



# CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

<b>Date:</b>	March 2019
<b>Review Date:</b>	March 2020
<b>Prepared by:</b>	Susan Gothard
<b>Links with Other policies:</b>	Anti-Bullying Policy Complaints Policy Sex & Relationship Education (SRE) Policy Whole School Policy for Safeguarding incorporating Child Protection Policy for the Prevention of Extremism and Radicalisation The Equality Statement Whistleblowing policy
<b>Signed:</b>	

## **Aims and Objectives**

This policy provides guidance and information on confidentiality procedures in the school for staff, pupils 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 conform to recent legislation and government guidelines and which protect confidentiality.

In practice this means:

- making it clear that gossip is discouraged among or about pupils and staff, including discussing personal details about members of staff. (e.g. reasons for absence)
- Before sharing any information about staff or pupils, ensure that the sharing is necessary. (Does this person need to know?)
- keeping personal records of behaviour confidential
- not discussing pupil 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 pupil has a key adult whom they know they can confide in. This may be their form tutor, a teaching assistant or the Head Teacher. 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 pupil approaches a member of staff and says that they want to tell them a 'secret', staff need to make it clear to the pupil 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 pupil.**
- Disclosures of pregnancy or advice on contraception – it is hoped that the following procedure will ensure that pupils 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 pupils to talk to parents/carers first:
- Pupils should be **told to tell** their parent(s) or carers and 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 checked.
- If pupils 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, pupils 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 pupils 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. Pupils 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 pupils.

### For example:

- use the 'third person' to allow pupils 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 pupils can express their feelings without risking exposure
- collect 'group' ideas without identifying individuals
- use sensitive role play to help pupils '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 pupils 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 pupils may be experiencing and answering questions 'in role'
- making sure that pupils 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 pupils 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 pupil.

## **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 Head Teacher'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 1998 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 pupil 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 Head Teacher'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.