



Deutsche Samstagsschule Brighton und Hove

German Saturday School Brighton & Hove Confidentiality & Information-Sharing Policy

Approved by Committee on: May 2026

Review due: May 2029

This policy will be reviewed at least every three years, or earlier if there are significant changes in legislation, safeguarding guidance, DSSBH's constitution, host-school arrangements, or following a relevant incident or concern.

1. Purpose and scope

German Saturday School Brighton & Hove (DSSBH) is committed to promoting the safety, wellbeing and dignity of all children and young people who attend the school.

DSSBH is a small volunteer-run Saturday school with limited administrative and pastoral capacity. This policy gives clear and proportionate guidance on how confidential information about children, families, teachers, helpers, volunteers and committee members should be handled, and when information must be shared to safeguard children or support individuals.

This policy should be read alongside the:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy;
- Equal Opportunities Statement;
- Data Protection & Privacy Policy;
- Health and Safety arrangements;
- Positive Behaviour Policy.

This policy applies to all teachers, helpers, volunteers and committee members. Parents and carers are also expected to respect confidentiality and raise concerns through appropriate DSSBH channels.

2. Key principles

Child safety and welfare come first

Where there is a conflict between keeping information confidential and protecting a child from harm, the safety and welfare of the child take priority.

No absolute confidentiality

DSSBH cannot promise absolute confidentiality. Children and adults should be told, in age-appropriate language, that there are limits to what can be kept private.

Need-to-know basis

Information should only be shared with those who need to know it in order to keep a child safe, provide appropriate support, or carry out their role.

Respect for privacy and dignity

Personal information should be treated with care, discussed discreetly, and stored securely.

Children's participation

Where appropriate and safe, children should be involved in decisions about sharing information that concerns them. However, where there is a risk of harm, information may need to be shared without consent.

3. Roles and responsibilities

The DSL and Deputy DSL are responsible for:

- advising staff and volunteers on confidentiality and information-sharing decisions;
- making or coordinating referrals to external agencies where needed;
- ensuring that safeguarding records and information-sharing decisions are kept securely.

All teachers, helpers, volunteers and committee members are responsible for:

- understanding the limits of confidentiality;
- not promising to keep secrets;
- reporting concerns or disclosures promptly to the DSL or Deputy DSL;
- recording and handling information carefully and respectfully;
- avoiding unnecessary discussion of identifiable children or families.

Trustees/Committee members are responsible for ensuring that confidentiality and information-sharing arrangements are proportionate, practical and consistent with DSSBH's safeguarding responsibilities and constitution.

4. Confidentiality in day-to-day school life

In normal classroom and school activities, teachers and volunteers should treat personal information shared by children and families as private and should not repeat it casually or unnecessarily.

Teachers and volunteers should avoid discussing identifiable children or families in public areas, in front of other parents or pupils, or in informal conversations.

Where children share personal experiences in group work, staff should:

- set simple ground rules about respect and privacy;
- remind pupils not to share other people's stories outside the group;
- intervene sensitively if a child begins to disclose something that may be a safeguarding concern.

Children should be encouraged to speak to an adult they trust if they are worried about themselves or someone else. They should also understand that some things cannot be kept secret if someone may be at risk of harm.

5. One-to-one conversations and informal disclosures

Sometimes a child may choose to speak to a teacher, helper or volunteer individually, for example at break time, before or after class, or during an activity.

In these situations, the adult should:

- explain the limits of confidentiality at an early stage, using age-appropriate language;
- listen carefully and allow the child to speak at their own pace;
- avoid promising to keep secrets;
- avoid leading questions or investigating the matter themselves;
- report any concern promptly to the DSL or Deputy DSL.

A simple phrase may be used, such as:

"I will listen carefully, but if you tell me something that makes me worried about your safety or someone else's safety, I may need to tell another adult who can help."

6. Responding to disclosures or concerns

Where a child makes a disclosure, or a teacher, volunteer or committee member becomes worried about a child's safety or welfare, they should:

Listen, do not investigate

Stay calm, take the child seriously, and allow them to speak freely. Ask only open questions if needed.

Explain what will happen next

Remind the child that information may need to be shared with the DSL or Deputy DSL so that help can be provided.

Record the information

Make a factual, dated and signed record of what has been seen, heard or said, using the child's own words where possible. Include the date, time, location, names of those present and any actions taken.

Share with the DSL or Deputy DSL

Pass the written record to the DSL or Deputy DSL as soon as possible.

If the DSL and Deputy DSL are unavailable and a child appears to be in immediate danger, emergency services should be contacted on 999, and the DSL/deputy should be informed as soon as possible.

The DSL or Deputy DSL will decide whether to:

- monitor the situation;
- speak to parents/carers, where safe and appropriate;
- seek advice from or make a referral to local authority children's services;
- contact the police in an emergency or where a crime may have been committed.

Full details should be set out in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

7. Sharing information with parents and carers

DSSBH recognises that parents and carers play a key role in supporting their children and that, where appropriate, concerns should be discussed with them.

However, where speaking to parents or carers may increase the risk of harm to the child or others, the DSL or Deputy DSL should seek advice from children's services before contacting parents.

Staff and volunteers should never promise a child that they will not tell their parents. Instead, they should explain that they will speak to the DSL or Deputy DSL about which adults need to know.

Decisions about whether and how to involve parents in safeguarding concerns should be recorded by the DSL or Deputy DSL.

8. Expectations of parents and carers

Parents and carers are expected to respect the privacy and dignity of children, families, teachers, volunteers and committee members.

Parents and carers should not share personal information, photographs, concerns or incidents involving other children or families in WhatsApp groups, social media, public conversations or informal parent networks.

If a parent or carer has a concern about a child, family, teacher, volunteer or committee member, they should raise it directly with the DSL, Deputy DSL or Chair, rather than discussing it publicly.

Where a parent or carer receives confidential information as part of a committee role, volunteering role or support arrangement, they are expected to handle it responsibly and only share it where authorised or necessary for safeguarding.

9. Sharing information with external agencies

DSSBH recognises that effective safeguarding may depend on timely and appropriate information-sharing with external agencies.

The DSL or Deputy DSL may share relevant information with, for example:

- local authority children's services;
- the police;
- the host school, where safety on the premises is involved;

- health professionals or other services directly involved in supporting a child or family.

When deciding whether to share information, the DSL or Deputy DSL will consider:

- the purpose of sharing the information;
- the relevance and accuracy of the information;
- who needs to know and how much they need to know;
- the views and best interests of the child;
- any risk of sharing or not sharing;
- whether consent can and should be sought.

Information may be shared without consent where there is reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, or where seeking consent would place a child or others at greater risk.

10. Confidentiality within the team

Staff and volunteers may need to share information with the DSL or Deputy DSL. Information may also be shared with the Chair where necessary for safeguarding, governance, support or risk-management reasons.

Information shared within the team should be limited to what is necessary for each person to know in order to carry out their role.

Discussions about individual children or families should take place in private and not in public, social or informal settings.

Staff, volunteers and committee members must not discuss confidential school-related information about children or families with their own friends or family members, or on social media.

Where staff or volunteers feel affected by a disclosure or safeguarding situation, they may seek support from the DSL, Deputy DSL or Chair. They may also seek confidential external support, such as from a GP or counselling service, without identifying the child or family unless strictly necessary.

11. Record-keeping and storage

Records of safeguarding concerns, disclosures and information-sharing decisions will be kept by the DSL or Deputy DSL in a secure, confidential file, separate from general participant information.

Access to safeguarding records will be restricted to the DSL, Deputy DSL and, where necessary, relevant committee members.

Records should be:

- clear, factual, signed and dated;
- stored securely;
- retained only for as long as necessary and in line with DSSBH's Data Protection & Privacy Policy and safeguarding procedures;
- securely destroyed when no longer required.

Other personal data, such as registration forms, contact details and attendance lists, will be managed in line with the DSSBH Data Protection & Privacy Policy.

12. Training and awareness

All teachers, helpers, volunteers and committee members will be made aware of this policy at induction and will receive basic guidance on confidentiality and information-sharing as part of safeguarding training.

The DSL and Deputy DSL will keep up to date with relevant safeguarding and information-sharing guidance and will share key updates with the team.

DSSBH may provide additional briefings where needed, for example on WhatsApp groups, photography, online teaching or handling parent concerns.

13. Constitutional position and serious breaches

This policy sits under the trustees' power to make reasonable rules to help run DSSBH, provided those rules do not conflict with the constitution or the law.

Where a serious confidentiality or information-sharing breach involves an adult who is also a formal member of DSSBH, any decision about removal of membership will be handled in line with the DSSBH constitution, including the member's right to be heard by the trustees and to be accompanied.

Where a breach involves a child's attendance, a volunteer role, committee role or parent conduct, DSSBH will follow the relevant policy or procedure, including safeguarding, complaints, behaviour/participation or volunteer procedures as appropriate.

14. Monitoring and review

The Committee, in consultation with the DSL and Deputy DSL, will:

- monitor how this policy is applied in practice;
- review any incidents, complaints or concerns involving confidentiality or information-sharing;
- update the policy at least every three years, or earlier if there are significant changes in legislation, local procedures, DSSBH's constitution or the school's activities.

Appendix 1: Relevant legislation and guidance

This policy should be read in the context of current safeguarding and data protection requirements, including:

- UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018;
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023;
- government information-sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners;
- Charity Commission safeguarding guidance for charities and trustees;
- DSSBH Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy;
- DSSBH Data Protection & Privacy Policy.

DSSBH will review this appendix periodically to ensure references remain current.