



Confidentiality Policy

September 2023

Next Update: September 2025

Approved by: Chair of Trustees

Principal: Neil Bain

Contents

1. Aim.....	3
2. Legislation and statutory responsibilities.....	3
3. Roles and responsibilities.....	3
4.Guidelines.....	4
5.Health Care Professionals.....	5
6. Staff Confidentiality.....	6
7. Monitoring and Evaluation.....	6

1. Aims

This policy aims to:

- Protect the child at all times and to give all staff involved clear, unambiguous guidance as to their legal and professional roles and to ensure good practice throughout Wemms Education Centre. It is important this information is understood by parents, carers, students, staff and Trustees.
- The Wemms Education Centre, in line with 'Every Child Matters', seeks to put the child at the heart of the learning process and to provide a safe and secure learning environment.
- It seeks to implement the underlying principles of the Every Child Matters Agenda and to address the issues that may arise about confidentiality.
- It is 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.
- Sharing information unnecessarily is an erosion of trust. The school is mindful that all stakeholders are in a position of trust and there is a general expectation that a professional approach will be used in all matters of confidentiality.

1.1 The Board of Trustees will implement this policy by:

- Providing consistent messages in school about handling information about children once it has been received.
- To ensure that staff, parents, carers and students are aware of the school's confidentiality policy and procedures.
- To ensure that students and parents/carers know that the school staff cannot offer unconditional confidentiality.
- To ensure that there is equality of provision and access for all, including rigorous monitoring of cultural, gender and special educational needs.
- To ensure that if there are child protection issues then the correct procedure is followed.
- To ensure that confidentiality is a whole school issue and that in lessons ground rules are set for the protection of all.
- To understand that health professionals are bound by different codes of conduct.
- To ensure that parents/carers have a right of access to any records the school may hold on their child but not to any other for whom they do not have parental responsibility.

2. Legislation and Statutory Responsibilities

This policy is based on advice from the Department for Education and the following legislation:

- Data protection Act 2018
- It is linked to the schools Safeguarding Policy

3. Roles and Responsibilities

Wemms Education Centre has a duty of care and responsibility towards pupils, parents/carers and staff. It also needs to work with a range of outside agencies and share information on a professional basis. The care and safety of the individual is the key issue behind this document. The Deputy Head has responsibility for monitoring this policy. Following any curriculum monitoring a positional statement will be written to contribute to the School Development Plan.

4. Guidelines

- All information about individual children is private and should only be shared with those staff that have a need to know.
- All social services, medical and personal information about a child should be held in a safe and secure place that cannot be accessed by individuals other than school staff.
- The school continues to actively promote positive ethos and respect for the individual.
- In addition to the Principal, the school has appointed at least one other member of the Senior Leadership Team, for child protection who receives regular training.
- All senior managers are Safeguarding Level 3 and receive regular training. The responsibility for this policy on a day to day basis is the DSL.
- There is clear guidance for the handling of child protection incidents.
- All staff have regular training on child protection issues.
- There is clear guidance for procedures if a member of staff is accused of abuse. This links to the school Safeguarding Policy.
- Child protection procedures are understood by staff and training is undertaken every three years for all staff. There is annual refresher safeguarding training delivered by the Principal and Deputy Head. New staff members joining mid-year will also receive training connected to Child Protection, in accordance with the school Safeguarding policy.
- Staff are aware that effective sex and relationship education that brings an understanding of what is and is not acceptable in a relationship, can lead to disclosure of a child protection issue. Reference is made to this in the Child Protection and RSE Policies.
- Staff are aware of the need to handle all issues about different structures of families in a sensitive manner.
- Any intolerance about gender, faith, race, culture or sexuality is unacceptable and should follow the schools discipline policy.
- Information collected for one purpose should not be used for any other purpose.
- 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.
- The school prides itself on good communication with parents and carers and staff are always available to talk to both children and parents/carers about issues that are causing concern. The school encourages children to talk to parents/carers about issues causing them concern and may in cases support them in talking to their parents. The school would endeavour to share with parents/carers any child protection disclosure before going to the authorities.
- Parents/carers and children should feel reassured that in only in exceptional circumstances will confidentiality be broken.
- All children have a right to the same level of confidentiality irrespective of gender, race, religion, medical concerns and special educational needs.
- Confidentiality is a whole school issue. Clear ground rules must be set for any classroom and other PSHE sessions dealing with sensitive issues such as sex, relationships and drugs.
- Strategies are in place and all children are aware of them for dealing with sensitive information that may fall outside the boundaries of child protection procedures.

- Wemms Education Centre needs to continue to be proactive so children feel supported but information is not unnecessarily revealed in a public arena. 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; in particular child protection information will only be shared on a need to know basis.

5. Health Care Professionals

Health professionals have their own code of practice dealing with confidentiality. Staff should be aware of children with medical needs and the class information sheet should be accessible to staff who need that information but not on general view to other parents/carers and children.

- State Registered Arts Therapists also work within their own Codes of Practice which ensures the confidentiality of session.
- The Counsellor, Art and Music Therapist will maintain confidentiality within their lessons unless a safeguarding issue becomes apparent.
- Photographs of children should not be used without parents/carers' written permission especially in the press and the internet.
- At no time should the child's name be used with a photograph for publicity purposes so that they can be identified, unless parental consent has been given. The school gives clear guidance to parents about the use of cameras and videos during public school events.
- A list of children who are not permitted to have photographs taken for public use is available from the office.
- Where parental permission is given for children to be videoed or recorded, or artwork photographed in music and art sessions, the material remains confidential. Parents may also consent to anonymous case studies being used in clinical studies.
- Information about children will be shared with parents but only about their child. Parents should not have access to any other child's books, marks and assessments at any time especially at parents' evenings.
- All personal information about children including social services and art therapies records should be regarded as confidential. It should be clearly understood by those who have access to it, and whether those concerned have access to all, or only some of the information.
- Information regarding health reports such as speech therapy, art therapies reports and referrals, medical reports, SEN reports, SEN minutes of meetings and social services minutes of meetings will be treated confidentially and passed onto the relevant staff members, SMT members, as required.
- Emails between professionals e.g. CIN minutes for example, will use a password to access the reports.
- Logs of administration of medication to children should be kept secure and each child should have their own individual log.
- In all other notes, briefing sheets etc. a child should not be identified, if the notes are of a confidential/sensitive nature.

- Addresses and telephone numbers of parents and children will not be passed on except in exceptional circumstances or to a receiving school.
- Trustees need to be mindful that from time to time issues are discussed or brought to their attention about staff and children. All such papers should be marked as confidential.
- These confidential papers should be destroyed. Trustees must observe complete confidentiality when asked to do so especially in relation to matters concerning individual staff, students or parents.
- Although decisions reached at Trustees meetings are normally made public through the minutes or otherwise, the discussions on which decisions are based should be regarded as confidential. Trustees should exercise the highest degree of prudence when discussion of potentially contentious issues arise outside the governing body.

6. Staff Confidentiality

Wemms Education Centre is committed to its obligations to staff and undertakes to maintain staff confidentiality by:

- Secure storage of all personal information e.g. names, addresses, telephone numbers and work history.
- Medical information is contained in a sealed envelope in the Admin Office and will be given to ambulance personnel in the event of an emergency. It contains medical details including medication taken by the staff but the content is unknown by Wemms Administration.
- It is against school policy to allow the recording of staff without their knowledge by any means- mobile phone, camera, photograph, PC or other device.
- Staff permission must be given for any photographs taken outside the necessary working practice of the school. Publicity material will only be used with staff permission.
- Staff may not use their mobile phones during the school day without express permission from senior staff or in an emergency.
- Disclosures of a confidential nature from staff may be made to their line managers and Heads of Departments. Counsellors and support are available on request.

7. Monitoring and Evaluation

- The policy will be reviewed as part of the schools monitoring cycle for policies.
- The PSHE scheme of work and Sex and Relationships Policy will enable identified opportunities to deliver aspects of this policy in specified year groups.
- The DSL has responsibility for monitoring this policy. Following any curriculum monitoring a positional statement will be written to contribute to the School Development Plan.