

ST MARY'S CE (A) FIRST SCHOOL CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY DOCUMENT

*"Our Vision is to provide the best opportunities to become life-long learners.
Our Christian values rooted in the Good Samaritan recognise everyone is loved by God.
Our ethos is to show love and respect - to ourselves, each other and God's creation."*

Philosophy

At St Mary's School, we place the child at the heart of everything we do, providing a safe, inclusive and supportive environment where every child is listened to, valued and respected. We encourage pupils to express their views while recognising that confidentiality has clear limits where safeguarding or the welfare of a child is concerned. The school is entrusted with sensitive information and is committed to handling it professionally, lawfully and securely. All staff, governors, volunteers, students and visiting professionals are expected to maintain appropriate confidentiality and share information only where there is a legitimate professional or safeguarding need.

Guided by our Christian values of love and respect for all, we foster a culture of trust, integrity and professionalism, supporting staff in their ongoing professional development and ensuring confidentiality is upheld across all aspects of school life.

Aims

- Safeguard the welfare, safety and wellbeing of all pupils by ensuring that information is managed appropriately, securely and in accordance with legal and professional requirements.
- Provide clear guidance for staff, governors, volunteers, students and visitors regarding their responsibilities and the boundaries of confidentiality.
- Access only confidential information and it will be used, stored and shared where there is a legitimate professional purpose and in line with UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018 and safeguarding requirements.
- Promote a culture of trust, respect and professionalism in which pupils, parents/carers and staff feel confident that personal information will be handled sensitively and responsibly.
- Encourage pupils and adults to share their views, concerns and experiences, while recognising that information may need to be shared with appropriate people where there is a safeguarding concern, risk of harm or legal requirement.
- Ensure that parents/carers understand their rights to access information relating to their own child, while recognising that confidentiality must be maintained in relation to others.
- Share information appropriately between relevant members of staff and external agencies where this is necessary to protect children, support their education, or promote their welfare.
- Maintain clear professional boundaries around confidentiality so that pupils, staff, parents/carers, governors, volunteers and visitors understand when information can and cannot be kept private.
- Fulfil its responsibilities as a trusted organisation by maintaining high standards of confidentiality, data protection, record keeping and professional conduct.

Objectives

- Promote a clear understanding of confidentiality and information sharing among all staff, governors, volunteers and visitors.
- Collect, store, access, use, retain and dispose of confidential information securely and in accordance with data protection legislation.
- Share information appropriately and lawfully where it is necessary to safeguard children, promote their welfare or fulfil statutory duties.
- Respect the privacy and dignity of pupils, families and staff by always maintaining appropriate confidentiality.
- Ensure that pupils and parents/carers understand the limits of confidentiality, particularly where there are concerns about a child's safety or wellbeing.
- Provide staff with appropriate guidance and training to enable them to make informed decisions about confidentiality and information sharing.
- Work collaboratively with parents/carers and external agencies, sharing information only where there is a lawful basis and it is in the best interests of the child.

Guidelines for Confidentiality

St Mary's First School recognises that confidential information must be handled with care, professionalism and in accordance with legal requirements. All members of the school community are expected to respect confidentiality while recognising that the welfare of the child is paramount.

- Information relating to pupils, families and staff will be treated as confidential and will only be accessed or shared where there is a legitimate professional reason, a lawful basis to do so, or where safeguarding or legal duties require information to be shared.
- All safeguarding, child protection, medical, SEND and other sensitive records will be stored securely and accessed only by authorised staff in accordance with the school's Data Protection, Records Management and Safeguarding policies.
- Confidential information shared electronically must be transmitted securely using approved school systems. Where appropriate, documents containing personal or sensitive information should be password protected, with passwords shared separately.
- All staff, governors, volunteers, students and visiting professionals must comply with the school's policies and procedures relating to safeguarding, data protection, online safety, SEND, equality and inclusion, information security and confidentiality.
- Staff must create a classroom environment where pupils feel safe to share their thoughts and feelings while understanding that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed where there are concerns about a child's safety or welfare. Where sensitive issues arise, staff should respond sensitively and, where appropriate, encourage the child to speak privately with a trusted member of staff. Any safeguarding concerns must be reported immediately in accordance with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.
- Staff must not disclose information about a pupil to anyone other than those with parental responsibility or another person who has the appropriate legal authority to receive that information, unless there is a lawful basis or safeguarding reason to do so.
- **Confidentiality is important, but it is not absolute.** Staff must never promise a child or adult that information shared with them will remain confidential if that information indicates a safeguarding concern, risk of harm, abuse or neglect. In such circumstances, information will be shared with the appropriate safeguarding lead and/or external agencies in accordance with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and statutory guidance.
- During meetings with parents/carers, discussions will relate only to their own child. Information about other pupils, families or members of staff will not be shared.
- Personal contact details, addresses and telephone numbers of pupils, families and staff will not be disclosed to third parties unless there is a lawful basis, consent has been obtained where appropriate, or disclosure is required to fulfil a statutory duty, including safeguarding or the transfer of educational records to another school.
- Staff, governors, volunteers, students and visiting professionals must not disclose confidential information obtained through their role to anyone who is not authorised to receive it. This responsibility continues after employment or voluntary service has ended.
- Any actual or suspected breach of confidentiality or personal data must be reported immediately to the Headteacher (and, where appropriate, the school's Data Protection Officer) and managed in accordance with the school's Data Protection and Data Breach procedures.

Monitoring

All staff have the responsibility to report to the Head Teacher any incident that contravenes this policy. Senior Management and Governor's Personnel Committee will monitor and evaluate implementation of the policy.

This policy will be reviewed every two years.

Agreed by Governors: September 2026

Review: September 2028