

All Saints Schools Trust



Confidentiality

2018 - 22

	Date	Signed
Agreed by Trust Board:	July 2018	Chair of Board James Hargrave
Lead:	HR Committee	
Review date:	July 2022	

Confidentiality Policy

This policy is on the confidentiality expected from all adults working in school, and on staff professionalism. It is not to be confused with, but must be read in conjunction with the policy on confidentiality in the safeguarding of children.

All staff, volunteers, students and supply teachers are asked to read this policy before working in school.

Rationale:

At All Saints Schools Trust there is a high expectation on every adult to follow the Confidentiality Policy, to act professionally at all times and to adhere to the set procedures that protect and ensure the well being of pupils.

It is critical that clear guidance is given to all members of the school community around the issue of confidentiality. This guidance encourages pupils to speak to a trusted adult if they have any problems or issues. It also provides a professional way forward for staff, giving them the confidence to deal with sensitive issues relating to pupils and/or other staff.

Aims:

The aims of this policy are to ensure that:

- Children and staff are protected at all times.
- Staff and others who work in the schools and for the Trust are given clear guidance as to their legal and professional roles.
- Good practice on confidentiality is maintained at all times.
- Pupils, parent and carers are reassured that their best interests will be maintained.
- An ethos of trust is fostered within the schools and Trust.
- Pupils and adults in the school are granted privacy and not subject to gossip.
- Pupils and parents/carers know that the school and Trust staff cannot offer unconditional confidentiality.
- Children and adults can have disciplinary matters dealt with in accordance with this policy and out of the eye of the wider school/Trust community.
- The child remains at the heart of the learning process and to provide a safe and secure learning environment.
- Information received is held and safeguarded.
- A professional approach will be used in all matters of confidentiality.

Definition of Confidentiality:

The dictionary definition of confidential is 'something which is spoken or given in confidence; private, entrusted with another's secret affairs'.

When speaking confidentially to someone the confider has the belief that the confidant will not discuss the content of the conversation with another. The confider is asking for the content of the conversation to be kept secret. Anyone offering absolute confidentiality to some one else would be offering to keep the content of his or her conversation completely secret and discuss it with no one.

Practice:

In practice, there are few situations within our schools where absolute confidentiality can be offered. Staff need to be aware that any disclosure or issue of concern must be reported through the correct procedure either to the Senior Designated person, a Senior Leader in the school, the Head Teacher or the Chief Executive Officer, as appropriate. It cannot be ignored. A balance is necessary to ensure that there is an ethos of trust where pupils and staff can feel comfortable asking for help when they need it, and ensuring the safety, well being and protection of pupils and staff.

This means that in most cases what is on offer is limited confidentiality. Disclosure of the content of a conversation could be discussed with professional colleagues but the confider would not be identified except in certain circumstances.

The general rule is that staff should make clear that there are limits to confidentiality, at the beginning of any conversation where they anticipate that disclosures may be made. These limits relate to ensuring childrens' safety and well being. When it is absolutely necessary for a confidence to be broken, the pupil will be informed and encouraged to do this for themselves.

Guidance:

a) Staff

- Staff will not discuss details of individual cases arising in staff meetings to any person without a direct professional connection to and interest in the welfare and education of the individual concerned. It is important that class teachers and support staff are aware of some confidential matters in order to support individuals. These staff will respect the sensitivity of such cases and not divulge information to people unconnected professionally with the individual concerned.

- There will be no gossip in public areas about perceived problems within the school, especially where stakeholders, or potential stakeholders, may be given a misleading, false or unnecessarily negative impression of the workings of the school. There is a very clearly defined procedure for real grievances, which is totally confidential.
- No member of staff will discuss an individual child's behaviour in the presence of another child in the school.
- Staff will not enter into detailed discussions about a child's behaviour with other children or their parents.
- Teaching Assistants should liaise with teachers about passing on information to parents and be sensitive when discussing such matters.
- Staff performance management will be carried out privately. Targets for individuals, named lesson observation sheets and other performance data will be shared, where appropriate, with the mentor or senior leader. Whole school targets are shared by all staff and these documents will be kept in the Head Teacher's office. Electronic records are to be kept confidentially and all staff will follow the school/Trust online safety procedures.

b) Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Child Protection

- There are clear guidelines for handling child protection issues and a lead person is always designated within the school. It is this person's responsibility to manage issues of this nature.
- All special needs and social services information is held in a secure place, accessed only by school staff.
- Information disclosed in sex and relationship education may become a child protection issue and should be disclosed to the Head Teacher.
- Clear ground rules should be set during any classroom work, particularly that of a sensitive nature, to ensure that children do not unnecessarily reveal information in public.
- Class information for staff should not be on general view.

c) Governors and Trustees

- Governors and Trustees, in particular those sitting on discipline, hearing and appeals committees, will not divulge details to any person outside of the meeting.

- At full governing body meetings, matters such as pupil exclusion, personnel issues and personal details of any member of the school community will be dealt with in the Head Teacher's report under Part 2 Confidential. These issues must not be discussed with persons outside the governing body meetings. Matters in Part 2 are minuted separately and minutes are not published.
- At Trust meetings, personnel issues and personal details of any employees will be minuted separately and the minutes will not be published.
- All papers marked as confidential should be destroyed or appropriately filed in a secure place.

d) Parents and Volunteers

- Parents/Adults working in schools as volunteers in classrooms or as part of the Friends of the School will not report cases of poor learning or pupil discipline to other parents in the school. This allows the teachers to deal with such matters in line with school/Trust policy and on certain occasions to allow children to put matters right without the direct involvement of their parents.
- When volunteers such as parents and friends of the school are working in classes they should not discuss educational matters outside of the classrooms (for example the specific use of teaching assistant time for particular pupils or groups of pupils). The provision and work with these children is for the teacher to discuss with the relevant parents or carers.
- Photographs of children should not be used without the permission of parents or carers. At no time should full names be attached to photographs which are available to view outside the school (for example, on the website).
- The school/Trust will give clear guidance about the use of cameras and videos during public events and this should be followed by all present.
- Parents should not have access to any other child's books, marks or grades at any time. Information about groups and their attainments should not be on public display, especially during parents' evenings. Class lists, addresses and telephone numbers of parents and children will not be passed on except by prior agreement.

Equal Opportunities:

Staff may wish to discuss an individual case with a class or group. For instance, it can support the inclusion of a child with Aspergers or Autism if their peers are made aware of the condition and so have some idea what to expect. Similarly, a child with visual impairment can be supported if his/her friends know how to look after her/him in the playground. In such cases, permission will be sought from the child and parents/carers.

Monitoring and Evaluation:

The Head Teachers and Chief Executive Officer have responsibility for monitoring this policy and for ensuring that all personnel invited into the Trust schools are made aware of its contents.

Links to Other Policies:

This policy should be read in conjunction with other relevant school and Trust policies.

Period of Review:

This policy will be reviewed every four years.

Document History

Version	Date	Comments
Issue 1	July 2018	