

Our Lady of Compassion Catholic Primary School



'To Live As Jesus Taught Us'

Confidentiality Policy

*Our Lady of Compassion School
is part of
Our Lady and All Saints MAC
in the
Archdiocese of Birmingham*

As a Roman Catholic Primary School our aim is to develop, within each child, an understanding of his or her Catholic faith. It is hoped that with this knowledge, children will grow into responsible Catholic adults who will be able to demonstrate their faith and concern for others and continue the worship of God.

The school provides a full curriculum and through the presentation of the curriculum it is hoped children will develop the necessary skills for adulthood and an understanding that the skills should be for the benefit of everyone, which is an important part of Catholic life.

Updated: November 2024
Approved by Governors: November 2024
To Be Reviewed: November 2025

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Mission Statement

The mission of Our Lady of Compassion is to serve the needs of all members of the community. The school seeks to provide a happy, caring Catholic environment in which children can develop spiritually, academically, physically and socially. The foundations of these are based on the teachings of Christ and the traditions of the Church.

1 Rationale

At Our Lady of Compassion Primary School we believe that:

- The safety, well-being and protection of our pupils are the paramount consideration in all decisions staff at this school make about confidentiality. The appropriate sharing of information between school staff is an essential element in ensuring our pupils well-being and safety.
- It is an essential part of the ethos of our school that trust is established to enable pupils, staff and parents/carers to seek help both within and outside the school in order to minimise the number of situations when personal information is shared to ensure pupils and staff are supported and safe.
- Pupils, parents/carers and staff need to know the boundaries of confidentiality in order to feel safe and comfortable discussing personal issues and concerns.
- The school's attitude to confidentiality is easily understood and everyone should be able to trust the boundaries of confidentiality operating within the school.
- Issues concerning personal information including sex and relationships and other personal matters can arise at any time.
- Everyone in the school community needs to know that no-one can offer absolute confidentiality.
- Everyone in the school community needs to know the limits of confidentiality that can be offered by individuals within the school community so they can make informed decisions about the most appropriate person to talk to about any health or personal issues they want to discuss.

2 A Definition of Confidentiality

Confidentiality is an understanding that any information shared with someone in trust can only be passed on to a third party with the agreement of the person disclosing it. Please note, in this policy, a 'disclosure' is the sharing of any private / personal information. It is a general term and does not just relate to child protection issues.

3 The Limits of Confidentiality

No member of school staff should promise confidentiality. Pupils do not have the right to expect they will not be reported to their parents or carers and may not, in the absence of an explicit promise, assume that information conveyed outside that context is private. No member of staff can or should give such a promise. The safety, well-being and protection of the child are the paramount consideration in all decisions staff at OLC make about confidentiality. School staff are NOT obliged to break confidentiality except where child protection is or may be an issue, however we believe it is important staff are able to share their concerns about pupils' safety and well-being is maintained.

4 Teachers, Counsellors and Health Professionals

Professional judgement is required by a teacher, counsellor or health professional in considering whether he or she should indicate to a child that the child could make a disclosure in confidence and whether such a confidence could then be maintained having heard the information. In exercising their professional judgement the teacher, counsellor or health professional must consider the best interests of the child, including the need to both ensure trust to provide safeguards for our children and possible child protection issues. All teachers at this school receive training in child protection as part of their induction to this school and are expected to follow the school's child protection policy and procedures.

5 Working with External Agencies

Anyone working with pupils from the school particularly on sensitive areas of the curriculum needs to be made aware of the school's confidentiality policy. At the beginning of lessons dealing with sensitive topics ground rules need to be agreed which ensure individuals do not pressure one another to answer questions about their own experiences. Staff will outline the sources of support available to any pupil who may wish to discuss the topics and / or their feelings further on a one-to-one basis. This school acknowledges and supports the differences between the role of any non-school staff as educators, and as providers of information and support to pupils. The boundaries between these roles will be clarified and agreed prior to involvement. Any distinctions in terms of confidentiality need to be made clear to pupils.

6 Staff Roles and Responsibilities and Policy Sharing

All staff will be made aware of the confidentiality policy and the entitlement to training and support in its implementation. All staff are under a contractual obligation to uphold the policy as with all other school policies. Failure to comply with this policy will result in disciplinary procedures being followed. The policy will be shared with non-teaching staff and teaching staff at one of their regular meetings where issues raised will be discussed. Dinner staff employed by the school will be given a copy of the policy, as will dinner staff employed by the catering company, responses will again be expected. The policy will be published on the school website. Staff can seek advice and support for themselves when dealing with a disclosure whilst keeping the individual's identity anonymous. The school will maintain an up-to-date list of appropriate contacts for staff so that they can seek support. This will include the following members of staff.

Mr N Emery –Head Teacher, Mrs Anna Vella –DHT, Designated Safeguarding Lead,
Bill Johnson – Governor with responsibility in this area.

7 Recording Information

The school acknowledges that:

- Pupils and their parents/carers have a right to gain access to processed information upon written request.
- Agencies such as the Police and Children and Young People's Services may be able to get a court order to gain access to processed information, which the school deems confidential.

This can also include the Local Authority's legal department and insurers, as well as other solicitors, eg in custody cases.

Any information recorded about a pupil will be written in a way that assumes it will be read by the subject or their parents / carers.

Any processed information will be stored in accordance with the Schools Record

8 Management Systems.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The policy will be reviewed after each significant disclosure to ensure that the policy and procedures work appropriately. This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis in line with other policy documents. Staff, governors, parents and pupils will be consulted during the review process.

8.1 Examples of where a confidentiality policy might be of use:

A pupil knows someone who is bullying others at the school but is unsure about whether or not to tell.

A pupil starts sharing something very personal in a classroom situation.

A school uses staff or peers as a support system for pupils, eg listening, befriending.

A pupil informs a lunchtime supervisor that their Dad is hitting their Mum.

A pupil talks to a member of staff about their knowledge of a crime, eg shoplifting, assault.

9. Exceptions to Confidentiality

Likely exceptions requiring consideration by the school might include:

Where there is risk of serious harm or threat to life.

Where a pupil needs urgent medical treatment.

Where potential or actual serious crime (eg murder, rape) is involved.

Where safeguarding national security is involved eg terrorism.

This must be consistent with other policies eg managing drug related incidents.

REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed annually and amended as necessary.