

# Saint Norbert's Catholic School

## Confidentiality Policy

Date Adopted: Summer 2017  
Date of Review: Summer 2019



**ST. NORBERT'S**  
CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

### **Our Mission Statement**

**St. Norbert's strives to nurture and develop the whole child through a**

**Love of God  
Love of one another  
Love of life itself**

### **Article 3- The best interests of the child must be top priority in all actions regarding children.**

#### **Aims:**

›To ensure that information of a sensitive and/or confidential nature relating to school personnel (staff and governors), pupils and their families and any visitors, volunteers or trainees, remains confidential to the appropriate and relevant parties and is not shared unnecessarily, inappropriately or maliciously beyond those parties.

›To ensure that staff members, governors, visiting professionals, trainees and volunteers are able to respond appropriately if:

- when working with children on personal, social and health education programmes,
- during the teaching of any sensitive or controversial issue,
- visiting school for meetings, pupil/lesson observations or events
- during the course of general school life, children will want to discuss information that is of a personal nature, or make disclosures about risky or illegal behaviour.

›To ensure that staff members, governors, visiting professionals, trainees and volunteers are fully aware of their obligations and commitments regarding confidentiality of information.

#### **What is confidentiality?**

Maintaining confidentiality is defined as 'ensuring that information is accessible only to those authorised to have access' or 'to be entrusted with private information and the confidence of another'.

The confider is asking for the content of any conversation to be kept secret. Anyone offering absolute confidentiality to someone else would be offering to keep the content of his or her conversation completely secret and discuss it with no-one.

#### **What is confidential or sensitive information?**

The majority of information that we deal with in school is of a nature that means it is not appropriate for general 'sharing' and knowledge/sharing of such information is restricted to certain, necessary parties. The typical types of information that this covers would include:

- Pupil attainment and progress information.
- Pupil medical information.
- Personnel and Family information such as addresses, telephone numbers etc.
- Pupil behaviour records and charts.

Certain information should be considered as strictly of a confidential nature and should be dealt with very carefully, only being disclosed/available to personnel who need to be aware of it as they are directly involved in the situation.

The types of information that this covers would include:

- Documents and Information relating to child protection issues.
- Information shared regarding medical or personal/family circumstances of school personnel.
- Documents and information related to sensitive family issues including CAF (Common Assessment Framework).
- Information relating the performance management of staff, capability and/or disciplinary issues.

### **Sharing confidential or sensitive information**

In practise there are few circumstances where absolute confidentiality is offered in our school. We strive to strike a balance between ensuring the safety, well-being and protection of our pupils and staff and protecting the confidentiality of information by ensuring that personal information is only disclosed when absolutely essential. This means that in most cases what is offered in terms of confidentiality of information is typically 'limited confidentiality'.

The disclosure of sensitive and/or confidential information should only take place if it is judged to be strictly necessary that the person to be informed requires knowledge of the information in order to fulfil their role effectively. Information that relates to child protection issues should always be passed on to the designated child protection staff (Mrs Withers, Mrs Jameson, Miss Bools). If a person is unsure whether information should be disclosed or not then they should consult a line manager for advice on how to proceed (in such an event the specific nature of the information does not have to be shared with the line manager).

All personnel have a duty to maintain confidentiality, for example by considering the conversations they have about pupils and their families, the purpose of these conversations and where these take place. All students and helpers at the school will be made aware of this through our Commitment to Confidentiality Statement

In the majority of cases it is reasonably obvious who it is and isn't appropriate to share sensitive and/or confidential information with. Additional guidance i.e. regarding Performance Management, Pay, Child Protection, data protection and freedom of information can be found in specific policies.

However, In the following circumstances, we will always break confidentiality:

- Life and immediate risk
- Prevention of terrorism
- A third party is at risk of abuse or neglect
- When you have been subpoenaed to a Court of Law

When discussing issues with children staff should make it clear that there are limits to confidentiality at the beginning of the conversation. These limits relate to ensuring children's safety and well-being. The pupil will be informed when a confidence has to be broken for this reason and be involved in the information sharing.

### **Different levels of confidentiality are appropriate for different circumstances:**

1. In the classroom in the course of a lesson given by a member of teaching staff or an outside visitor including health professionals. Careful thought needs to be given to the content of the lesson setting the climate and establishing ground rules to ensure confidential disclosures are not made. It should be made clear to pupils that lessons are not necessarily the appropriate time or place to disclose confidential personal information. When a health professional is contributing to a school's health education programme in a classroom setting, they are working with the same boundaries of confidentiality as a teacher.

2. One-to-one disclosures to members of school staff. It is essential all members of staff know the limits of the confidentiality they can offer to both pupils and parents and carers and any required actions and sources of further support or help available both for the pupil or parent/carer, within the school and from other agencies where appropriate. All staff at this school encourage pupils to discuss different issues with their parents or carers and vice versa. However, the needs of the pupil are paramount and the school staff will not automatically share information about the pupil with his/her parents unless it is considered to be in the child's best interests.

3. Disclosures to a counsellor, school nurse or health professional operating a confidential service in the school. Health professionals such as school nurses can give confidential medical advice to pupils provided they are competent to do so and follow the Fraser Guidelines (guidelines for doctors and other health professionals on giving medical advice to under 16's). School nurses are skilled in discussing issues and possible actions with young people and always have in mind the need to encourage pupils to discuss issues with their parents or carers. However, the needs of the pupil are paramount and the school nurse will not insist that a pupil's parents or carers are informed about any advice or treatment they give. Guidelines for practice when working with children in lessons (particularly Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education or PHSE linked sessions): This is particularly relevant to the teaching of PSHCE, Drug Education and RSE. However it also covers all situations both in and outside the classroom.

### **Information relating to Child Protection**

Following the guidance in our Child Protection policy, where information of a sensitive nature is disclosed, this must be treated seriously and with sensitivity. Under no circumstances must a promise be made that you will not tell anyone else. Explain that in order to help, you may need to talk to other people. If a child discloses information that indicates that they may be at risk of abuse, neglect or harm, it should always be

passed on to the designated child protection staff (Mrs Withers, Mrs Jameson, Miss Bools).

**Commitment to confidentiality statement**

The statement should be agreed and signed by all persons working in school on an employed (temporary / permanent), governor. (This is not necessary for visiting Health and SEND professionals who are working under their own confidentiality codes).

**Breaches of confidentiality**

Anyone who has concerns regarding breaches of confidentiality should inform the Head Teacher, Chair of Governors or other appropriate Line Manager.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

(Headteacher)

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

(for and on behalf of the Governing board)

Date \_\_\_\_\_