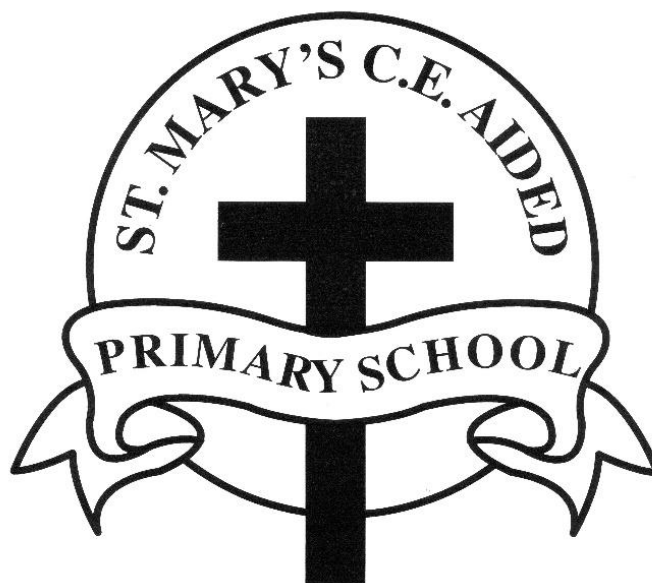




Policy:	Confidentiality
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Author:	Amanda McGarrigle
Date:	March 2026
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Key changes/notes:
There are no changes to the previous version of this policy.

Statutory Requirement:	Yes
Proposed Renewal Cycle:	Annually
Proposed annual review authority:	Governing Body
Policy Section:	Governance

Let the children come to me and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.” (Luke 18:16)

This policy is based upon our Christian values of thankfulness, respect, honesty, love and resilience.

Aims:

The aim of this policy is to ensure that every member of the school community understands how the school deals with confidential information and the varying levels of confidentiality which may be offered in different circumstances.

The school is mindful that it is placed in a position of trust and that sharing information unnecessarily is an erosion of that trust. Even when sensitive information appears to be widely known, it will not be assumed by those immediately involved that it is appropriate to discuss or share this information further.

By developing a proper and professional understanding of confidentiality, we aim to foster a culture of trust within the school, where children, parents and staff feel able to confide in members of staff, as well as being encouraged to talk to their parents and carers. We are committed to developing creative and positive ways for the child's voice to be heard, whilst recognizing the responsibility to use, hold and safeguard information received.

We aim to reassure parents and pupils that their best interests will be maintained, and that all issues arising will be handled in a sensitive manner. Please refer to our Data Protection (GDPR) policy for further details about how information is stored and handled.

Sharing Information

In a confidential relationship there is openness and agreement about what will happen to information disclosed between two, or more, people. It may not have to take the form of secrecy. In practice there are few situations where absolute confidentiality is possible, and in many cases only limited confidentiality can be offered. The boundaries of confidentiality must be made clear at the beginning.

If it is felt that there is a possibility of a child or children being harmed or put in danger, the necessity to inform the safeguarding lead will be explained. At St Mary's this is Mrs Amanda McGarrigle.

If confidentiality has to be broken, the child must be informed and reasons given. The child must be reassured that confidential information will only be shared on a strict need-to-know basis, and only in their best interests.

If a member of the school community receives information, where they believe there is a child protection issue, they should refer to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Mrs Amanda McGarrigle), who is responsible for child protection within the school.

Where information is shared with another professional, in the interests of the child, then a record will be made in the child's safeguarding file.

Confidentiality and Pupils

The school prides itself on good communication, and staff are always available to talk to children and families about issues causing concern. The school encourages pupils to confide in their parents, and in some circumstances will support children with this.

All children have the right to the same level of confidentiality, irrespective of gender, race, religion, medical needs, and special educational needs or disability. A large amount of data is generated by schools, but information collected for one purpose should not be used for another.

Confidentiality is a whole school issue, and staff are aware that class work can lead easily to a disclosure of a child protection issue. If a child does begin to talk about something personal and sensitive, teachers would protect children from sharing such information with a wide group, and encourage the children, in a private and safe space to talk about their worries or issues, supporting them appropriately.

However, parents and child need to be aware that the school cannot guarantee total confidentiality, and has a legal duty to report child protection issues. The school will share with parents any child protection disclosure before informing the correct authority, except where this is not in the best interest or safety of a child (or adult). There is clear guidance for the handling of child protection incidents, and all staff have regular training on child protection issues. Please see our child protection policy for more information.

All information about individual children is private and will only be shared with those staff that have a need to know. All social services, medical and personal information about a child, including Special Education Needs paperwork, will be held in a safe and secure place which cannot be accessed by individuals other than school staff. Professionals visiting the school, such as school nurses, counsellors or advisors, for example, are bound by professional codes of conduct which uphold confidentiality, but in classroom situations will work within the school policy. More information on this is available in the school's Data Protection (GDPR) Policy.

Parents have a right of access to any records the school may hold on their child, but not to those of any other child they do not have parental responsibility for. Parents should not have access to any other child's books, marks and progress grades at any time, especially at parents evening. The exception, in law, to this is child protection information which will not be shared.

Parents should be aware that information about their child will be shared with the receiving school when they leave.

Confidentiality and Staff

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

Staff performance management will be carried out privately. Targets for individuals, named lesson observation sheets and other performance data will be securely stored in the Head teacher's office. A copy will also be held by the person to whom the information pertains.

Confidentiality and Governors

Governors need to be mindful that confidential issues, about staff and children and their families, may be discussed or brought to their attention. Any sensitive correspondence should be clearly marked as 'confidential' and minuted separately. Once read, these confidential papers should be destroyed, or returned to the Chair for secure filing.

Governors serving on committees where sensitive or contentious issues about staff, children or families are discussed, should not share this information with the wider body of governors, particularly as, in the case of an Appeal or Complaint, a group of

governors without any prior knowledge of the case would need to convene to hear details of it and form an unbiased opinion.

Governors must observe complete confidentiality in dealing with issues concerning individual staff, pupils and families and whenever they have been asked to do so by the governing body. They should not share information with their family members and, with this in mind, care should be taken when making phone calls and using email.

Any governor known to have committed a breach of confidentiality may be asked to stand down. 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, and names of individuals need not be mentioned.

Governors should exercise the highest degree of prudence when discussion of potentially contentious issues arises outside the governing body, being careful not to appear to give opinions on behalf of the Governing Body.

Confidentiality and Families

We recognise that sometimes there may be family issues which might affect a pupil and which the family will only disclose to us if they can be sure the information will be treated confidentially and not be shared unnecessarily. We will respect the wishes of the family wherever possible, but, where it is felt necessary to share the information given to us, 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 Visitors

A 'Visitor' in this context is any person who works in school either in a paid or a voluntary capacity, for example, parent readers or music tutors. In some instances, a visitor may become privy to personal information regarding pupils, parents and staff that is of a sensitive or confidential nature.

All regular visitors to school receive Safeguarding advice through an information leaflet / pack. This advice makes it explicit that any personal information they may come across should remain confidential and not be shared outside of school. It also gives clear guidance about what to do in the event of 'disclosure' by a child and that in these circumstances they do not guarantee confidentiality to the child and who they should speak to in these circumstances.

Parents in school working as volunteers in the office, classrooms, or as part of the School Association will not report cases of poor behaviour or pupil discipline to other parents. This allows the teachers to deal with such matters in line with school policy and on occasions to allow children to put the matter right without the direct involvement of their parents. All visitors are made aware of our Visitors Code (See Appendix 1)

VISITORS' CODE

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ADULTS WORKING IN SCHOOL

St Mary's CE Primary School is a safe and happy learning environment. To help us protect this, please observe the following:

- Visitors to report to the school office.
- Visitor badges must be worn.
- Visitors must sign in to school.
- Visitors must make themselves aware of the fire evacuation process for the class they are working in.
- Visitors will conduct themselves in a respectful, supportive and friendly manner.
- All adults will speak to children in an appropriate manner, valuing and respecting difference racial origins, religions, cultures and languages.
- All adults working with pupils will have an enhanced DBS check.
- If you have child protection concerns, you must report these to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Mrs Amanda McGarrigle).
- No photography is allowed.
- Mobile phones must only be used in office areas.

At St Mary's, we take our safeguarding responsibilities very seriously, and we are proactive in every area of school life. Please help us to keep our children safe, happy and secure by following the Visitors Code when you are in school.