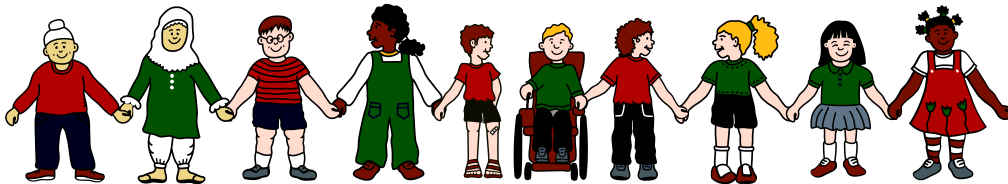


THE GILES NURSERY AND INFANTS' SCHOOL



Confidentiality Policy

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**This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's
online safety and data protection policies**

Confidentiality Policy

Rationale

At The Giles Nursery and Infants' School we believe that we can best meet the needs of individual children by working closely with parents/carers. We aim to develop partnerships between parents/carers and staff which are based on mutual trust and respect, and which promote the sharing of information and knowledge for the benefit of the children in our care.

Objectives

- To provide consistent messages in school about handling information about children.
- To foster an ethos of trust within the school.
- To ensure that staff, parents/carers and children are aware of the school's confidentiality policy and procedures and act upon them.
- To encourage children to be aware of confidentiality issues relating to their peers.
- To reassure children that their best interests will be maintained
- To encourage children to talk to their parents/carers.
- To ensure that children and parents/carers know that school staff cannot offer unconditional confidentiality.
- To ensure that parents/carers have a right of access to any records the school may hold on their child but not to those of any other child that they do not have parental responsibility for.

General principles

- All information regarding individual children is treated in a confidential manner and is only shared with staff members or individuals who have a legitimate need to know.
- All safeguarding, medical and personal information about a child is stored securely and can only be accessed by authorised staff members.
- We value open communication with parents/carers and staff are available to discuss concerns with children and parents/carers. We encourage children to talk to their parents/carers about issues affecting them and may, in some cases support facilitate these conversations.
- All children, regardless of gender, race, religion, culture, medical needs or special educational needs, are entitled to the same level of confidentiality.
- All members of the school community including children, parents/carers, staff and governors – are entitled to privacy from gossip. Matters are dealt with according to school procedures and remain confidential within the school setting.

Staff confidentiality guidelines

- Staff members must not share details of individual cases with anyone who does not have a professional connection to the welfare or education of the child.
- Staff must not discuss a child's behaviour, personal matters, or other sensitive information in the presence of another child.
- Staff must not discuss a child's behaviour, personal matters, or other sensitive information in the presence of another child's parents/carers.
- Governors, particularly those on disciplinary, grievance or exclusion committees, must maintain strict confidentiality about matters concerning individuals (staff, families, or children) outside of official meetings.
- Staff performance is managed and conducted in a confidential manner.
- Information regarding child protection matters is shared with staff on a need-to-know basis only.
- All staff members, including teachers, support staff, volunteers and governors, must always be mindful of the sensitive nature of personal information about children and respect confidentiality.
- Volunteers, such as parents/carers and friends of the school, must not discuss school matters, particularly personal information, within the wider community.
- Before working in the school, all volunteers, students and supply teachers are required to read and understand this policy.

Handling sensitive information

- Information about children with medical needs is made accessible only to staff members who require it to provide appropriate care. This information is kept secure and is not visible to other children or parents.
- Photographs of children are never used for publications or online media without permission from the child's parents/carers.
- Governors are required to uphold complete confidentiality, particularly concerning individual staff, children, or parents/carers. Although decisions reached at governors' meetings are normally made public through the minutes or otherwise, the discussions on which decisions are based are regarded as confidential. Governors should exercise the highest degree of prudence when discussion of potentially contentious issues arise outside of governing board meetings.

Implementation of the policy

The headteacher and governors are responsible for ensuring the confidentiality policy is implemented effectively. This includes:

- Establishing clear communication channels with parents/carers.
- Providing parents with accessible information and ensuring consent forms are completed.
- Ensuring that contact information is up to date.

- Establishing, where appropriate, the name of a child's legal guardian.
- Keeping a secure and up-to-date record of a child's particular needs where necessary.
- Ensuring that all staff, volunteers, and students understand the confidentiality policy and its importance.

Sharing information

- Parents/carers are invited to a briefing meeting upon their child's admission to The Giles Nursery and Infants' School to discuss policies, procedures, and complete required contact forms.
- We collect information about each child's individual needs to ensure their well-being and to provide them with the best care. This information is only shared between the child's designated staff member and other appropriate staff.
- Any changes to a child's circumstances or personal information are promptly updated in the school's records.
- Parents/carers should discuss any concerns with the child's class teacher in the first instance. If necessary, the teacher will escalate the issue to the headteacher for further resolution.
- Establish a system in which only authorised adults can collect children and create a plan that can be used in an emergency when a child cannot be collected by the recognised adult.
- Ensure that information about children is treated as confidential, is held securely and is only shared with parents/carers and relevant personnel
- ensure that all staff, volunteers and students understand that information held on children and their families is confidential.
- ensure that all employed staff, volunteers and students are aware of this policy and the procedures followed in the school.

Privacy and data security

- Any personal data held on children and their parents/carers is stored securely.
- Information is shared only with staff on a need to know basis and with parental consent.
- The class teacher is responsible for discussing a child's progress and welfare with their parents/carers, and this information may be shared with other staff to ensure the child's best interests and needs are met.
- Regular reports, meetings, and updates are provided to parents, with records stored securely.
- Parents can request access to their child's records but are not permitted to access the records of other children.
- Confidentiality is respected at all times, except in specific situations where information must be shared without consent, such as in safeguarding matters.

Legal and data protection compliance

- All electronic data containing personal, medical, or safeguarding information is stored securely and in accordance with the school's current data protection policy.
- Any data transfer will comply with UK GDPR regulations, ensuring encryption and password protection.
- Governing board meetings regarding sensitive issues, such as exclusions, staff performance, safeguarding matters or personal details, are recorded in a confidential report, which is not available to the public.
- Explicit consent is required from the child's parents/carers before sharing any personal data or discussing sensitive matters in a group setting.

Volunteer guidelines

- Volunteers and others assisting with school activities must refrain from discussing personal or behavioural matters about individual children with others.
- Volunteers and staff must adhere to the school's confidentiality standards regarding any personal information they may encounter.

Photography and video guidelines

- The Giles Nursery and Infants' School follows strict guidelines for the safe use of photography and video recording. Consent from parents/carers is required before any images of children are taken or published, in line with the photographic and video images policy. All such use complies with the data protection policy.

Government guidance

The latest government guidance on best professional practice with those working with children and young people is outlined in 'Information Sharing – Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers' (DfE, May 2024). This document replaces the previous July 2018 guidance and reinforces the critical importance of information to protect a child from harm.

The guidance clarifies that data protection laws do not prevent the sharing of information when necessary to protect a child from harm. It sets out a structured framework to help professionals make informed decisions about sharing information while balancing confidentiality, privacy, and safeguarding responsibilities.

The seven golden rules of information sharing

Staff must follow these seven key principles when deciding whether to share information:

1. **A child's safety comes first** – Protecting a child from harm takes priority over privacy concerns.
2. **Be open and transparent** – Where safe and appropriate, inform children and families about how and why information will be shared.
3. **Consent is not always required** – Information can be shared without consent if there is a safeguarding concern. A lawful basis must be established instead.
4. **Seek advice if unsure** – Staff should consult the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or senior leaders when uncertain about sharing information.
5. **Ensure security and confidentiality** – Information must be shared appropriately and securely, following school protocols.
6. **Only share relevant and necessary information** – Share the minimum amount of information required to protect a child.
7. **Record decisions and actions** – Whether information is shared or not, staff must document their decision, reasoning, and any actions taken.
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Decision-making framework for information sharing

The DfE guidance provides a clear decision-making process to help professionals determine when and how to share information:

1. **Identify the purpose** – Confirm whether sharing information is necessary to safeguard a child.
2. **Assess necessity and proportionality** – Ensure that only relevant and required information is shared.
3. **Check the legal basis** – Identify a lawful reason for sharing (e.g., public task, legal obligation, legitimate interests).
4. **Consider transparency** – Inform the child or their family where safe and appropriate.
5. **Seek advice when needed** – Consult the DSL, senior leader, or data protection officer if unsure.
6. **Share securely** – Follow school procedures to ensure safe and appropriate sharing of information.
7. **Record the decision** – Document what information was shared (or why it was not), with whom, and the justification.

Additional decision-making considerations

- **Urgent or emergency situations** – If a child is at immediate risk of harm, staff should share information without delay and inform the DSL as soon as possible.
- **Multi-agency working** – Staff should work collaboratively with other agencies to build a full picture of a child's needs and risks.
- **Confidentiality and data protection** – While maintaining confidentiality is important, it must not override the duty to safeguard children.

All staff at The Giles Nursery and Infants' School must follow this policy and refer any safeguarding concerns immediately to the DSL. By adhering to these principles, we ensure that decisions about information sharing are made responsibly, lawfully, and in the best interests of the child.

Links with other policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

Behaviour policy
Child protection policy
Data protection policy
Online safety policy
Performance management policy
Photographic and video images policy
SEND policy
Whistleblowing policy
Visitors' policy