

## CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

### Rationale

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.

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

To protect information of a confidential nature on file on children and their families.

Personnel interacting with the pupils will be aware of what confidentiality means and will recognise their responsibility in this area.

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 and especially those who are in contact with staff and students. For staff, this is explicitly stated in their contracts of employment as well as the school's Child Protection Policy.

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 pupils 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
- Intimate Care
- Home school Communication
- Code of Behaviour
- Enrolment 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 Department of Education 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 SNAs will meet with the new class team at the start 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 members of the school community, under the positive and supportive leadership of the Board of Management and Principal, have both a role and a responsibility in for maintaining and respecting confidentiality.

The Principal/Deputy Principal is responsible for:

- 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.
- Informing all new personnel of the existence of this policy to include bus drivers, volunteers, students on placement etc.
- Ensuring volunteers and students sign a declaration of confidentiality on commencement of placement in the school. (See Appendix A)
- The transfer of files in conjunction with the psychologist on pupils' graduation to adult services.
- 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.

#### *Declaration of Confidentiality*

A 'declaration of Confidentiality' (Appendix 1) must be completed and signed by all those who work and volunteer within the school, indicating that they clearly understand and are willing to abide by the guidelines governing this policy. This includes teachers, SNAs, external coaches and students on work experience. This is not an exhaustive list.

The principal is responsible for ensuring that the Declaration of confidentiality is signed by relevant individuals.

#### *Ratification/Communication*

The amended policy was presented to the Board of Management for amendment and ratification at a meeting on 23 May 2023. A copy of the revised policy will be stored on the masters drive for staff to access and uploaded on to the school website.

#### *Success Criteria*

We will know that this assessment policy is working well when procedures run smoothly because there is clarity about what is expected and who is responsible for different aspects

#### *Review and Ratification*

This policy was reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management.

Signed:



Sé Goulding, Chairperson of Board of Management



Jennifer Doyle, Principal

Date: 23 May 2023



## APPENDIX 1

I, the undersigned, confirm that I have read, understand and will adhere to the Confidentiality Policy dated May 2023.

I am aware that the data and other information to which I have access with Enable Ireland Sandymount School must be treated by me in a professional and confidential manner. The information will only be used in the performance of my duties and will not be disclosed to any third party.

In particular I confirm as follows:

1. Any personal data concerning pupils which I process or have learned by virtue of my position as an employee attached to Enable Ireland Sandymount School will be kept confidential both during and after my attachment.
2. I will only discuss pupils with Enable Ireland Sandymount School staff in a professional capacity when appropriate.
3. I will not remove any confidential documents or property from Enable Ireland Sandymount School.
4. No discussion of the student, the teacher, school staff, the class or the events of the school day should take place outside the school setting.

Information received on students, and observations made in classrooms, need to be handled sensitively and carefully and are often only to be shared with particular members of staff.

SNAs may be closer to parents than teachers and some parents may therefore consider them more approachable than teachers. Parents with questions or issues about school policy or practice should be referred directly to the class teacher or principal. This applies to direct face-to-face communication or indirect telephone communication. It is not appropriate for parents to have a phone number for members of staff other than bus escorts.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

