POLICY

For

Confidentiality

Amended

September 2024		
September 2025		

‘Striving for excellence whilst caring for all within a loving and caring Christian environment.’

As a RRS (Rights Respecting School – UNICEF) this upholds the following articles from the UNCRC (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child):

Article 2: Everyone has equal rights whatever their race, religion, ability, whatever they think or say or whatever their family.
Article 3 The best interests of the child must be as top priority in all actions concerning children.
Article 28: Every child has the right to an education.
Article 29: Every child has the right to be the best they can

Our Academy Vision

We are a community in which everyone is offered the opportunity to fulfil their full potential, to understand themselves and be valued for who they are. Through a stimulating and challenging learning environment, we pursue academic excellence and seek the flourishing of all. This is because we know we are all God's children.

"Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as you ever can." **John Wesley**.

Aim

To protect the child at all times and to give staff, trustees, governors and anyone working in our Academy Trust clear, unambiguous guidance as to their legal and professional roles and to ensure good practice throughout the Academy Trust which is understood everyone involved in our organisation.

'Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong. Do everything in love.' 1 Corinthians 16:13-14

Rationale

Abbey Academies Trust (AAT) seeks to put the child at the heart of the learning process and to provide a safe and secure learning environment. It seeks to address the issues which 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.

AAT is mindful that it is placed in a position of trust by all stakeholders and there is a general expectation that a professional approach will be used in all matters of confidentiality.

Objectives

1. To provide consistent messages in the school about handling information about children once it has been received.

2. To foster an ethos of trust within the school.

3. To ensure that staff, parents/carers and pupils are aware of the school's confidentiality, policy and procedures.

4. To reassure pupils that their best interests will be maintained.

5. To encourage children to talk to their parents/carers.

6. To ensure that pupils and parents/carers know that staff cannot offer unconditional confidentiality.

7. To ensure that there is equality of provision and access for all including rigorous monitoring of cultural, gender and special educational needs.

8. To ensure that if there are child protection issues then the correct procedure is followed.

9. To ensure that confidentiality is a whole school issue and that in lessons ground rules are set for the protection of all.

10. To understand that health professionals are bound by different code of conduct.

11. To ensure that parents/carers have a right of access to any records the school may hold on their child but not any other child that they do not have parental responsibility for.

Guidelines

1. All information about individual children is private and should only be shared with those staff that have a need to know.

2. All social services, medical and personal information about a child should be held in a safe and secure place which cannot be accessed by individuals other than school staff.

3. AAT continues to actively promote a positive ethos and respect for the individual:
   a) AAT has appointed a senior leader for child protection who receives regular training.
   b) There is clear guidance for the handling of child protection issues.
   c) There is clear guidance for procedures if a member of staff is accused of abuse.
   d) Staff are aware that effective relationship and sex education which brings an understanding of what is and is not acceptable in a relationship, can lead to disclosure of a child protection issue.
   e) Staff are aware of the need to handle all issues about different types of families in a sensitive manner.

f) Any intolerance about gender, faith, race, culture or sexuality is unacceptable and should follow the school's discipline policy.
g) Information collected for one purpose should not be used for another.

4. 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.

5. AAT 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 some cases support the children to talk to their parents. The school would share with parents/carers any child protection disclosures before going on to inform the correct authorities.

6. Parents/carers and children should feel reassured that in exceptional circumstances confidentiality will be broken.

7. All children have a right to the same level of confidentiality irrespective of gender, race, religion, medical concerns and special educational needs. A lot of data is generated in schools and academies by these categories but individual children should not be able to be identified.

8. AAT has appointed a senior member of staff as a Designated Safeguarding Lead at each school in the Trust. Child protection procedures are understood by staff and training is undertaken annually for all staff.

9. Confidentiality is a whole school issue. Clear ground rules must be set for any classroom work such as circle time and other PSHE sessions dealing with sensitive issues such as sex and relationships and drugs. Strategies are in place and all children are aware of them for dealing with sensitive information which may fall outside the boundaries of child protection procedures. The school needs 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.

10. Health professionals have their own code of practice for 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.

11. Photographs should not be used without parents/carers permission especially in the press and internet. This is often a cultural issue that the school needs to be aware

of. At no time should the child's name be used with a photograph so that they can be identified without the parents/carers permission. Children's photographs should not be used in a medical room identifying their medical need. The school gives clear guidance to parents/carers about the use of cameras and videos during public school events. Staff should also seek permission form colleagues before they use photographs of other staff.

12. Information about children will be shared with parents/carers but only about their child. Parents/carers should not have access to any other child's books, marks and progress grades at any time especially at parents' evenings. However, parents/carers should be aware that information about their child will be shared with the receiving school when they change school.

    All personal information about children including social services records should be regarded as confidential. It should be clearly understood by those who access it, whether those concerned have access to all, or only some of the information. Information regarding health reports such as speech therapy, medical reports, SEN reports, SEN minutes of meetings and social services minutes of meetings and reports will be circulated in envelopes and once read should be returned for secure filing.

    Logs of administration of medication to children should be kept secure and each child should have their own log. In all other notes, briefing sheets etc a child should not be able to be identified. Address and telephone numbers of parents/carers and children will not be passed on except in exceptional circumstances or to a receiving school.

13. Trustees/Governors 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/Governors must observe complete confidentiality when asked to do so by the Board of Trustees and Local Governing Body especially in relation to matters concerning individual staff, pupils or parents/carers. Discussions on which decisions are based at Trustees/Governors' meetings should be regarded as confidential. Trustees/Governors should exercise the highest degree of prudence when discussion of potentially contentious issues arises outside the Board of Trustees and Local Governing Body.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- The policy will be reviewed as part of the schools monitoring cycle
- The PHSE scheme of work and RSE policy will enable identified opportunities to deliver aspects of this policy in specified year groups

AAT 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.

Date: Autumn 2025
Next Review: Autumn 2026