

Confidentiality Procedures

The policy of St. Dunstan's Educational Foundation is to work in partnership with parents in order to promote the welfare of children. The Foundation also aims to build up relationships of trust with children. Children and parents should feel able to raise with the Foundation concerns about safety and welfare in the knowledge that these will be dealt with sensitively.

Due to the sensitive nature of such concerns, St. Dunstan's Education Foundation will operate on the presumption that anything imparted in confidence will be treated in confidence. This is subject to three qualifications:

1. Anything imparted "in confidence" to one member of staff or person approached as an associate of the Foundation may be shared with a restricted number of colleagues, if that person feels in need of support and guidance from them. Whenever possible, the child will be consulted and told who the information will be shared with. The child's wishes should be considered carefully before sharing information with any other staff.
2. If concerns are raised about the safety or welfare of a child, the person approached is obliged, as outlined in the Foundation's Safeguarding Policy, to pass that information on to the Foundation's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), for consideration as to whether it should be shared with appropriate agencies, parents or members of staff. In these circumstances, the person approached would not, except in an emergency, breach the confidence without letting the child know that they intended doing so.
3. St Dunstan's Education Foundation must pass on information when legally obliged to do so, for example, by a court of law.

Children must also feel able to share concerns with staff. Problems may arise when a child consults a member of staff about a problem and does not want that information to be shared with parents. Whilst staff will try to encourage children to share the information with parents where that is appropriate, there may be circumstances in which any pressure to pass the information on could result in the child keeping the problem to himself/ herself, or not sharing concerns in the future.

Parents must be reassured that it is the aim of St Dunstan's Foundation always to act in the best interests of the child, and to encourage the fullest possible involvement and consultation with parents.

Although decisions to seek support for a child in need would normally be taken in consultation with parents and pupils, consent is not required for a referral when there are reasonable grounds to believe that a child is at risk of significant harm.

The Related Document *Pupil Physical and Mental Health Policy* outlines the expectations pupils can have of confidentiality when speaking to the College Nurse or Counsellors.

ANW

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