



Loreto Abbey Secondary School, Dalkey

Confidentiality Policy

'Our school is a caring, Christian Community in which pupils have the opportunity to achieve academic excellence and to grow spiritually, emotionally, socially, creatively, and physically in a healthy environment.'

School Name:	Loreto Abbey Secondary School Dalkey
Purpose:	<p>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.</p> <p>This policy outlines all aspects involved in confidentiality within the school and should be read in conjunction with other school policies.</p>
Context:	<p>The school is a fee-paying voluntary secondary for girls school under the trusteeship of the Loreto Education Trust. There are currently 736 students enrolled. It provides a Junior cycle Programme , an optional Transition Year Programme (TY) , the Established Leaving Certificate Programme and the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme.</p> <p>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.</p>

Confidentiality & the Role of Staff:	<p>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 (2015)</p> <p>Our school adopts a student-centred approach to education.</p> <p>Support of students is paramount in our school community.</p> <p>The Children First Guidelines (2017) are applied in our school as appropriate.</p> <p>All staff members must be aware that absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.</p> <p>In supporting the students at our school, all stakeholders must be aware of the limits to confidentiality.</p> <p>This includes a legal obligation to share information where a student's welfare is at risk.</p> <p>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:</p>
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- (i) The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) in our school is Principal: Mr. Robert Dunne. The school DLP has responsibility for ensuring that the standard reporting procedure is followed, so that suspected child protection concerns are referred promptly to the designated person in TUSLA the Child and Family Agency or in the event of an emergency and the unavailability of TUSLA, to An Garda Síochána.
- (ii) The Deputy Designated Liaison Person is (DDL), Ms. Grainne Byrne. 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 at Child and Family Agency, Dublin South East/Wicklow, Carysfort House, Carysfort Avenue, Blackrock Co Dublin (01-2155758) email: am.dsdseww@tusla.ie.

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 counterproductive 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.

<p>Additional Information for Learners Under 18 Years of Age:</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017 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 2017 notes that it is not necessary to inform a parent/carer that a report is being made -</p> <p>(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.</p> <p>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.</p>
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<p>Confidentiality and Learners Over 18:</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>Further information in relation to the safeguarding of vulnerable adults is available on the website of the HSE www.hse.ie</p>
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<p>Links Between This Policy and Other Policies:</p>	<p>This confidentiality policy should be read in conjunction with the School's policies on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Child Safeguarding Statement ● Admissions Policy ● RSE policy ● Whole School Guidance Plan
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<p>Record Keeping:</p>	<p>Our school recognises the importance of record keeping.</p> <p>Our school keeps records in accordance with Appendix 4 of the DES Child Protection Procedures in Primary and Post-primary (2017) (Revised 2023)</p> <p>All school records and data pertaining to students and parents/guardians are regarded as highly confidential and are stored in line with GDPR (2018) procedures.</p>
<p>Communicating the Limits to Confidentiality with Staff</p>	<p>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 by the Principal (DLP).</p> <p>Staff should consult a member of management if they have any questions or concerns about our school's confidentiality policy.</p> <p>The Guidance and Counselling Service abides by a strict code of ethics and confidentiality policy as outlined by the Institute of Guidance Counsellors.</p> <p>Confidentiality is a central and integral part of the counselling process and is assured to each student who avails of the counselling service. It offers safety and privacy to those who choose to discuss personal concerns.</p>
<p>Communicating the Limits to Confidentiality with Students and Parents/Guardians</p>	<p>The limits to all staff-student confidentiality are made clear to students & parents/guardians in our school in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parents/Guardians sign a 'Confidentiality Agreement' when a student first registers as a student in the school. - Students are reminded about confidentiality at their first assembly of every school year <p>There are limits to confidentiality within our school.</p>

	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:	<p>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.</p> <p>The specific focus of An Garda Síochána is on the investigation of alleged offences and whether a crime has been committed.</p>
Responsibilities in Relation to the Policy:	The School Management team & Guidance Counsellors are involved in the development, implementation and review of the policy.
Accessibility:	This policy will be accessible online within the school's planning documents.
Date Policy Ratified by BOM:	
Date for Review of Policy:	
WSE	Our school is aware that when conducting a Whole School Evaluation, Department inspectors seek evidence to confirm that the school is complying with the requirements of the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools (Revised 2023).

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on the 20th February 2024 and will be reviewed in 2027.

Signed: *Elis Humphreys*

Chairperson of the Board of Management

Date: 20th February 2024

Date for review: February 2027

Appendix A

Consent Form to Attend Confidential One to One Guidance Sessions

Loreto Abbey Secondary School, Dalkey

(As part of admissions policy and/ or enrolment documents)

The whole-school guidance programme in this school aims to provide a safe environment for each student to grow and to develop their personal, social, careers, educational and life choices. The guidance counsellor/s in Loreto Abbey provide/s a confidential one-to-one guidance counselling service to students where appropriate. Here, the guidance counsellor may meet with students to discuss a range of careers, educational, personal and or social development issues.

Our school policy on confidentiality is informed, among others, by the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and the Children First Guidelines (2017).

In the event that your daughter wishes to meet the guidance counsellor on a one-to-one basis at any stage throughout their time in the school, your permission is requested for any such meetings.

Our policy on confidentiality is available on the school website loretoabbeydalkey.ie

Please complete and return to the school Principal

Name of Student:.....

Year:.....

Class:.....

I give my permission for.....to attend one to one meetings with the guidance counsellor/s in Loreto Abbey, in keeping with the School's mission of support for students and in the context of the School's whole-school guidance programme.

Signature of parent/guardian:

Date:.....

Appendix B

Administration of Assessment Instruments to Students (Consent Form)

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s).

During your daughter's education in Loreto Abbey Secondary School, she will have the opportunity to engage in a wide range of assessment activity as part of normal teaching and learning.

Other specialist tests may also be administered to support your daughter's educational development and learning as well as her career development. Such tests may include achievement, ability, diagnostic and interest tests.

The results of all such tests will be shared with parents/guardians and students if it is deemed necessary or if it is requested. It is important to note that CAT 4 Cognitive Ability Testing which is done in 1st Year is used in conjunction with other forms of assessment, alongside teacher observations to help inform a baseline for our academic tracking system within Loreto Abbey. There may also be occasion to administer tests on an individual basis to your daughter to support her learning, progress and achievement. Such tests will only be administered following consultation with parent(s)/guardian(s).

I enclose a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) information sheet which may address any additional questions you may have in relation to the above. In addition, the school's policy on the use of assessment instruments is available from the school's website www.loretoabbeydalkey.ie

If you would like to find out more, please do not hesitate to contact the Guidance Counsellor at guidance@loretoabbeydalkey.ie

Please return the completed Consent Form below by (indicate date).

Your sincerely

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Please complete and return to the school Principal.

Name of Student:

Year:

Class:

I give consent for assessment instruments to be administered to my daughter while she is a student in Loreto Abbey Secondary School

Signature of parent/guardian:

Date:.....

