

Thomas Telford Multi Academy Trust



Confidentiality Policy and Agreements

November 2022

Aim

To ensure that confidentiality and Data Protection Compliance are a natural part of good practice. To provide all staff, governors and others in academies clear, unambiguous guidance as to their legal and professional roles.

To make certain that the procedures throughout the school can be easily understood by students, parents/carers and staff.

Rationale

Academies hold a lot of confidential information about students, staff and sometimes parents and carers. Whilst it is important that the Thomas Telford Multi-Academy Trust continues to develop positive ways to use that information, it is recognised that it is the Trust's responsibility to use, hold and safeguard information received.

The Trust 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. Its obligation to comply with the Data Protection Act 2018, the UK GDPR and other legislation and statutory guidance underpins its management of data.

Objectives:

- To provide consistent messages in the Trust and Academies about handling information about students and adults once it has been received.
- To foster an ethos of trust within the Academies.
- To ensure that staff, governors, volunteers, students, parents, and students are aware of the Trust's Confidentiality Policy and Procedures.
- To reassure students that their best interests will be maintained.
- To encourage students to talk to their parents and carers.
- To ensure that students and parents/carers know that the Trust's staff cannot offer unconditional confidentiality.
- To ensure that if there are child protection issues then the correct procedure is followed.
- To ensure that confidentiality is a whole school issue and that everyone understands their personal responsibilities.

Guidelines

- All information about individuals is private and should only be shared with those staff that have a need to know.
- 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 Trust staff.
- The Trust continues to actively promote a positive ethos and respect for the Individual.
- The Safeguarding Policy will be applied and monitored by appropriate Academy personnel.

- All students and adults have a right to the same level of confidentiality irrespective of gender, race, religion, medical concerns, and special educational needs.

Day to Day Practice

Confidentiality is a whole Trust issue. 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.

Health professionals have their own code of practice dealing with confidentiality. Staff should be aware of students 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 students.

Information about students will be shared with parents and carers but only about their child. **Parents should not have access to any other child's books, marks and progress grades at any time.**

All personal information about students including social services records should 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, SEN reports, SEN minutes of meetings and social services minutes of meetings and reports will be circulated in envelopes / files and once read should be returned for secure filing.

In all other notes, briefing sheets etc. a student should not be able to be identified. Addresses and telephone numbers of parents and students will not be passed on except in exceptional circumstances or to a receiving school.

Staff should exercise prudence and consider the dignity of individuals during conversations on the school site, for example in the staff room, particularly if non -members of staff are present and in the presence of students.

Non-members of staff, for example, students and voluntary helpers, will be asked to follow the principles of the confidentiality policy and sign a confidentiality agreement.

Governors/Trustees

In consideration of this policy, governors/trustees have agreed to maintain complete confidentiality in the execution of their responsibilities and are particularly mindful that from time-to-time issues are discussed or brought to their attention about staff and students. All such papers which might be provided are, therefore, marked as confidential and governors accept that these should be destroyed after use. Governors/Trustees understand the requirement to observe complete confidentiality, especially in relation to matters concerning individual staff, students or parents. Although decisions reached at governors'/trustee

meetings are normally available to the public on request through the minutes, the discussions on which decisions are based are regarded as confidential. Governors/Trustees have agreed to exercise the highest degree of prudence when discussing potentially contentious issues which arise outside the termly meetings and understand that upon leaving office, the requirement for confidentiality regarding any matters of school business continues to apply.

This policy, as approved by governors/trustees, should be viewed as a confidentiality agreement and, as such, a copy will be provided to any new governor/trustee who will be required to confirm content to terms thereof, if appointed prior to the next policy review.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The policy will be reviewed as part of the Trust's monitoring cycle.

Conclusion

Thomas Telford Multi-Academy Trust has a duty of care and responsibility towards students, 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.