Confidentiality Policy

Last Reviewed	**October 2026**
Next review	**October 2029**
Persons responsible	**SLT**
Governor committee	**P&P**

Tracking Changes	
October 2026	Completely new template policy

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 might 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 understanding of confidentiality we will foster an ethos of trust within the school, where children 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 recognising 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 Policy and Freedom of Information Policy for further details about how we comply with the Data Protection Act 2018, Data (Use and Access) Act 2025, and UK GDPR, and how information is handled.

Confidentiality – 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 total 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 of the conversation.

If it is felt that there is a possibility of children being harmed or put in danger, the necessity to inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) within the school will be explained.

If confidentiality has to be broken, the child must be informed first and reasons given (where it is safe and appropriate to do so). The child must be reassured that confidential information will only be shared on a strictly need-to-know basis and only in their own best interests. If a member of the school community receives information where they believe there is a child protection issue, they should refer the case to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) within the school.

Where any information is shared with another professional, in the interests of the child, then a record of the information and with whom it was shared will be kept in school.

Recording confidential conversations

When confidential information is shared, a written record will be made including:

- Date and time of the conversation
- Who was present

- What information was shared
- Reasons for sharing
- Any actions agreed

These records will be stored securely in line with our Data Protection Policy and retention schedule.

Confidentiality and Pupils

The school prides itself on good communication and staff are always available to talk to both children and parents/carers about issues that are causing concern – whatever they might be. The school encourages children to confide in parents/carers and may in some cases support the children in this.

All children have a right to the same level of confidentiality irrespective of gender, race, religion, medical concerns and special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). A lot of data is generated in schools by these categories but individual children should not be able to be identified and information collected for one purpose should not be used for another.

Confidentiality is a whole school issue and staff are aware that classroom work, such as circle-time and other PSHE sessions dealing with sensitive issues such as sex, relationships and drugs, can lead to disclosure of a child protection issue. If a child did begin to talk about something personal and sensitive, teaching staff would protect them from sharing such information with the group, and later encourage the child to talk about their issue in private and advise and support them accordingly.

However, parents/carers and children need to be aware that the school cannot guarantee total confidentiality and the school has a duty to report child protection issues.

Informing parents about safeguarding concerns

The school will normally share with parents any child protection disclosure before informing the relevant authorities. However, we will not inform parents if doing so would:

- Place the child at increased risk of harm
- Compromise a police investigation
- Lead to an unjustified delay in making a referral

In these circumstances, we will seek advice from children's social care and/or the police before informing parents.

The school has appointed a senior member of staff as Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and has trained Deputy DSLs. There is clear guidance for the handling of child protection incidents and all staff have regular training on child protection issues. Please refer to our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy for more detail on this.

Storage and access to pupil 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 Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) 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 Policy.

Parents' right of access to information

Parents have a right of access to any records the school may hold on their child under UK GDPR through a Subject Access Request (SAR). The school will respond to SARs within one month. Parents do not have access to records 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, including at parents' evenings or school events.

Information sharing when pupils leave

Parents should be aware that information about their child will be shared with the receiving school when they leave, in accordance with statutory requirements. Addresses and telephone numbers of parents and children will not be passed on except in exceptional circumstances or to a receiving school.

Confidentiality and Digital Communication

The school recognises that confidentiality extends to digital communications and online platforms. All staff, governors, volunteers and visitors must:

- Not discuss confidential school matters on social media platforms (including Facebook, Twitter/X, Instagram, WhatsApp groups, etc.)
- Not share photographs or information about pupils online without appropriate consent from parents/carers
- Use school email systems (not personal email accounts) for sharing sensitive or confidential information about pupils, staff or school matters
- Ensure any video calls or online meetings involving confidential discussions are conducted securely using approved school platforms
- Not take screenshots or recordings of confidential information on personal devices
- Follow the school's Online Safety Policy and Acceptable Use Policy at all times

Specific guidance for staff:

- Staff must not accept or send friend/follow requests to current pupils or their parents/carers on personal social media accounts
- Staff must not discuss pupils, parents, colleagues or school matters on personal social media
- Any concerns about pupils observed on social media should be reported to the DSL immediately

Specific guidance for governors:

- Governors must not discuss confidential governing body business on any digital platform outside of secure school systems
- Governors should use their school-provided email addresses for all governor business
- Care must be taken when working remotely to ensure confidential documents are not visible to others

Specific guidance for volunteers and visitors:

- Volunteers and visitors must not take photographs of pupils on personal devices unless explicitly authorised for a specific purpose
- Any photographs taken on school devices for school purposes must not be shared outside of school
- Volunteers must not discuss what they see or hear in school on social media or messaging platforms

Any breach of confidentiality through digital means will be treated as seriously as a breach through other channels and may result in:

- Volunteers no longer being permitted to work in school
- Staff facing disciplinary action
- Governors being asked to stand down
- Possible legal action under data protection legislation

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 e mail.

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 teachers. 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 our **Safeguarding Information for Visitors** leaflet. This leaflet includes:

- Confidentiality expectations
- What to do if a child makes a disclosure
- Who the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy DSLs are and how to contact them
- How to report concerns
- The school's approach to online safety and use of mobile phones

A copy of this leaflet is displayed at the school reception and on our website.

This advice makes it explicit that any personal information visitors 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 a 'disclosure' by a child and that in these circumstances they cannot guarantee confidentiality to the child and must speak to the DSL or a Deputy DSL immediately.

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.

Appendix 1

Voluntary Helper - Confidentiality Agreement

First of all, thank you for volunteering to be a helper at Stocks Green Primary School. Your help and support in this role is greatly appreciated. In this role you are supporting the life of this school. This role carries certain responsibilities on your part including the requirement to be confidential about school matters.

By signing this agreement, you agree to uphold Stocks Green Primary School's Confidentiality Policy.

This means you will not share pupil/staff information with anyone in a way that breaches confidentiality.

Examples of confidential information include (but are not limited to):

- Information about staff, pupils, and events that occur in school *For example, a parent who knows you are a helper at the school may ask you how their child is getting on (e.g. academically/behaviour). To prevent any misunderstanding, it would be better to advise the parent to speak to the class teacher.*
- Information accessed by 'privilege' e.g. notices on staff noticeboard/conversations overheard in the staffroom or office
- Pupil records, assessment data, or SEND information
- Staff personal information or employment matters
- Safeguarding concerns or child protection matters
- Any information about pupils' family circumstances

Digital confidentiality:

You must also maintain confidentiality in digital communications:

- Do not discuss anything you see or hear in school on social media, messaging apps, or email
- Do not take photographs of pupils on personal devices unless explicitly authorised
- Do not share school information in online parent groups or forums
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If you see something in school that concerns you:

Please discuss the matter with the headteacher or a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Safeguarding responsibilities:

If you believe a child may be suffering or at risk of suffering harm, a child discloses abuse, or the behaviour of another adult gives rise for concern, you have a duty to notify the **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a Deputy DSL** immediately (see visitor leaflet for names and contact details).

Understanding the consequences:

I understand that I may have access to confidential information and that it is my responsibility to maintain the integrity of this information and to keep it private. I further understand that disclosure of confidential information may result in me no longer being permitted to volunteer at the school.

If I breach confidentiality I understand that I may be in breach of the Data Protection Act 2018, Data (Use and Access) Act 2025, and UK GDPR, and could face external sanctions including potential legal action.

Declaration:
I have read and understood this Confidentiality Agreement and the school's Confidentiality Policy. I agree to maintain confidentiality in all aspects of my volunteer role.

Name of Helper	
Signature of Helper	
Date	
School Representative	
Signature of School Representative	
Date	