



St Joseph's Special School

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

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INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

This policy was initially devised by the whole staff during a School Planning Day {24th Mar. '03}. It was reviewed in Jan 2009 and reviewed again by school staff in January 2017.

RATIONALE

- 1) To protect the welfare of the pupil and those involved in their care. In this climate of accountability we need definite and clear guidelines on confidentiality.
- 2) To heighten our own awareness of the pupil's rights and the importance of protecting their rights.

RELATIONSHIP TO CHARACTERISTIC SPIRIT OF SCHOOL

In accordance with its' ethos the school is committed to giving each pupil the respect and dignity he/she deserves and to creating an environment in which the safety and privacy of the pupil is ensured.

AIMS

- 1) To protect information of a confidential nature on file on children and their families.
- 2) Personnel interacting with the pupils will be aware of what confidentiality means and will recognise their responsibility in this area.
- 3) To give all staff 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.

GUIDELINES

Confidentiality pertaining to all school matters is of paramount importance to all those who work in or visit our school. This is imperative in the case of those who have direct contact with pupils who may be experiencing difficulty or have a variety of learning styles. This is a sensitive area, requiring all involved to have due regard for the privacy and confidentiality of all. Discussion about a pupil's progress with any party other than the classroom teacher is not tolerated.

Confidentiality refers to the restricted use of information concerning pupils in the school which is obtained during the course of work. All information about individual children is private and should only be shared with those staff who have a need to know.

Confidentiality also refers to information gained about families outside of school. This policy recognises that every pupil and their family has a right to privacy. Implicit in the concept of confidentiality is the value of trust. It is essential that pupils and families trust personnel to

respect their privacy and preserve confidential information that is gained both within and outside of school.

RELEVANT SCHOOL POLICIES

All social services, medical and personal information about a pupil should be held in a safe and secure place which can only be accessed by class teachers and relevant personnel. This policy on confidentiality must be read in conjunction with the school's policies on:

- Data protection
- Child protection
- Assessment and Record keeping
- Intimate Care
- Staff Communication
- Physical Interventions and Restrictive Practices
- Code of Behaviour
- Enrolment and Participation policy
- Acceptable Use policy

LIMITATIONS TO CONFIDENTIALITY Parents should be aware of when and how information about their child will be stored or shared, as per the Data Protection Policy The Dept. of Education & Science guidelines and procedures on Child Protection operate in the school. This may give rise to a situation where the right to confidentiality is overridden.

ORAL COMMUNICATION:

- Should always be carried out in private. General conversations, for example during breaks, should not refer to private information about individual pupils or their families.
- 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.
- Class teachers and one SNA will meet with new class teacher and one SNA at the end of the school year to relay information deemed relevant.
- Care should be taken during telephone conversations that personal information held by the school is not disclosed. (See Data Protection Policy).

WRITTEN COMMUNICATION.

- Procedures to ensure confidentiality in relation to written or electronic information are outlined in the Data Protection Policy

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- All school personnel including volunteers have responsibility for maintaining and respecting confidentiality.
- The Principal/Deputy Principal is responsible for:
 - a) Acquiring information on the pupil from parents and assuring them that this information will be restricted to those who are working

directly with the pupil and will be used in the best interests and to the benefit of the pupil.

- b) Informing all new personnel of the existence of this policy to include bus drivers, volunteers, students on placement etc.
 - c) Ensuring volunteers and students sign a declaration of confidentiality on commencement of placement in the school. (See Appendix A)
 - d) The transfer of files in conjunction with the psychologist on pupils' graduation to adult services.
 - e) The transfer of files where a pupil is changing schools
- The Secretary is responsible for filing reports and locking filing cabinets each day.
 - Serious breaches of confidentiality will be brought to the attention of the Board of Management.

RATIFICATION/COMMUNICATION

The Policy was presented to the Board of Management for amendment and ratification at a meeting on March 9th, 2017. A copy of the revised policy will be filed and uploaded on to the school website. The Parents' Association will be notified that a policy on confidentiality is available on the website.

Ratification and Review

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on _____
It will be reviewed in the school year 2020

Signed _____
Chairperson, Board of Management.