Confidentiality Policy

Date	June 2026
Approved By	Headteacher
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Review Date	June 2028
Staff role responsible for review	DSL

This policy applies to all stakeholders within Ivel Valley School & College

Introduction

Ivel Valley seeks to provide a safe and secure learning environment for all the children and young adults who attend our school and college. We are committed to developing creative and proactive ways for the pupils' voices to be heard, whilst recognising the responsibility to use, hold and safeguard information received. Sharing information unnecessarily can break down trust; we are placed in a position of trust by the whole Ivel Valley community and this must be nurtured. There is a general expectation that a professional approach will be used in all matters of confidentiality.

Note: Children include everyone under the age of 18. At Ivel Valley, our young people may stay in our college provision until they are 19 years of age. Due to their vulnerability, this policy will continue to be used until they leave Ivel Valley. When we refer to 'children' and 'school' in this policy, we also cover 'young adults' and 'college'. This policy also applies to pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stages (EYFS).

The purpose of this policy

As confidentiality is a whole school and college issue, we all need to understand important messages about confidentiality. This policy aims to clarify these messages, enabling staff to understand exactly what is expected of them.

Our key messages

All personal information about children should be regarded as confidential. It should be clearly understood by those who have access to it. It should only be shared with those staff that have a need to know. Staff **must not** share personal details about pupils with others who do not need to know them, especially outside of Ivel Valley.

All information held within Ivel Valley must adhere to our Data Protection policy. All social care, medical and personal information about a pupil will be held in safe and secure places which cannot be accessed by individuals other than Ivel Valley staff. We use the electronic system CPOMS to securely record safeguarding and behaviour records, along with information from other professionals, such as social care, and details of significant interactions with families and professionals. Stored information can only be accessed by identified staff members. It is important that this policy is considered alongside our Data Protection policy, as this gives advice on storing and sharing information safely, and processes to follow if there is a data breach.

We do need to be proactive with information sharing so that pupils are supported effectively, but information must not be unnecessarily revealed in a public space. Even when sensitive information appears to be widely known, it must not be assumed by those immediately involved that it is appropriate to discuss or share this information further; in particular, child protection information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis.

Staff must be incredibly mindful about discussing information about pupils in front of any other pupils – this is not appropriate to do.

Pupils might want to share confidential information about themselves with others. It is important that the appropriateness of this is considered based on assessment of the nature of the information, who

they are sharing it with, and where they are sharing it. Staff support might need to be given to help pupils consider their actions; this can be discussed with the safeguarding team if needed. It is important that pupils are given safe spaces to disclose personal information if they want to, but that they are not pressured into doing this.

Using images of pupils can be a sensitive issue for several reasons, including:

- Some children must not have their image put online for legal reasons.
- Some people do not want their images or their children's images online for personal or religious reasons.
- Some children may have a complex family background which means that sharing their image online can have unforeseen consequences.
- There is increasing concern about the use of AI to manipulate images.

We seek permission from families to use photos and videos of pupils in a number of different scenarios; it is vital that staff are aware of these permissions and follow them accurately, especially in the press and internet. If any events are held with parents/carers present who might take photographs, they must be reminded that photos and videos should only be taken for personal use and must not be distributed or put online. If images are shared online in public spaces, such as our website or social media, we will not connect photos and names of pupils.

We actively promote a school and college culture that has respect for individuals. Some of the ways that we implement this include:

- We promote a strong culture of safeguarding
- Any intolerance connected to any of the protected characteristics (as per the Equality Act) is unacceptable
- There are clear procedures to follow if a member of staff is alleged to have acted inappropriately
- There is clear guidance for the handling of safeguarding and child protection incidents. All staff have regular training and updates on safeguarding
- We have a trained safeguarding team, a Family Support team and a Preparing for Adulthood team
- Teachers are aware that clear ground rules must be set for any classroom work dealing with sensitive issues such as relationships and sex.

Confidentiality and information sharing has specific supports in place when connected to whistleblowing; please see our Whistleblowing Policy for more details.

When pupils become adults

It is important that we continue to maintain our expectations of confidentiality and that we follow this policy when our pupils become adults. An important part of Preparing for Adulthood is helping all pupils to advocate for themselves, and to make decisions about their lives. Where appropriate, young adults should be supported to be part of information sharing. If a young adult does not give consent to information being shared, but staff feel it is important, a Mental Capacity assessment might need to be considered. Support from the relevant local authority department might need to be sought.

Sharing information with professionals

Strong multi-agency and multi-disciplinary working is vital to identifying and responding to the needs of children and families. We abide by the statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026) to inform our information-sharing practice and to ensure that we are meeting our safeguarding responsibilities as per the most current version of Keeping Children Safe in Education. We follow this guidance when sharing information with professionals from other agencies, such as health and social care.

Staff need be aware of pupils' medical needs in order to support them appropriately and safely. Information from health professionals is stored in individual pupil files on our internal drive. Health professionals have their own code of practice dealing with confidentiality. Significant information is shared between Ivel Valley and relevant health professionals, as per the safeguarding policy. Logs of administration of medication to pupils should be kept secure and each pupil should have their own individual log. These will be shared with the nursing team as appropriate.

Therapists have their own safeguarding policies, but they also adhere to the Ivel Valley safeguarding policy. They maintain confidentiality within their sessions unless there is a need to share information for safeguarding purposes.

Sharing information with parents / carers

At Ivel Valley, we work hard to maintain good communication with parents/carers, using a combination of Class Dojo, MyChildAtSchool, telephone call, emails and face-to-face meetings. We have a parent/carer communication charter in place that sets out our commitment and expectations around communication.

Staff endeavour to be available as far as possible to talk to both pupils and parents/carers about any issues that are causing concern.

Parents/carers and pupils need to be aware that Ivel Valley cannot guarantee total confidentiality and that we have a duty to report safeguarding issues. We share with parents/carers any disclosure before going on to inform the correct authorities, but this might not happen in exceptional circumstances. Information about pupils will be shared with parents/carers, but only about *their* child. Parents/carers should not have access to any other child's work or data at any time.

If a pupil changes school, parents/carers should be aware that information about their child will be shared with the receiving school.

Addresses and telephone numbers of parents/carers and pupils will not be passed on without consent, except in exceptional circumstances or to a receiving school.

Generally, we will share information with the people with Parental Responsibility for our pupils. There are some sensitive situations where contact and information-sharing is not straightforward. It is important that our Designated Safeguarding Lead is made aware of these circumstances, and that this is shared with the class team.

Governors and confidentiality

Governors need to be mindful that from time-to-time issues are discussed or brought to their attention about staff and children. Governors must observe complete confidentiality when asked to do so by the governing body, especially in relation to matters concerning individual staff, pupils or parents/carers. Although decisions reached at governors' meetings are normally made public through the minutes or otherwise, the discussions on which decisions are based should be regarded as confidential. Governors should exercise the highest degree of prudence when discussion of potentially contentious issues arises outside the governing body.

Roles and responsibilities

All **staff and governors** are responsible for implementing this policy consistently.
The **Headteacher**, **Business Manager** and **Designated Safeguarding Lead** are responsible for responding to any concerns around breaches of confidentiality, as appropriate.

Legal framework & statutory guidance

Linked national guidance: Data Protection Act (2018), Equality Act (2010), Keeping Children Safe in Education (current version), UK GDPR, Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026).
Linked policies: Data Protection policy, Safeguarding policy and Whistleblowing policy.

Equalities & inclusion

All pupils have a right to the same level of confidentiality, irrespective of gender, race, age, religion, medical concerns and special educational needs or disabilities.

Safeguarding implications

Ivel Valley has a duty of care and responsibility towards all pupils, parents/carers and staff; the care and safety of the individual needs to drive any decisions about confidentiality.

We need to work with a range of outside agencies and share information on a professional basis. We must be very mindful of the way that we share information about pupils, especially outside of Ivel Valley. If someone is ever unsure whether they should share information, they should always start by considering the best interests of the pupil.

Sustainability implications

As part of our commitment to sustainability, we will:

- Prioritise secure digital storage over paper-based systems for confidential information
- Use confidential waste recycling services for secure disposal of paper documents
- Minimise printing of confidential materials and use double-sided printing on recycled paper when necessary
- Regularly review our retention schedules to avoid storing information longer than required.