



ST THOMAS MORE CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

MISSION STATEMENT

I have come so that they may have life and have it to the full - John 10:10

As a Catholic school, God is at the heart of all we do. We believe that each person is made in His image, deserving to be treated with respect and dignity.

Showing respect, love and care for everyone and everything, we aim to develop harmony between pupils, parents, the school and Parish and grow as a Christian community.

We aim to embed the virtues in every child to believe in themselves to be the best that they can be and leave school as well-rounded individuals who care about themselves, others, and the world.

This policy must be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, the Data Protection Policy, the Data Breach Policy & Procedure, the Information Security Policy, the Privacy Notices for Staff & Pupils and the GDPR Policy

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1. Aim

To protect the child at all times and to give all staff involved 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.

2. Rationale

St Thomas More Catholic Primary School seeks to put the child at the heart of the learning process and to provide a safe and secure learning environment. It seeks to address any 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. Sharing information unnecessarily is an erosion of trust.

The school is mindful 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.

3. Objectives

- To provide consistent messages in school regarding handling information about children once it has been received.
- To foster an ethos of trust within the school.
- To ensure that staff, parents and pupils are aware of the school's Confidentiality Policy and Procedures.
- To reassure pupils that their best interests will be maintained.
- To encourage children to talk to their parents and carers.
- To ensure that pupils and parents/carers know that school staff cannot offer unconditional confidentiality.
- To ensure that there is equality of provision and access for all including rigorous monitoring of cultural, gender and Special Educational Needs.
- To ensure that if there are any child protection issues then the correct procedure is followed.
- To ensure that confidentiality is a whole school issue and that in lessons, ground rules are set for the protection of all.
- To understand that health professionals are bound by a different code of conduct.
- To ensure that parents have a right of access to any records the school may hold on their child but not to any other child that they do not have parental responsibility for.

4. Guidelines

All information about individual children is private and must only be shared with those staff that have a need to know. All social services, medical and personal information about a

child must be held in a safe and secure place which cannot be accessed by individuals other than designated school staff.

The school continues to actively promote a positive ethos and respect for the individual:

- a. The school has appointed Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) who receive regular training.
- b. There is clear guidance for the handling of safeguarding concerns. All staff have regular annual Safeguarding training.
- c. There is clear guidance for management of allegations against staff.
- d. Staff are aware that effective sex and relationship education, which brings an understanding of what is and is not acceptable in a relationship, can lead to disclosure of a safeguarding concern.
- e. Staff are aware of the need to handle all issues about families in a sensitive manner.
- f. Any intolerance about gender, faith, race, culture or sexuality is unacceptable and will result in the school's Discipline Policy being implemented.
- g. Information collected for one purpose must not be used for another.

The school has appointed a senior member of staff as Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Child protection procedures are understood by staff and training is undertaken annually for all staff, with whole setting training every three years by the Local Authority or other external provider. Parents/carers and children need to be aware that the school cannot guarantee total confidentiality and the school has a duty to report safeguarding concerns.

The school prides itself on good communication with parents/carers and staff are always available to talk to both children and parents/carers about issues that are causing concern. The school encourages children to talk to parents/carers about issues causing them concern and may in some cases support the children to talk to their parents. The school would share with parents any child protection disclosure before going on to inform the correct authorities, unless to do so may place the child at increased risk of significant harm, in which case advice will be sought from Children's Social Care. Parents/carers and children should be aware that in exceptional circumstances confidentiality will be broken.

All children have a right to the same level of confidentiality irrespective of gender, race, religion, medical concerns and Special Educational Needs. Data is regularly generated in schools by these categories but individual children must not be able to be identified.

Confidentiality is a whole school issue. Clear ground rules must be set for any classroom work such as Circle Time and other PHSE (Learning for Life) sessions dealing with sensitive issues. Strategies have been put in place and all children are made aware of them when dealing with sensitive information which may fall outside the boundaries of child protection procedures. School needs to be proactive so children feel supported but information is not unnecessarily revealed in a public arena. 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.

Health professionals have their own Code of Practice dealing with confidentiality. Staff are aware of children in their class who have medical needs but lists must not be placed on general view to other parents/carers and children.

Photographs of children must not be used without parent/carer permission especially in the press and on the school website. The school gives clear guidance to parents about the use of cameras, videos and mobile devices during public school events.

Information about children will be shared with parents but only about their child. Parents must not have access to any other child's books or progress grades at any time, especially at Parents Evening. However, parents should be aware that information about their child will be shared with the receiving school when they change school. All personal information about children including Social Services records is regarded as confidential. This must be clearly understood by those who have access to these records and whether those concerned have access to only some of the information.

Information regarding health reports such as speech therapy, medical reports, SEN reports, SEN minutes of meetings and Social Services minutes of meetings and reports will be circulated in envelopes and once read must be returned for secure filing. Logs of administration of medication to children must be kept secure and each child must have their own individual log. Addresses and telephone numbers of parents and children will not be passed on except in exceptional circumstances or to a receiving school. Governors need to be mindful that from time to time issues are discussed or brought to their attention about staff and children. All such papers must be marked as confidential and these confidential papers must be destroyed after the meeting. Governors must observe complete confidentiality when asked to do so by the Local Governing Committee, 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 must be regarded as confidential. Governors must exercise the highest degree of prudence when discussion of potentially contentious issues arises outside the Local Governing Committee.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation

The policy will be reviewed as part of the school's monitoring cycle every 3 years.

6. Conclusion

St Thomas More Catholic Primary School has a duty of care and responsibility towards pupils, 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 the key issue behind this document.