The Federation of St Bernadette's and St. Patrick's Catholic Primary Schools

Confidentiality Policy

Policy Reference:	C3 - F
Responsibility:	Curriculum and Standards Committee
Designation:	Non Statutory
Reviewed by:	Paula Dix
This Review:	March 2024
Next Review Due:	March 2027
Cycle:	3 yearly
Ratified by Full Governing Body on:	
Signed:	Chair of Governors

At our school, with Jesus in our hearts, we have:

The passion to learn;
The courage to fail; The strength to love.

With Christ as our guide and example we celebrate the uniqueness of the individual.

Together we will try to:
Learn from Jesus;
Love like Jesus;
Live like Jesus.

Rationale

Pupils occasionally make personal disclosures, either in class or to individual staff members. Staff and governors may come to possess sensitive information about school, parents or pupils. All parties need to be clear about the rules of confidentiality which apply in these circumstances. Both schools in the federation also retain some pupil information that is deemed confidential such as pupil records and have in place clear rules on storage of such information and its disclosure to others. Sharing information unnecessarily is an erosion of trust. The federation has an expectation that a professional approach will be used by everybody in matters of confidentiality.

Aims

- To foster an ethos of trust across the federation
- To reassure pupils and adults (staff, parents, governors and other volunteers) that their best interests will be maintained
- To address issues which may arise around confidentiality
- To provide a safe and secure learning environment
- To safeguard children at all times
- To give all staff and governors clear, unambiguous guidance as to their professional roles
- To ensure good practice throughout the federation regarding confidentiality

Information and information sharing

The federation of St Bernadette's and St Patrick's has a duty of care and responsibility towards children, 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 paramount.

All information about individual children is private and should only be shared with those staff and governors that have a need to know. All children's 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 authorised school staff.

Information about staff and governors of the federation should only be shared on a professional, need to know basis. The need for confidentiality should be clearly understood by those who have access to it, whether this is all or part of the information. 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. Where it is necessary to share information regarding health reports (e.g. speech therapy, medical reports, SEN reports, and minutes of meetings about a child) these reports will be sent electronically to professional email addresses within the federation, the health service and the local authority, as appropriate. Information collected for one purpose should not be used for another.

Parents have a right of access to any records the federation may hold on their child but not to those of any other child for whom they do not have parental responsibility. Information will usually be sent to the parent with whom the child resides. Other arrangements can be made for non-resident parents on request. Parents should not have access to any other child's information, books, or assessments at any time. However parents should be aware that information about their child will be shared with the receiving school upon transition to another school.

Health professionals have their own confidentiality code of practice. Staff should be aware of children with medical needs and the relevant information should be accessible to professionals who need it but not on general view to other parents/carers and children. Due consideration will be given to the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) the Freedom of Information act when sharing information.

Logs of administration of medication to children should be kept secure and each child should have their own individual log. 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 shared with individuals outside the federation except in exceptional circumstances relating to safeguarding or to a receiving school.

From time to time issues are discussed or brought to the attention of governors about staff and children. All such papers or minutes should be marked as confidential. These confidential papers should be destroyed or electronic copies password protected. Governors must observe complete confidentiality at all times, especially in relation to matters concerning individual staff, pupils or parents.

Although decisions reached at governors' meetings are normally made public through the minutes or otherwise, the discussions on which decisions are based should be regarded as confidential. Governors should exercise the highest degree of prudence when discussion of confidential issues occurs outside the governing body.

All children have a right to the same level of confidentiality irrespective of gender, race, religion, medical concerns and special educational needs. In data generated across the federation by these categories, individual children should not be able to be identified.

Safeguarding and Child Protection

Our child protection and safeguarding policies seek to establish and maintain an environment where the children feel secure, are encouraged to talk and are listened to. It is essential to ensure that confidentiality is a whole school issue and that clear ground rules must be set for any classroom work such as circle time and other PHSE sessions dealing with sensitive personal issues. In lessons, teachers should establish from the beginning that it is inappropriate to disclose personal information in a public forum.

Across the federation there are seven trained Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) as detailed in our child protection policy. DSL's receive refresher training every two years. All staff receive whole school safeguarding training every three years.

Staff and Governors are aware of the need to handle all issues about different types of families in a sensitive manner. Pupils and parents/carers know that school staff cannot offer unconditional confidentiality. Information must be shared on a need to know basis if it is considered to be in the child's best interests.

Photographs of children should not be used without parents/carers permission, especially in the press and online. At no time should the child's full name be used with a photograph so that they can be identified.

In the case of illegal activity, the federation should take action in the best interests of the child.