

Confidentiality Policy

Reviewed Date: September 2025

Next Review due: September 2026

RATIONALE AND STATEMENT ON THE IMPORTANCE OF CONFIDENTIALITY

Thornhill Community Academy believes that:

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

1. All information about individual children is private and will only be shared with those staff that have a need to know.
2. All social services, medical and personal information about a child will be held in a safe and secure place which cannot be accessed by individuals other than appropriate Academy staff.
3. The Academy prides itself on good communication with parents and carers and staff are available to talk to both children and parents/carers about issues that are causing concern. The Academy 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. (Refer to the Academy's Safeguarding Policy for Parents.)
4. All children have a right to the same level of confidentiality irrespective on gender, race, religion, medical concerns and special educational needs. A lot of data is generated in the Academy by these categories but individual children should not be able to be identified.
5. Confidentiality is a whole Academy issue. Clear ground rules must be set for any classroom work such as circle time and other SMSC sessions dealing with sensitive issues such as sex and relationships and drugs.
6. All children, parents, staff members and trustees must enjoy privacy from gossip. All matters are dealt with according to the Academy's procedures and out of the eye of the wider community. It is important that:-
 - staff do not discuss details of individual cases arising in staff meetings to any person without direct professional connection to and interest in the welfare and education of the individual concerned
 - no member of staff discusses an individual child's behaviour in the presence of another child in the Academy
 - staff do not enter into detailed discussion about a child's behaviour with other children or their parents
 - trustees, in particular those sitting on Discipline Committees, do not divulge details about individuals (be they staff, families or individual children) to any person outside of the meeting
 - parents in the Academy, working as volunteers do not report cases of poor behaviour or pupil discipline to other parents. This allows teachers to deal with such matters in line with Academy policy
 - at full Trustee meetings matters such as pupil exclusion, personnel issues and personal details of any member of the Academy community will be dealt with in the Headteacher's Report. This is not for the knowledge of persons outside the Trustee meeting
 - staff appraisals will be carried out privately and confidentially.

- matters of Safeguarding are made known to staff on a need to know basis. When issues of Safeguarding are discussed meetings should be held in a specified room and not in a public area.
- it is important that class teachers and support staff are aware of some confidential matters in order to support individuals. These staff will respect the sensitivity of such cases and not divulge information to people unconnected professionally with the individual concerned.
- when volunteers, such as parents and friends of the Academy are working in classes, they do not discuss educational matters outside the classroom
- volunteers, students and supply teachers are asked to read this policy before working in the Academy

Other Professionals

Health professionals are bound by their professional codes of conduct to maintain confidentiality when working in a one to one situation. When working in a classroom, they are bound by relevant Academy policies. In line with best practice guidance, like other Academy staff, they will seek to protect privacy and prevent inappropriate personal disclosures in a classroom setting, by negotiating ground rules and using distancing techniques.

7. Staff should be aware of children with medical needs. This information should be accessible to staff who need it but not on general view to other parents/carers and children.
8. Photographs of children should not be used without parents/carers permission especially in the press and internet. This is often a cultural issue of which the Academy needs to be aware. At no time should the child's name be used with a photograph so that they can be identified. The Academy gives clear guidance to parents about the use of cameras and videos during public Academy events.
9. Information about children will be shared with parents but only about their child. However, parents should be aware that information about their child will be shared with the receiving school when they change school.
10. All personal information about children including social services records will 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, medical reports, SEND reports, SEND 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 individual log
 - in all other notes, briefing sheets etc. a child should not be able to be identified.

- addresses and telephone numbers of parents and children will not be passed on except in exceptional circumstances or to a receiving school.
11. Governors need to be mindful that from time to time issues are discussed or brought to their attention about staff and children. This information should remain confidential and not repeated outside of the meeting.

EQUALITY IMPACT AUDIT AND ACTION PLAN

Put X in the PLUS column to indicate if you judge that the policy has a positive impact on a group.

Put X in the neutral column to indicate if you judge that the policy has a neutral impact on a group.

Put X in the MINUS column to indicate if you judge that the policy has a negative impact on a group.

In making a judgement *due regard* has been paid to the requirement to:

- i. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimization
- ii. Advance equality of opportunity
- iii. Foster good relations

PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS		PLUS	NEUTRAL	MINUS	ACTION
1	Age	x			
2	Disability	x			
3	Gender Reassignment	x			
4	Marriage and Civil Partnership	x			
5	Pregnancy and Maternity	x			
6	Race	x			
7	Religion or Belief	x			
8	Gender	x			
9	Sexual Orientation	x			
Other					