



St. Clement's College Confidentiality Policy

Contents

Purpose	3
Context	3
Confidentiality & the Role of Staff	3
Additional Information for Learners under 18 years of age	4
Confidentiality and Learners over 18 years of age	5
Links between this policy and other policies	5
Record Keeping	5
Communicating Limits to Confidentiality with Staff	5
Communicating the limits of Confidentiality with students and parents/guardians	6
What to do when an issue arises	6
Responsibilities in relation to the policy	6
Accessibility	7
Monitoring and Review	7
Confidentiality and Consent Policy – Checklist	8

Purpose

The purpose of our school's confidentiality policy is to outline and clarify information and procedures around confidentiality for all stakeholders within our school community. This policy outlines all aspects involved in confidentiality within the school and should be read in conjunction with other school policies.

Context

St Clement's College is an all-boys school of approximately 400 students located in Limerick City. St Clement's College was founded in October 1884 as a juniorate for the Redemptorist Order. St Clement's College seeks to facilitate the development of each student to his full academic, personal spiritual and social potential in a catholic, caring, respectful and safe environment. This confidentiality policy is written in the context of contemporary legislation and other relevant publications. A list of references is provided at the end of this document.

Confidentiality & the Role of Staff

The safety and welfare of children is the key principle underlying all decision making within our school in line with the Child Care Act 1991 and the Children First Act.

Our school adopts a student-centred approach to education.

Support of students is paramount in our school community.

The Children First Guidelines are applied in our school as appropriate.

All staff members must be aware that absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

In supporting the students at our school, all stakeholders must be aware of the limits to confidentiality. This includes a legal obligation to share information as follows, where a student's welfare is at risk.

In the case where any member of the school community is aware of a concern to child welfare and safety this concern must be reported to one of the following:

(i) The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) in our school: Mr Michael O Connor [Principal]

(ii) The Deputy Designated Liaison Person is (DDL), Ms Joan Chawke [Deputy Principal]

(iii) Child and Family Agency Child Protection Social Work Services: Any stakeholder can report a child protection concern about a student or school directly to the by contacting the local social work office. **Contact details for Limerick: 061 588688**
Child and Family Agency, Unit 3, St. Camillus Hospital, Shelbourne Road, Limerick

In cases where school personnel have a concern about a child but are not sure whether to report the matter to Tusla, the designated liaison person shall seek advice from Tusla.

In cases of emergency, where a child appears to be at immediate and serious risk, and it is not possible to contact Tusla, An Garda Síochána shall be contacted immediately. This may be done at any Garda Station. Under no circumstances should a child be left in a dangerous situation pending Tusla intervention.

It is not the responsibility of school personnel to assess or investigate or to make enquiries of parents/carers, and in some cases, it could be counter-productive for them to do so. It is a matter for Tusla to assess and investigate suspected abuse and neglect and determine what action it shall take.

[Additional Information for Learners under 18 years of age](#)

All information regarding concerns of possible child abuse or neglect should be shared only on a 'need to know' basis in the interests of the child.

Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children states that it is good practice to inform the parent/carer that a report is being made and the reasons for the decision to make the report. However, Children First National Guidance also notes that it is not necessary to inform a parent/carer that a report is being made –

- (a) if by doing so, the child will be placed at further risk
- (b) in cases where the family's knowledge of the report could impair Tusla's ability to carry out a risk assessment
- (c) if the reporter is of the reasonable opinion that by doing so it may place the reporter at risk of harm from the family.

Where there is any doubt as to whether to inform a parent/carer that a report is being made concerning his or her child the advice of Tusla shall be sought.

Confidentiality and Learners over 18 years of age

It is recognised that some schools may also cater for adult pupils with additional vulnerabilities.

Where a vulnerable adult may have been, is being, or is at future risk of being abused or neglected - the advice of the HSE, or if necessary, An Garda Síochána should be sought.

Further information in relation to the safeguarding of vulnerable adults is available on the website of the HSE www.hse.ie

Links between this policy and other policies

This confidentiality policy should be read in conjunction with our school's policies on:

- ★ Admissions Policy
- ★ Acceptable Use Policy
- ★ Bí Cineálta Policy
- ★ Code of Behaviour
- ★ Data Protection Policy
- ★ Student Support Policy
- ★ Whole School Guidance Plan

Record Keeping

St Clement's College recognises the importance of record keeping.

Our school keeps records in accordance with Appendix 4 of the DES Child Protection Procedures in Primary and Post-primary (2017).

All school records and data pertaining to students and parents/guardians are regarded as highly confidential and are stored in line with are stored in line with GDPR (2018) procedures.

Communicating Limits to Confidentiality with Staff

The limits to all staff-student confidentiality are made clear to the staff on an annual basis at the first staff meeting of the year.

Staff should consult a member of management if they have any questions or concerns about our school's confidentiality policy.

Communicating the limits of Confidentiality with students and parents/guardians

The limits to all staff-student confidentiality are made clear to students & parents/guardians in our school in the following ways:

-Students are reminded about confidentiality when Student Support Team visit classes at the start of each year.

-A 'limits to confidentiality' sign is on display in the offices of the Guidance Counsellor, School Chaplain, Home School Community Liaison Officer and Outreach Support Worker. [**Appendix i**]

There are limits to confidentiality within St Clement's College. Under circumstances where an individual is at risk of significant harm, a duty exists on the part of those with information to alert others to the risk perceived.

What to do when an issue arises

The School Referral Procedures provide information and guidelines as to how to respond to any issue presented to a staff member. Any concern relating to a student who is at risk of significant harm, must be reported to the DLP [Mr Michael O Connor] or the DDLP [Ms Joan Chawke]

TUSLA the Child and Family Agency and An Garda Síochána are the two key authorities. TUSLA the Child and Family Agency has a duty to assess reports regarding a child's welfare or safety.

The specific focus of An Garda Síochána is on the investigation of alleged offences and whether a crime has been committed.

Responsibilities in relation to the policy

Those involved in the development, implementation, and review of this policy at St Clement's College, include,

- ★ Mr Michael O Connor [Principal],
- ★ Ms Joan Chawke [Deputy Principal],
- ★ Ms Úna Ruddle [Guidance Counsellor],
- ★ Ms Frances Murphy [School Chaplain],
- ★ Mr Tommy Giltenane [Home School Community Liaison Officer]
- ★ Ms Niamh Canty [School Outreach Support Worker].

Accessibility

Staff: This policy has been emailed to all staff and is available in the School Policies folder on Sharepoint.

Parents: This policy is available online via the college website, www.stclements.ie

Monitoring and Review

Note: Submitted to Board of Management and Trustees on the 4th June 2025.

Reviewed and ratified on the 4th June 2025.

Signed:

Patricia Kieran
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Date: 4th June 2025

Michael O'Connor
(Principal)

Date: 4th June 2025

Confidentiality and Consent Policy – Checklist

- ✓ We have a written school policy on Confidentiality and Consent.
- ✓ The policy is informed by the *General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) (2018)*.
- ✓ The policy is informed by *Children First Guidance* guidelines.
- ✓ The policy is accessible by all.
- ✓ All school staff members been informed of the policy on confidentiality and consent.
- ✓ All school staff members are aware of the boundaries / limits of confidentiality:
 - in the whole-school context and Student Support Team context
 - in the guidance counselling context.
- ✓ Students are informed of the policy (as appropriate)
- ✓ The policy includes informed consent information for students.
- ✓ Parents have been informed of the content of the policy.
- ✓ The policy includes informed consent information for parents.
- ✓ A copy of the policy is clearly visible in the guidance counsellor's office.
- ✓ The school admission process includes a consent form for parents/guardians.
- ✓ Provision is made in the policy for students under 18 years of age.
- ✓ Provision is made in the policy for students over 18 years of age

'Limits to Confidentiality': Displayed in the each of the Student Support Team Offices

WHAT YOU SAY IN HERE..... STAYS IN HERE.

Exceptions



Someone is hurting you.



You want to hurt someone.



You want to hurt yourself.