

Bohermore National School

Confidentiality Policy

1. Introduction

Bohermore National School is committed to maintaining the highest standards of confidentiality in all aspects of school life. This policy outlines the school's approach to handling confidential information relating to pupils, families, staff, and the school community.

The policy applies to all members of the school community, including staff, the Board of Management, volunteers, and the Parents' Association.

2. Rationale

This policy is developed in accordance with:

- **The Education Act 1998**
- **Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017)**
- **The General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (GDPR)**
- **The Data Protection Act 2018**
- **The Teaching Council's Code of Professional Conduct**

Confidentiality is essential in:

- Creating a safe, respectful school environment
- Building trust between staff, pupils, and families
- Complying with legal obligations

3. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to:

- **Personal data** (e.g. names, addresses, medical information)
- **Academic records** (e.g. assessment results, support plans)
- **Sensitive information** (e.g. family circumstances, child protection concerns)
- **Staff information** (e.g. employment records, performance reviews)
- **Discussions and meetings** relating to school operations

4. Principles of Confidentiality

Bohermore National School is guided by the following principles:

1. **Right to Privacy** – Everyone in the school community has a right to have their personal and sensitive information respected and protected.
2. **Need to Know Basis** – Information is only shared with relevant individuals when necessary.
3. **Professional Responsibility** – All staff must handle information with professionalism, integrity, and discretion.
4. **Duty to Report** – Where there is a **child protection** concern, the **best interest of the child** takes precedence over confidentiality.

5. Responsibilities

Staff:

- Will not discuss individual pupils, staff, or families in public or informal settings (e.g. corridors, social media, staffroom).
- Will only share information with colleagues on a **need-to-know basis**.
- Will follow procedures for storing and accessing pupil records securely.
- Will report child protection concerns to the **Designated Liaison Person (DLP)** as per **Child Protection Procedures**.

Principal and DLP:

- Are responsible for determining what information can be shared and with whom.
- Will ensure all staff are aware of and trained in confidentiality practices.
- Will ensure GDPR compliance in relation to the storage and sharing of data.

Board of Management:

- Will treat all matters discussed at meetings as confidential.
- Will maintain confidentiality regarding staff, pupils, or family matters.
- Will handle complaints or disciplinary procedures with strict discretion.

Parents/Guardians and Visitors:

- Are expected to respect confidentiality around school matters.
- Volunteers and parent association members will be asked to sign a **confidentiality agreement** if involved in school activities.

6. Sharing Information

Information may be shared:

- **With consent**, e.g. when referring a pupil for external support.
- **Without consent**, when required by law or in the **best interest of the child** (e.g. child protection concerns).
- **With external agencies**, such as TUSLA, NEPS, or the HSE, where appropriate and lawful.

7. Breach of Confidentiality

Any breach of this policy by staff, volunteers, or others will be treated seriously and may lead to disciplinary action or removal from school-related activities.

8. Record-Keeping and Storage

- All records (digital and paper) are stored securely and accessed only by authorised personnel.
- Digital records are password-protected and backed up securely.
- Paper files are stored in locked cabinets.
- Data is retained only for as long as legally required.

9. Child Protection and Confidentiality

In accordance with **Children First guidelines**, where there is a child protection concern:

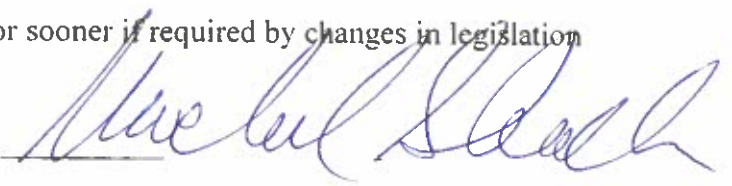
- **Confidentiality cannot be promised** to a pupil or parent.
- Information will be shared with the **Designated Liaison Person (DLP)** and possibly with **TUSLA** or **An Garda Síochána**.
- The identity of individuals involved will be protected as far as possible.

10. Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed every **two years**, or sooner if required by changes in legislation or practice.

Date of Adoption by Board of Management:

Date of Next Review: June 2027



16/10/2025

Review date: May 2026

Michael Sheahan