

# St John's Catholic Primary School



## Confidentiality Policy

*"I am the vine, you are the branches."  
– John, 15.*

## **Definition of Confidentiality**

Something that is spoken or written or given in confidence: something private; entrusted with another's personal or secret affairs.

## **The Importance of Confidentiality**

Confidentiality forms a building of trust within relationships. It is an essential part of the ethos of our school that trust is established to enable pupils, staff and parents/carers to understand that help is available, both in school and outside of school. In dealing with matters of confidentiality, the safety, well-being and protection of all concerned are of the paramount importance. We believe that this addresses the underlying principles of the Every Child Matters Agenda.

## **Aims of this policy**

In view of the above:

- We aim to ensure that children are protected at all times and that they feel safe and secure in school. We want them to know that they can share their worries and concerns with members of staff and that these worries and concerns will be handled sensitively.
- We aim to give everyone working with the children clear, unambiguous guidance as to their legal and professional roles and to ensure good practice throughout the school which is understood by pupils, parents/carers, staff and visitors.
- We aim to ensure that all parents and carers can share their information in the confidence that it will only be used to enhance the welfare of their children.

## **General rules of Confidentiality**

Staff should make clear, at the beginning of a conversation, that there are limits to confidentiality. *This is a legal requirement.* These limits relate to ensuring childrens' safety and well-being. The child will be informed when a confidence has to be broken for this reason. All medical, personal and sensitive information regarding confidential issues will be stored in a safe and secure place in a locked store.

## **Dealing with confidential information for all involved in school\***

*\*Teaching staff and teaching assistants, parent/carer helpers, visitors, governors (admin staff, kitchen staff and cooks, lunchtime supervisors, hygiene specialists, Learning Support Teachers, Work experience students, PE coaches/JSLAs, Outside services – music, sport, visitors from other schools)*

**Teachers, counsellors and health professionals:** Careful thought will be given to the content of lessons and circle times given by teaching staff or outside visitors, including health professionals. The children will be involved in the establishment of ground rules (see page 3) and they will be regularly reminded of these rules. During sensitive conversations with children, professional judgement is required by teachers and health professionals in considering whether he or she should indicate to a child that the child could make a

disclosure to them. Consideration must be given to the best interests of the child including the need to both ensure trust to provide safeguards for our children and possible child protection issues.

**Visitors and non-teaching staff:** are expected to report any disclosures by children or parents/carers, of a concerning personal nature to Mrs J. Payton; the designated Child Protection Co-ordinator, as soon as possible after the disclosure and in an appropriate setting, so others cannot overhear. The Child Protection Co-ordinator will decide what, if any, action needs to be taken.

**Parents/Carers:** Our school believes that it is essential to work in partnership with parents and carers and we endeavour to keep parents/carers abreast of their child's progress at school, including any concerns about their progress or behaviour. However, we also want our children to know that they can discuss difficult personal matters with staff. Staff will encourage children to discuss the matter with their parent/carers themselves.

### **Ground rules to be used in lessons**

Our school considers ground rules very important to ensure a safe environment for teaching, in particular in Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education (PSHCE) and Circle Time. This reduces anxiety to children and staff and minimises unconsidered, unintended personal disclosures. At the beginning of each PSHCE lesson and Circle Time, children are reminded of the ground rules.

#### **Examples of ground rules**

- We won't ask personal questions
- We will respect each other and not laugh, tease or hurt others
- We won't say things we want to keep confidential
- We can pass or opt out if something makes us feel uncomfortable
- If we hear anything personal and private we won't talk about it outside the lesson
- If we are worried about someone's safety (including our own) we can tell a teacher.

### **Procedure for dealing with confidential information**

See the Child Protection Policy. If in doubt that this applies speak to the Head teacher.

#### **Principles:**

- Tell the child that we cannot guarantee confidentiality if we think they will hurt themselves/hurt someone else/or if they tell us that someone is hurting them or others
- Do not interrogate the child or ask leading questions
- Ensure that the child does not have to repeat distressing matters to several people
- Inform the child before any confidential information is shared, with the reasons for this
- Only share information given in confidence if necessary
- Encourage the child, whenever possible, to confide in his/her parents/carers

The following table is designed to help everyone involved in school life know who they should talk to if they have any concerns about a child. **If the issue is a Child Protection issue, go straight to Mrs J. Buzzing.** If she is unavailable, see **Miss C Derwas.**

Person with concern	First person to talk to	Next in line (or if first person is unavailable)	Next in line (or if previous person is unavailable)	Ultimate responsibility
Teaching Staff (including Teaching Assistants)	Key Stage Manager Mrs Devey (Deputy Headteacher) Miss C Derwas	Deputy Head Teacher (Mrs Devey)	Head teacher (Mrs Buzzing)	Head teacher
Parents/Carers	<b>Child's teacher</b>		<b>Deputy Head teacher</b>	<b>Head teacher</b>
Parent helpers				
Kitchen Staff/ lunchtime Supervisors/ Hygiene specialists				
Governors				
Work Experience Students/ JSLAs/ PE coaches/ College students				
Child				
Child or person who overhears sensitive issues	Whoever they feel comfortable with. Whoever the child talks to should refer to the relevant section of this table to know who to tell.			

It is essential that information is only shared on a 'need to know' basis.

### **Links with other policies:**

- Child Protection
- Every Child Matters
- Safeguarding
- Personal, Social, Emotional and Citizenship Education
- Relationships and Sex Education
- Anti-bullying
- Drugs Education
- Visitors Policy
- Science
- Religious Education

### **Support**

Support for anyone who has been told something distressing is available through the Shirehall anonymously. The Head Teacher has contacts for who parents can approach for support.

### **Review and Next Steps:**

Policy review within 3 years or sooner if considered necessary.

Sharing of policy with parents through website.

Sharing of policy with children. Teaching staff to address in a PSHCE lesson and circle times. Possibly make a poster to remind children/adults of procedures.

Parent helpers/Visitors – booklet.

Work experience Students – booklet.

New members of staff/Teaching assistants booklet