



SAINT JOHN'S

# Staff Confidentiality Policy

Designated Member of Staff	Head Teacher
Date of Issue	Autumn 2021
Frequency of Review	Annual

Issue Number	Issue Date	Summary of Changes
1	December 2021	Re-formatting of the policy
2	October 2024	Review of the policy
3	November 2025	Reviewed and approved at FGB 3

Saint John's Church of England Primary School recognises that the school environment is one based around relationships; the school takes seriously the responsibility when engaging in conversations of a confidential nature. This policy is written to underpin our school ethos to ensure that we all flourish at Saint John's, establishing best practice for adults and children.

## Aims

When teaching staff are working with children on personal, social and health education programmes or in the teaching of any sensitive or controversial issue, it is possible that some children will want to discuss information that is of a personal nature or they may sometimes make disclosures about risky or illegal behaviour. This policy aims to set out guidelines for responding to such situations.

## Objectives

- To ensure that staff, parents and pupils understand what will happen if these situations occur
- To define 'confidentiality'
- To explain the implications of this for practice within the school
- To ensure that staff, pupils and parents understand what is meant by 'confidentiality' at Saint John's C of E Primary School
- To ensure that staff consider the issue of confidentiality when discussing the children in their care and incidents that may have happened in school.

## Guidelines for practice

This policy is particularly relevant to the teaching of Personal, Social, Health Education (PSHE), Drug Education Policy and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE). However, it also covers all situations both in and outside the classroom.

- 'Ground Rules' will be made explicit in lessons whenever appropriate. These should outline the following (in appropriate language):
  - We will respect each other's views
  - We will listen carefully to one another
  - No put-downs!
  - We don't name names or talk about things that are very personal to us. If I (*the teacher*) think that someone has said something that makes me think they are being hurt in some way or are not safe, I will have to talk to someone else about it.

When the lesson is tackling particularly sensitive matters such as puberty, sex or drug education, we will add another rule that: "*Whatever we talk about in this lesson will stay between us. No gossiping in the playground.*"

- Following the guidance in our Safeguarding 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, you must seek further advice as indicated in our Safeguarding Policy.
- In the following circumstances, we will always break confidentiality:
  - Threat to the life of or immediate risk to the pupil
  - Prevention of terrorism
  - A third party is at risk of abuse or neglect
  - When you have been subpoenaed to a Court of Law

- Following a disclosure:
  - Explain to the child who you will talk to and what you will say
  - Make clear how you will continue to support them through the process

'Confidentiality' also refers to protecting the information we hold about the pupils in this school and their families. All staff will endeavour to maintain confidentiality when appropriate, 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 Confidentiality Statement (see below). This is part of the safeguarding leaflet given to every adult visiting or working at Saint John's.

### **Confidentiality Statement**

Staff talk about their job constantly.  
 Conversations at breaks and lunchtimes are often about school,  
 individual children and their families.  
 We ask that such conversations are regarded as confidential.

Similarly, the work, progress and behaviour of individual children is a matter of fact  
 for the teacher, the child and the parents of the child.  
 Any comments made by students about a child, or an incident at school may be  
 misinterpreted and lead to misunderstandings.

Small incidents are dealt with in school and should end there.  
 More serious incidents will be discussed, in confidence, with parents.

We feel sure you will understand the need for such confidentiality on school matters.  
 As a student/ helper in the school we ask that you respect confidentiality  
 on such matters to avoid misunderstandings and upset.

#### **How we are meeting these objectives?**

- All staff working at Saint John's C of E Primary School will be made aware of the contents of this policy and the implications of it for their everyday practice, as well as following policy and practice in the Staff Code of Conduct and Acceptable Use policy.
- All parents will be made aware of this policy and its contents.
- All external agencies working in school to deliver elements of PSHE will be made aware of this policy and its contents. When working with the whole class or groups of children, their practice will be covered by this policy. When working with individual children or families, they will be bound by their own professional code of conduct.