



One-to-One Confidentiality Policy

School Name:	Galway Educate Together Secondary School
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>Galway Educate Together Secondary School is a post-primary school providing education to students from First Year to Leaving Certificate Year.</p> <p>This policy is informed by the vision for Galway ETSS coupled with the school's ethos which aims to enable students to reach their full potential both academically and socially.</p> <p>Galway ETSS endeavours to be a vibrant school community in which all members experience a real sense of active participation and belonging. The school aims to provide an education for students that contributes both to their academic and personal development as well as to the social and cultural development of their community. Our school acknowledges and respects the rights of all students to be educated in a welcoming, positive and inclusive environment.</p> <p>Personal data collected about prospective students/students and their parents/guardians will be retained and used strictly in accordance with GDPR legislation as introduced in May 2018. Further details on data protection are set out in the school's Data Protection Policy.</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>
Rationale	<p>The Board of Management recognises that child protection and welfare considerations permeate all aspects of school life and must be reflected in all of the school's policies, procedures, practices and activities. In its policies, procedures, practices and activities, the school will adhere to the following principles of best practice in child protection and welfare:</p> <p>The school will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recognise that the protection and welfare of children is of paramount importance, regardless of all other considerations, • fully comply with its statutory obligations under the Children First Act 2015 and other relevant legislation relating to the protection and welfare of children, • fully co-operate with the relevant statutory authorities in relation to child protection and welfare matters,

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adopt safe practices to minimise the possibility of harm or accidents happening to children and protect workers from the necessity to take unnecessary risks that may leave themselves open to accusations of abuse or neglect, • develop a practice of openness with parents and encourage parental involvement in the education of their children; and • fully respect confidentiality requirements in dealing with child protection matters.
Aims	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To ensure that students in receipt of one- to- one support are identified and provided for in a fair and equitable manner so that their learning potential and their sense of self-worth and dignity is developed and respected. 2. To ensure that students are provided for in an inclusive way. 3. To enable students to access the curriculum and to develop students’ self-esteem, confidence and feelings of achievement and fulfilment in accordance with the school’s mission statement 4. To assist teaching staff with the educational management of students with one-to-one teaching/counselling needs where appropriate. 5. To ensure the effective and efficient use of resources.
Procedure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided it is deemed appropriate for an individual student, one-to-one counselling may be provided in GETSS, using the resources available to the school. • GETSS will make every effort to ensure the safeguarding of children and staff. • Where practicable, prerequisite conditions will be put in place regarding physical environment e.g. glass panel in door, leave door ajar, seating arrangements, appropriate timetabling etc. • Visitors or guest speakers will not be left alone with an individual student, nor be left alone with a group of students. • Outside professionals may be required to meet with/assess students in a one-to-one setting. This includes visits from external agencies for example, NCSE, NEPS, SEC, TUSLA etc. All personnel in such cases, working with children on a one-to-one basis must be Garda Vetted, and parental permission must be given in advance.
Confidentiality and Role of the 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. 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. In supporting the students at our school, all stakeholders must be aware of the limits to confidentiality.</p>

	<p>Confidentiality will not be guaranteed in the following circumstances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When a student poses a danger to themselves or others • When a student discloses an intention to commit a crime • When the counsellor or staff member suspects abuse or neglect • When a court orders a counsellor to make notes or records available <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> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) in our school: Sarah Molloy ii. The Deputy Designated Liaison Person (DDL): Sinéad Conlon iii. Child and Family Agency Child Protection Social Work Services: Any stakeholder can report a child protection concern about a student or school directly by contacting the local social work office. <p style="text-align: center;">Child and Family Agency: 25 Newcastle Road, Galway 091-546235</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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 counter-productive 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>
<p>Additional Information for students under the age of 18</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/carers that a report is being made and the reasons for the decision to make the report.</p> <p>However, Children First National Guidance 2017 also notes that it is not necessary to inform a parent/carers that a report is being made -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. if by doing so, the child will be placed at further risk

	<p>b. in cases where the family’s knowledge of the report could impair Tusla’s ability to carry out a risk assessment</p> <p>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>
<p>Confidentiality and learners over 18</p>	<p>It is recognised that some schools may also cater for adult students with additional vulnerabilities.</p> <p>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>
<p>Links between this policy and other policies</p>	<p>This confidentiality policy should be read in conjunction with all other school policies. Links to these policies can be found on the school website: Galway ETSS</p>
<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).</p> <p>All school records and data pertaining to students and parents/guardians are regarded as highly confidential and are stored in line with 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.</p> <p>Staff should consult a member of management if they have any questions or concerns about our school’s confidentiality policy.</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 ‘<u>Confidentiality Agreement</u>’ when a student first registers as a student in the school (see Appendix 1). • Students are reminded about confidentiality at the beginning of every school year. • A ‘limits to confidentiality’ sign is on display in the Guidance Counsellors office.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are reminded of the limits of confidentiality at the beginning of each session with the Guidance Counsellor. <p>There are limits to confidentiality within our school.</p> <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.</p> <p>If it is felt it is in the student's best interests to inform a Teacher/Parent & Guardians of a particular difficulty, this is only done with the knowledge and ideally the agreement of the student. In certain instances, the advice and direction of the duty care social worker is sought and reported, if necessary, as per the School Safeguarding Statement. Such referrals are reported by the Principal at all Board of Management meetings.</p>
Responsibilities in relation to the policy	The Guidance team, AEN team and the School Leadership Team are responsible for the development, implementation and review of this policy in consultation with parents & guardians and student body.
What to do when an issue arises	<p>The School Referral Procedures explained in the Whole School Guidance Plan provides information and guidelines as to how to respond to any issue presented to the Guidance Counsellor.</p> <p>All school policies can be found on the school website: Galway ETSS.ie</p> <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>
Accessibility	This policy is available on the school website at: Galway ETSS.ie
Date policy ratified by BOM	June 4th, 2024
Date for review of policy	June 2025
SSE	Our school is aware that when conducting a Whole School Evaluation, Department inspectors seek evidence to confirm that a school is complying with the requirements of the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017.

Signed: 

Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: 4th June, 2024

Signed: 

Principal

Date: 4th June, 2024

Appendix 1

Consent Form to Attend Confidential One-to-One Guidance Sessions

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 in Galway ETSS provides 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 child wishes to meet the Guidance Counsellor on a one-to-one 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 to read on the school website www.galwayetss.ie

Please complete and return to the school Principal

Name of Student: _____

Year: _____

Class: _____

I give my permission for _____ (*Student's name*) to attend one-to-one meetings with the Guidance Counsellor in Galway ETSS 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: _____