



Confidentiality Policy

Next review due	November 2026
Last review	November 2025
Reviewed by	Mrs Catherine Miller, Head of School
Approved by	Dr Julie Smith, Chair of Governors

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

Introduction.....	3
Policy Aims	3
Legislation	4
GDPR Legislation in Education	4
Policy Management	4
GDPR and Confidentiality in Teaching	5
Dealing with Pupil Disclosures	6
Equal Opportunities	6
Health and Therapy Professionals.....	6

Introduction

Every Child Is Different - we work together to break down barriers and cultivate a respectful, inclusive community

Welcome to Conifers House School, West Sussex. Our school is committed to providing a safe and nurturing environment where every pupil can thrive. We believe in fostering an ethos of trust and respect, ensuring that all pupils feel valued and supported. Our confidentiality policy is designed to protect the privacy of our pupils and their families, while also promoting transparency and open communication within our school community.

Conifers House is a co-educational, independent day school established to provide contemporary and enjoyable learning experiences for young people aged 5 – 16 years with special and individual needs. Our school offers a warm and friendly environment for learning, with specialist support for pupils with unique learning profiles and neurodivergence, including specialist provision for pupils with autism, communication and interaction needs, sensory processing needs, global developmental delay and other related aspects.

- We are an inclusive school and believe that neurodivergence is not a deficit or a barrier to achievement.
- We have developed a curriculum approach which includes learning pathways and adaptive approaches to meet the needs of each individual pupil.
- We have taken the very best school practices and built them into our school.
- We consider that creating an inclusive school community is one of the key aspects for supporting our pupils to develop and grow.
- We believe that such differences need not be barriers to success, and we have taken the very best school practices and built them into our school.

Our curriculum offer is highly personalised to the needs of each pupil and delivered through our three Curriculum Pathways. The teaching of English, mathematics, science, PSHE and PE sits at the core of each pathway, and pupils will also experience the wider curriculum including, where appropriate, life skills, computing, music and drama, art and design. We adapt the curriculum and align with the children's EHC Plans to support their growing independence.

At Conifers House School, we understand the importance of confidentiality in maintaining a positive and secure learning environment. Our staff are dedicated to upholding the highest standards of data protection and privacy, in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and other relevant legislation. We are committed to working closely with pupils, parents, and carers to address any concerns and ensure that the best interests of our pupils are always at the forefront of our actions.

Policy Aims

- Maintain an ethos of trust within the school.
- Protect pupils at all times.
- Reassure pupils that their best interests will be maintained.
- Encourage pupils to talk to a trusted adult if they are having problems of any sort.

- Provide clear guidance to all school staff about confidentiality.
- Give staff confidence to deal with sensitive issues.
- Ensure that pupils and parents/carers know that school staff cannot offer unconditional confidentiality.
- Reassure pupils and parents/carers that if confidentiality has to be broken, they will be informed first and then supported appropriately.
- Ensure that if there are child protection issues, the correct procedure is followed.

Legislation

This policy is designed to comply with the following legislation:

- **General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR):** Ensures that all personal data is handled in accordance with the principles of data protection.
- **Children Act 1989 and 2004:** Provides the legal framework for the protection of children and the responsibilities of those who work with them.
- **Education Act 2002:** Sets out the responsibilities of schools to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- **Equality Act 2010:** Ensures that all pupils have the right to the same level of confidentiality irrespective of gender, race, religion, medical concerns, and special educational needs.

GDPR Legislation in Education

The **General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)** ensures that all personal data is handled in accordance with the principles of data protection. In the context of education, this means that schools must take specific measures to protect the confidentiality of pupils' personal information. Here are some key points:

- **Data Handling:** All information held in school must adhere to the GDPR policy. This includes ensuring that personal data is processed lawfully, fairly, and transparently.
- **Confidentiality:** Information on individual pupils is private and shared with staff confidentially. Social services, medical, and personal information about a pupil is held in a safe and secure place, accessible only to school staff.
- **Parental Involvement:** Pupils and parents/carers are welcomed into school to discuss issues causing concern. However, parents/carers do not have access to any other child's books, marks, and progress at any time.
- **Photographs and Videos:** Photographs and videos of pupils are not used without parents/carers' consent.
- **Directors, Governors and Staff:** Governors and staff are required to respect the sensitivity of confidential matters and not divulge information to unconnected individuals.

Policy Management

- All information held in school is held to adhere to our GDPR policy.

- All information on individual pupils is private and is shared with staff confidentially.
- All social services, medical and personal information about a pupil is held in a safe and secure place which cannot be accessed by individuals other than school staff.
- Pupils and parents/cares are welcomed into school to discuss issues causing concern.
- The school has a member of staff as a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and 3 Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads.
- Child protection procedures are understood by staff and training is undertaken at recommended intervals.
- All staff are aware of some confidential matters to support individuals. Staff will respect the sensitivity of such cases and not divulge information to people unconnected professionally with the individual concerned.
- When volunteers and pupils are working in classes, they do not discuss educational matters including behaviour issues outside the classroom.
- Information about pupils is shared with parents/carers about their child. Parents/carers do not have access to any other child's books, marks and progress at any time. Information about a child will be shared with a receiving school when a child changes school.
- Photographs and videos of pupils are not used without parents/carers' consent.
- Governors do not divulge details about individuals to any person outside of the Governor meeting.
- At LAB or CQS meetings matters such as pupil exclusion, personnel issues and personal details of any member of the school community will be dealt with in the Headteacher report. This is not for the knowledge of persons outside the meeting. Confidential minutes will be kept separately and are not published.
- Staff performance management will be carried out privately. Targets for individuals, named lesson observation sheets and other performance data will be held by the Headteacher.

GDPR and Confidentiality in Teaching

Incorporating GDPR principles into lessons can help pupils understand the importance of data protection and privacy. Here are some ways to integrate GDPR into educational activities:

- **Ground Rules and Distancing Techniques:** When addressing sensitive issues, establish ground rules to ensure that pupils feel safe and respected. Use distancing techniques to discuss hypothetical scenarios rather than personal experiences.
- **Encouraging Open Discussions:** Create an environment where pupils feel comfortable discussing data protection and privacy issues. Encourage them to share their thoughts on how personal data should be handled and protected.
- **Personal Disclosures:** If a pupil discloses personal information during a lesson, handle it with care. Speak to the pupil privately and seek advice from the safeguarding team if necessary.
- **Equal Opportunities:** Ensure that all pupils have the same level of confidentiality, regardless of gender, race, religion, medical concerns, or special educational needs. Discuss individual cases with the class or group only with parental consent.

- **Health Professionals and Therapists:** When health professionals are involved in lessons, they should follow their own code of practice regarding confidentiality. In a classroom setting, they must adhere to the school's policies.

Dealing with Pupil Disclosures

When a pupil discloses personal information, it is crucial to handle the situation with care and sensitivity.:

- **Private Conversations:** If a pupil discloses personal information at an inappropriate place or time, the member of staff should talk to the pupil privately.
- **Seek Advice:** The member of staff is encouraged to talk to a member of the safeguarding team for advice on suitable actions and to report the information on the current safeguarding platform.
- **Confidentiality:** Ensure that all information on individual pupils is private and shared with staff confidentially. Social services, medical, and personal information about a pupil should be held in a safe and secure place, accessible only to school staff.
- **Parental Involvement:** Pupils and parents/carers should be welcomed into school to discuss issues causing concern. However, parents/carers do not have access to any other child's books, marks, and progress at any time.

Equal Opportunities

All pupils have the right to the same level of confidentiality irrespective of gender, race, religion, medical concerns and special educational needs. However, staff may need to discuss an individual case with a class or group. Permission to discuss an individual case with a class or group should be sought from parents/carers first.

Health and Therapy Professionals

Health professionals follow their own code of practice when dealing with confidentiality when working in a one-to-one situation. When working in a classroom they are bound by the relevant school policies.