



Francis Jordan Catholic School

Peterborough Drive, Currambine WA 6028
www.fjcs.wa.edu.au

THE MANAGEMENT OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION POLICY

Rationale

Francis Jordan Catholic School acknowledges that all children are unique, and that it has a responsibility in the development of the whole child in a way that respects and protects that uniqueness.

The school also acknowledges that parents and/or guardians are partners with the school in the education of children, and that trust and respect for the dignity of the child and family require that standards are observed in the management of any information revealed about the child or family.

The school is required under the Privacy Act legislation to ensure that where confidential information is collected, that it is managed in such a way as to preserve the dignity of those involved and to maintain confidentiality.

Definitions

Information, data or experience, whether it be received or stored in hard copy, electronic or any other form, is classified as:

- Confidential - information given in trust whereby a relationship not to betray is established.
- Personal – information which can identify an individual; or

- Sensitive – information about a person’s religious and political beliefs, racial or ethnic origin, membership of political associations, philosophical beliefs, sexual preferences or practices, criminal record or health information.

There are two main categories of student information:

- **General Access Records**

These include objective and verifiable data which are necessary for the ongoing administrative functioning of the school. Examples of such records include student identification, enrolment details, attendance records, results from standardised aptitude or achievement tests, reports of disciplinary action and achievement records.

This data should be accessible to teachers, administrative support staff and others only with the specific authority of the Principal.

- **Restricted Access Records**

These include records which are essentially confidential, personal or sensitive in nature. This data should be accessible to or held by identified individuals only with the specific authority of the Principal. Examples of such records include information pertaining to children with special needs, sensitive family data and the personal files held by the Principal, Social Worker, Psychologist, Special Education Consultant or others to which they alone would usually have access unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Principles

1. All school employees shall respect information given confidentially by students, guardians and professional colleagues in the course of their work and guard against open discussion of confidential or sensitive information. In addition, they must be mindful of information gained through hearsay.

2. Written parental/guardian consent shall be required when confidential and/or sensitive information is to be obtained whether sought or not by school personnel including psychologists and social workers. Discussions with teaching staff and other non health care staff would normally be covered by the school's standard collection notice. This does not apply in instances covered under Mandatory Reporting legislation (refer to the CECWA Policy Statement, Child Abuse: 2-D3).
3. Where it becomes apparent during an informal meeting with a student that sensitive or confidential information is being obtained that is not or cannot be covered by the school's standard collection notice, then the meeting shall be suspended and written consent be obtained prior to any further meeting. This does not apply in instances covered under Mandatory Reporting legislation (refer to the CECWA Policy Statement, Child Abuse: 2-D3).
4. Parental and/or guardian consent is required prior to seeking confidential and sensitive information from students. Parents and/or guardians with English language or other communication difficulties will receive appropriate support to allow them to give informed consent.
5. All confidential or sensitive information disclosed about students shall only be with the consent of the student or parents and/or guardians. The exception is generally where:
 - there is risk such that protective action is necessary; eg. risk to self, risk to others, abuse or neglect
 - it is required at law
6. Professional codes of conduct exist for allied health professionals such as social workers, psychologists and nurses. These codes shall be examined and potential conflicts resolved within the Catholic school setting and CECWA policy parameters. CECWA policy shall take precedence over professional codes of conduct.
7. All records are the property of the employer. These include psychologists, social workers and other allied health professionals' records. Records received from a third party may

- be retained by the school but remain the property of the third party.
8. In schools, there are legal requirements and obligations that limit the extent to which a minor may be regarded as mature or independent. These include the Principal's and other staff members' duty of care, parental contract of enrolment and the staff members' responsibility to the school, parent and student.

Management Procedures for Confidential Information at Francis Jordan Catholic School

1. Restricted Access Records shall be kept separate to General Access Records with indication in the General Access Record that a Restricted Access Record exists.
2. All confidential, personal and sensitive information shall be securely stored in a locked facility with appropriate access determined by the Principal. All information on families and students will be managed in the following manner:
 - 2.1 Personal information obtained through enrolment will be kept in the office/storeroom of the Administration Officer. Access may only be gained through the Principal or Administration Officer for the purpose of providing schooling to the student.
 - 2.2 All Psychology, Special Needs or reports of this nature will be kept in a locked cabinet in the Principal's Office. Access may be gained by teachers for the purpose of providing schooling to the student.
 - 2.3 A student's Psychology reports will be forwarded to the Psychology Team at the Catholic Education Office of Western Australia once a student leaves the school.
 - 2.4 Where a student leaves the school and has Special

Education Records, those records shall be kept until the student reaches 25 years of age in secure off-site storage.

- 2.5 Student reports and other assessment materials will be kept in designated individual student files in the Administration Office Storeroom.
 - 2.6 Standardised reports and data on student progress and behaviour will be kept on the SEQTA Program. Access for teachers will be through a Personal Password. Hard copies of standardised tests will be kept in designated individual student files in the Administration Office Storeroom.
 - 2.7 Student files shall be kept until the student reaches 25 years of age in secure off-site storage after the student leaves the school.
 - 2.8 Registers are a legal document and shall be kept in digital form on SEQTA for 25 years. Absentee notes will be kept in secure off-site storage until the student reaches 25 years of age after students have left the school.
 - 2.9 Health Records shall be kept with the student's file and treated in the same manner for storage.
 - 2.10 MediAlert forms will be kept in a file in the Sick Bay, Library, Offices and classrooms. These must be updated each year and former forms destroyed.
3. Where a staff member works as a member of a team it may become necessary for that staff member to share information with other team members in the course of planning for a student's needs. This shared information will remain confidential to the team.
 4. When a student moves from one school to another, the content of existing records pertaining to that student shall be reviewed. Where confidential/sensitive information is included, this shall not be transferred without the written consent of the source of the information. All forms containing collection notices (identifying

- possible third parties) and signed by parents and/or guardians satisfy written consent. Only copies of appropriate records shall be forwarded (see Handbook for Catholic Schools, Section 3, Administration page 3-E3).
5. When records are requested by an outside agency/consultant, before copies are forwarded to this outside agency or consultant, written consent of the author, parent and/or guardian shall be obtained.
 6. Where schools are unsure of the appropriate action to be taken regarding the management of confidential, personal or sensitive information the Catholic Education Office Leadership, Employee and Community Relations Team or Psychology Team shall be contacted for advice.

Reviewed: 2016

Due for review: 2020