a distance ('If you were Jamie/Sara what would you do?' rather than 'What would you do?')
- collect answers anonymously on pieces of paper so that students can express their feelings without risking exposure
- collect 'group' ideas without identifying individuals
- use sensitive role play to help students 'act out' situations and people they can identify within a 'contained' and safe way (always 'de-role' afterwards)
- provide appropriate materials and written scenarios with invented characters to encourage students to imagine how the people would feel, and discuss what they would do in their shoes
- organise planned visits with theatre in education groups – they provide a vehicle for probing sensitive issues, with actors expressing the emotions which students may be experiencing and answering questions 'in role'
- making sure that students are informed of sources of confidential help, for example, school based services, GP or local young person's advice services.

Confidentiality within Sex & Relationship Education

Within Sex and Relationship Education (SRE) Schemes of Work, contraception, abortion, abuse, homosexuality, gender, sexually transmitted infections and the age of consent can all be seen as sensitive issues. At the beginning of every SRE lesson the students are all reminded of the ground rules that keep confidentiality in the classroom.

Ground Rules

1. Always listen to each other.
2. Respect others and their opinions.
3. You have the right not to participate in discussions etc. (But still follow rules one and two).
4. We may use language that is appropriate to the situation e.g. sexual language. The words must only be used in the room and not used as soon as you have stepped out of the door.

It is essential when discussing an issue of this type with anyone that confidentiality (individually and in the classroom) is maintained and that we respect and consider the views and values of others. There are, however, issues where, for the protection of the student and teacher it is necessary to inform the appropriate authority. Such situations would include child abuse, sexual activity in students under 16 and pregnancy in a girl under 16.

As there are primary and secondary aged students in the school, it is important that it is recognised that different issues may be more or less appropriate/sensitive at different ages. If issues related to abuse arise during work on SRE these must be reported in writing to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Where there is concern about a student involving issues of a sexual nature (other than child abuse) e.g. fetish behaviour, inappropriate responses to others, a strategy meeting should be called which

should be attended by all those involved with the student and a course of action identified that is appropriate to support the development of the student.

Other Professionals Working in School

Students may come in contact with a number of other professionals within the school, both those who work in the school and those visiting from outside. For example:

- educational psychologists
- social workers
- health professionals

The involvement of these professionals raises a number of confidentiality issues:

1. Maintaining confidentiality in a classroom

Other professionals may need some support in working with groups in a way that protects confidentiality. In a one-to-one setting it is good practice for other professionals to talk to a student personally, to make sure that their concerns are identified, and that they understand the advice they are given. In a classroom setting it is not appropriate to talk directly to individuals about their personal experiences.

2. Maintaining confidentiality in meetings

When conducting interviews with parents, carers, professionals and students (for example, an annual review,) the Headteacher's office is made available. Meetings which may have confidential content are never held in public spaces such as a classroom.

3. Professional Codes of Conduct

Whereas teachers are bound by their terms of contract and cannot promise students absolute confidentiality, other professionals – *when working with individual students* – are bound by their professional codes of conduct which tend to give students the right to confidentiality and it would be unreasonable to expect a professional to act outside his/her professional code within a school setting. Confidentiality, in these situations, should only be breached in exceptional cases and not without first informing the student.

In a classroom situation, including small group work, the school's policies and procedures apply to teachers and other professionals alike.

4. Giving contraceptive advice and information

There is a difference between a teacher giving general *information* about contraception in the classroom and other professionals giving individual *advice* to students about different kinds of contraception and which one might be most suitable for them. In a classroom situation, other professionals are bound by the school's confidentiality policy and should restrict themselves to general information about contraceptive advice and treatment.

Data Protection

Confidentiality does not just relate to disclosures of information, which could have legal implications such as abuse. Staff members should not handle *any* confidential information carelessly as students and other members of staff may regard this as the norm and respond in a similar manner if a confidence is passed to them.

The school has a legal obligation to comply with the Data Protection Act 2018 over the use and storage of both written and electronically stored personal data (see Data Protection Policy).

All Saints School follows the Norfolk County Council's Retention Schedule guidance for retaining student files.

Confidential records are kept in secure, lockable cabinets, and computer access to information is password protected.

Documentation involving Child Protection issues is kept in a separate, locked cupboard in the Headteacher's office.

Equality Statement

Our policy aims to respond to the diversity of children's cultures, faith and family backgrounds.

Sexual Identity and Sexual Orientation

All Saints School believes that the needs of all students should be met regardless of their developing sexuality. Staff are encouraged to deal honestly and sensitively with sexual orientation, answer appropriate questions and offer support. Homophobic bullying is dealt with strongly yet sensitively. The school liaises with parents on this issue to reassure them of the content and context.

Dissemination

All staff members will receive a copy of the policy which is also available on the school website.