



Together we love to learn  
and learn to love

# St. Mary's CE Infant School

## Confidentiality Policy

St Mary's CE Infant school is committed to inspiring every individual. We embed the Christian value of love across school life because we believe that a person who feels loved, secure and happy can flourish. We encourage everyone to achieve their potential, develop their talents, celebrate their uniqueness, and rejoice in their relationships with others.

*"Do everything in love"*

1 Corinthians 16:14



Confidential information is information that is not trivial and not in the public domain. Confidentiality is the keeping private of information that a person has obtained or had revealed to them.

### **Aims**

To protect the child at all times and to give all staff, governors and volunteers clear, unambiguous guidance as to their legal and professional roles, and to ensure good practice throughout the school which is understood by pupils, parents/carers and staff.

### **Rational**

St Mary's seeks to put the child at the heart of the learning process and to provide a safe and secure learning environment. It seeks to implement the underlying principles of the Every Child Matters Agenda and to address the issues, which may arise about 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. The school understands 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 confidentiality.

### **Principles**

All information with regard to children and adults connected with the school that is not trivial and not in the public domain is confidential. It can be passed on to those who are legally entitled to receive it, where there is a legal duty to reveal the information, or where the safety or well being of the child or adult requires it. In other circumstances, it should only be passed on with the agreement of the child's parent or carer, or the adult concerned. If a member of staff or volunteer is unclear whether the information is confidential they should seek the advice of the Headteacher.

Pupils and adults may from time to time wish to disclose to a member of staff or volunteer information about themselves or other people, and may ask for this to be in confidence. It must be made clear from the start that unconditional confidence can never be offered. If the matter involves the safety and well-being of the child, or any other child whether in the school, or involves significant illegal activity, the confidentiality cannot be maintained. We recognise that a person making a disclosure or the person hearing the disclosure may need particular support, love and consideration to them in line with our Christian vision.

### **Confidentiality and pupils**

We recognise that there are occasions when children are worried about something and feel that they cannot talk about it to their parents or carers. These can be very stressful situations for children, which may impact on their education or health. If children turn to a teacher or other staff member for support, we must seek to be as helpful as possible, while recognising the potential for difficulties in being supportive.

If the matter is an issue of child protection, then the procedures in the School's Safeguarding Policy must be followed. The first step is to inform the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead.

In all situations, the following policy should be adhered to:



- Staff must make it clear to children that unconditional confidentiality cannot be offered, as stated above. This must be done as soon as it becomes clear that confidentiality may become an issue.
- As soon as it becomes clear in a discussion with a child that confidentiality will have to be broken, the child should be informed, and reassured that the child's best interests will be maintained.
- Staff should always encourage children to talk to parents or carers about the issue that may be troubling them and support them in doing this where appropriate. We recognise that if the matter involves a parent or carer, this may be very challenging for the child, and it is in such cases that the child is likely to ask for parents or carers not to be told. The child should be told that their wish will be respected, but that absolute confidentiality cannot be promised. If there is a suggestion of potential harm to the child, then this is a matter for safeguarding, and the Child Protection Coordinator should be informed. The child will be offered appropriate support.

### **Confidentiality and families**

Staff and governors recognise that sometimes there may be family issues which affect a pupil and which the family will only disclose if they can be sure the information will be treated confidentially. While no promise of absolute confidentiality may be given, as indicated above, the wishes of the family will be respected and where it is felt necessary to share the information given, this will be discussed with the parent first unless a pupil is considered to be at immediate risk and/or there is an overriding child protection concern.

### **Confidentiality and Staff/Governors**

All staff and governors can expect that their personal situations and health will remain confidential, within and beyond the school, unless it impinges on their terms of contract or endangers pupils or other members of staff.

As indicated in the Governors' Code of Conduct, governors have a responsibility to be discrete with all information learnt about staff or children during their role within the School. They should not discuss incidents or information out of School and should pass on any concerns to the Headteacher or the Chair of the Governing Body.

### **Confidentiality and Visitors to school**

A visitor in this context is any person who works in school either in a paid or a voluntary capacity or visits the school in a professional rôle. In some instances, the visitor may become privy to personal information regarding pupils, parents and staff that is of a confidential nature. There is an agreement between the Governing Body and everyone who works in school to sign a declaration not to use any such information outside the school context and to share relevant information with other agencies in situations of child protection.

### **Confidentiality agreement**

All staff members and governors are required to sign a confidentiality agreement at the start of each academic year after reading this policy.