



St. Mary & St. Andrew's Catholic Primary School

We are guided by God who is at the centre of everything we do.

We support each other to be the best we can be to secure bright futures for everyone.

With our parishes, families and the community, we work together to create a school that is safe, happy, respectful and inspirational.

Confidentiality Policy

This policy must be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Data Protection Policy.

Aim

To protect all members of the school community, especially our pupils, and to give all staff clear, unambiguous guidance as to their legal and professional roles in relation to sharing information and confidentiality, ensuring good practice throughout the school which is understood by pupils, parents/carers and staff.

Rationale

St Mary & St Andrew's Catholic Primary School seeks to put the child at the heart of the learning process and to provide a safe and secure learning environment. It supports the view that children should be entitled to confidential support alongside safeguarding them from harm and, recognises the importance of our pupils having access to confidential services, including health services to support their physical and emotional needs.

St Mary & St Andrew's Catholic Primary School seeks to implement the underlying principles of the 'Every Child Matters Agenda' and to address the issues which may arise about sharing information and confidentiality. It is committed to developing creative and positive ways for the child's voice to be heard whilst recognising the responsibility to use, hold and safeguard information received.

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Sharing information unnecessarily is an erosion of trust. The school is mindful that it is placed in a position of trust by all stakeholders and there is a general expectation that a professional approach will be used in all matters of information sharing and confidentiality.

Pupils, parents/carers and staff should all expect that information they identify as confidential will not be shared with any other party unless it is a safeguarding issue in which case the appropriate member of the school workforce will be consulted, or permission has been given as part of the CAF process.

In practice there are few situations where absolute confidentiality can be offered in a school. St Mary & St Andrew's aims to strike a balance between ensuring the safety, wellbeing and protection of children and the school workforce, ensuring there is an ethos of trust where any member of the school community can ask for help when they need it and ensuring that when it is essential to share personal information, good practice is followed and, when appropriate, safeguarding procedures.

Staff members adopt a supportive and accepting attitude towards pupils as part of their general responsibility for pastoral care. It is our hope that pupils and parents/carers feel free to discuss any concerns and worries they have, that may affect educational progress with members of the school team.

Objectives:

1. To foster an ethos of trust within the school and reassure children that their best interests will be maintained.
2. To provide consistent messages in school about handling and sharing information about children once it has been received.
3. To ensure that staff, governors, volunteers, students, parents and pupils are aware of the school's confidentiality policy and information sharing procedures and know that adults cannot offer unconditional confidentiality.
4. To encourage children to be aware of confidentiality issues relating to their peers.
5. To reassure pupils that their best interests will be maintained.
6. The school workforce will encourage children to talk to their parents and carers.
7. To ensure that there is equality of provision and access for all including rigorous monitoring of disability, race, gender, age, faith and sexual orientation.

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8. To ensure that parents have a right of access to any records the school may hold on their child but not to any other child that they do not have parental responsibility for as set out in the Data Protection and Freedom of Information Acts.
9. To ensure that confidentiality is a whole school issue and that in lessons, ground rules are set for the protection of all.
10. To ensure that if there are child protection issues then the correct procedure is followed.

Guidelines

1. All information about individual children is private and should only be shared with the staff that need to know.
2. All social services, medical and personal information about a child should be held in a safe and secure place which cannot be accessed by individuals other than identified school staff.
3. The school continues to actively promote a positive ethos and respect for the individual:
 - a) The school has appointed Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) who receive regular training.
 - b) There is clear guidance for the handling of safeguarding concerns. All staff have regular Safeguarding training.
 - c) There is clear guidance for management of allegations against staff.
 - d) Staff are aware that effective sex and relationship education, which brings an understanding of what is and is not acceptable in a relationship, can lead to disclosure of a safeguarding concern.
 - e) Staff are aware of the need to handle all issues about different types of families in a sensitive manner.
 - f) Any intolerance about gender, faith, race, culture or sexuality is unacceptable and should follow the school's Discipline Policy.
 - g) Information collected for one purpose should not be used for another.
4. Parents/carers and children need to be aware that the school cannot guarantee total confidentiality and the school has a duty to report child protection issues.
5. The school prides itself on good communication with parents and carers and staff are always available to talk to both children and parents/carers about issues that are causing concern. The school encourages children to talk to parents/carers about issues causing them concern and may in some cases support the children to talk to parents. The school would share with parents any child protection disclosure before going on to inform the correct authorities, unless to do so may place the child at

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increased risk of significant harm, in which case advice will be sought from Children's Social Care.

6. Parents/carers and children should feel reassured that in exceptional circumstances confidentiality will be broken.
7. All children have a right to the same level of confidentiality irrespective of gender, race, religion, medical concerns and special educational needs. A lot of data is generated in schools by these categories, but individual children should not be able to be identified.
8. The school has appointed a senior member of staff as Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Child protection procedures are understood by staff and training is undertaken every year for all staff.
9. Confidentiality is a whole school issue. Clear ground rules must be set for any classroom work such as circle time and other PHSE session dealing with sensitive issues such as sex and relationships and drugs. Strategies are in place and all children are aware of them for dealing with sensitive information which may fall outside the boundaries of child protection procedures. School needs to be proactive, so children feel supported, but information is not unnecessarily revealed in a public arena. Even when sensitive information appears to be widely known it should not be assumed by those immediately involved that it is appropriate to discuss or share this information further.
10. All children, parents, staff members and governors must enjoy privacy from gossip. All matters are dealt with according to the school's procedures and out of the eye of the wider community. It is important that: -
 - Staff do not discuss details of individual cases arising in any staff meetings to any person without direct professional connection to and interest in the welfare and education of the individual concerned.
 - No member of staff discusses an individual child's behaviour in the presence of another child in school.
 - Staff do not enter into detailed discussion about a child's behaviour with other children or their parents.
 - Staff should exercise prudence and consider the dignity of individuals during conversations on the school site, for example in the staff room, particularly if non-members of staff are present.
 - Governors, in particular those sitting on Discipline Committees, do not divulge details about individuals (be they staff, families or individual children) to any person outside of the meeting.

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- Parents in school, working as volunteers do not report cases of poor behaviour or pupil discipline to other parents in the school. This allows teachers to deal with such matters in line with school policy.
 - At full Governing Body meetings matters such as pupil behaviour, personnel issues and personal details of any member of the school community will be dealt with in the Head Teachers Report whilst protecting the individual's identity. This is not for the knowledge of persons outside the Governing Body meeting. Confidential items are minuted separately and minutes are not published.
 - Staff performance management will be carried out privately. Targets for individuals, named lesson observation sheets and other performance data will be in the Head Teachers office and electronic records will only be available from the Head Teachers computer.
 - Matters of Child Protection are made known to staff on a need to know basis.
 - It is important that class teachers and support staff are aware of some confidential matters in order to support individuals. The staff will respect the sensitivity of such cases and not divulge information to people unconnected professionally with the individual concerned.
 - When volunteers, such as parents and friends of the school are working in classes, they do not discuss educational matters outside the classroom. For example, the specific use of teaching assistant time for particular pupils or groups of pupils, teaching assistants have different roles within a class, including the support of children with special educational needs, the provision and work with these children is for the teacher to discuss with the relevant parents or carers.
 - Volunteers, Governors, students and supply teachers are asked to read this policy before working in school and sign a confidentiality agreement.
 - *Other Professionals* - Health professionals are bound by their professional codes of conduct to maintain confidentiality when working in a one to one situation. When working in a classroom, they are bound by relevant school policies. In line with best practice guidance, like other school staff, they will seek to protect privacy and prevent inappropriate personal disclosures in a classroom setting, by negotiating ground rules and using distancing techniques.
11. Staff should be aware of children with medical needs. This information should be accessible to all staff who need it (through the class information files) but not on general view to other parents/carers and children.
12. Photographs of children should not be used without parents/carers permission especially in the press and internet. The school gives clear guidance to parents

about the use of cameras and videos during public school events (see Child Protection and Safeguarding policies, Use of Images Policy and Data Protection Policy).

13. Information about children will be shared with parents but only about their child. Parents should not have access to any other child's books, marks and progress grades at any time especially at parents' evening. However, parents should be aware that information about their child will be shared with the receiving school when they change school.
14. All personal information about children including social services records should be regarded as confidential. It should be clearly understood by those who have access to it, and whether those concerned have access to all, or only some of the information.
 - Logs of administration of medication to children should be kept secure.
 - Information regarding health reports such as speech therapy, medical reports, SEN reports, SEN minutes of meetings and social services minutes of meetings and reports will be circulated in envelopes/files and once read should be returned for secure filing.
 - In all other notes, briefing sheets etc a child should not be able to be identified.
 - Addresses and telephone numbers of parents and children will not be passed on except in exceptional circumstances or to a receiving school.

Appendices for agreements are attached (Volunteers, Students / work experience & Governors).

Monitoring and Evaluation

The policy will be reviewed as part of the schools monitoring cycle every three years.

Conclusion

St Mary & St Andrew's Catholic Primary School has a duty of care and responsibility towards pupils, parents/carers and staff. It also needs to work with a range of outside agencies and share information on a professional basis. The care and safety of the individual is the key issue behind this document.

SIX KEY POINTS ON INFORMATION SHARING

1. You should explain to children, young people and families at the outset, openly and honestly, what and how information will, or could be shared and why, and seek their agreement. The exception to this is where to do so would put that child, young person or others at increased risk of significant harm or an adult at risk of serious harm, or if it would undermine the prevention, detection or prosecution of a serious crime including where seeking consent might lead to interference with any potential investigation.
2. You must always consider the safety and welfare of a child or young person when making decisions on whether to share information about them. Where there is concern that the child may be suffering or is at risk of suffering significant harm, the child's safety and welfare must be the overriding consideration.
3. You should, where possible, respect the wishes of children, young people or families who do not consent to share confidential information. You may still share information, if in your judgement on the facts of the case, there is sufficient need to override that lack of consent.
4. You should seek advice where you are in doubt, especially where your doubt relates to a concern about possible significant harm to a child or serious harm to others.
5. You should ensure that the information you share is accurate and up-to-date, necessary for the purpose for which you are sharing it, shared only with those people who need to see it and shared securely.
6. You should always record the reasons for your decision – whether it is to share information or not.



St. Mary & St. Andrew's Catholic Primary School

Confidentiality Agreement Voluntary Helper

First of all, thank you for volunteering to be a helper at this school. Your help and support in this role is greatly appreciated. In this role you are supporting the life of this school. This role carries certain responsibilities on your part including the requirement to be confidential about school matters.

By signing this agreement, you agree to uphold St Mary & St Andrew's Catholic Primary School's Confidentiality Policy. This means you will not share pupil / staff information with anyone that breeches confidentiality other than those who are directly involved.

Examples of confidential information are:

- Information about staff and pupils and events that occur in school. For example, a parent who knows you are a helper at the school may ask you how their child is getting on (e.g. academically / behaviour). To prevent any misunderstanding, it would be better to advise the parent to speak to the class teacher.
- Information accessed by 'privilege' e.g. notices on staff noticeboard / conversations.

If you see something in school that concerns you, please discuss the matter with the Head Teacher.

I understand that I may have access to confidential information and that it is my responsibility to maintain the integrity of this information and to keep it private. I further understand that disclosure of confidential information may result in me no longer being required to be a volunteer helper.

_____ PRINT NAME OF VOLUNTEER
 _____ / _____ Signature of Volunteer / Date
 _____ / _____ Signature of school representative / Date



St. Mary & St. Andrew's Catholic Primary School

Confidentiality Agreement Student / Work Experience/Supply Teacher

Please read the school's Confidentiality Policy.

This work placement / experience carries certain responsibilities on your part including the requirement to be confidential about school matters.

By signing this agreement, you agree to uphold St Mary & St Andrew's Catholic Primary School's Confidentiality Policy. This means you will not share pupil / staff / school / parent / carer information with anyone.

Examples of confidential information are:

- Information about staff, pupils and events that occur in school.
- Information accessed by 'privilege' e.g. notices on staff noticeboard / conversations.

If you see something in school that concerns you, please discuss the matter with the Head Teacher immediately.

You must never use information about individual children outside the school without parental permission (photographs / names). I understand that I may have access to confidential information and that it is my responsibility to maintain the integrity of this information and to keep it private. I further understand that disclosure of confidential information may result in me no longer being required to work in school.

_____ PRINT NAME OF STUDENT/SUPPLY
 _____ / _____ Signature of student/supply / Date
 _____ / _____ Signature of school representative / Date



St. Mary & St. Andrew's Catholic Primary School

Confidentiality Agreement Governor

First of all, thank you for volunteering to be a Governor at this school. Your help and support in this role is greatly appreciated. In this role you are supporting the life of this school. This role carries certain responsibilities on your part including the requirement to be confidential about all matters relating to the School.

By signing this agreement, you agree to uphold St Mary & St Andrew's Catholic Primary School's Confidentiality Policy. This means you will not share pupil / staff information with anyone that breaches confidentiality other than those who are directly involved.

Examples of confidential information are:

- Information about staff and pupils and events that occur in school. For example, a parent who knows you are a helper at the school may ask you how their child is getting on (e.g. academically / behaviour). To prevent any misunderstanding, it would be better to advise the parent to speak to the class teacher.
- Information accessed by 'privilege' e.g. notices on staff noticeboard / conversations.
- Information about actions of the Governing Body that are not published in the minutes.
- Information about future school plans / actions that have not been disclosed to parents.

If you see something in school that concerns you, please discuss the matter with the Head Teacher.

I understand that I may have access to confidential information and that it is my responsibility to maintain the integrity of this information and to keep it private. I further understand that disclosure of confidential information may result in me no longer being required to be a volunteer helper.

_____ PRINT NAME OF GOVERNOR
 _____ / _____ Signature of Governor / Date
 _____ / _____ Signature of school representative / Date