

Student Services Confidentiality and Privacy Statement

Student Services is committed to protecting the privacy, confidentiality and personal information of all students who access our services. We recognise that students need to feel safe, respected and supported when seeking advice, guidance or specialist support.

Student Services comprises Accommodation, Counselling, Disability and Mental Health Support, Student Funding, Student and Residence Life. We also work closely with colleagues across the University where appropriate.

Information shared with Student Services will be treated confidentially and handled in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), the Data Protection Act 2018, and relevant professional standards. We work in accordance with University policies, including the University Data Protection Policy and Student Privacy Notice.

We will not normally disclose information about a student to a third party, such as a parent, family member or friend without the student's consent unless there is a lawful basis or exceptional circumstance requiring disclosure.

How We Use Your Information

Student Services is committed to maintaining confidentiality and will only access, use and share personal information where this is necessary to provide support, deliver services, fulfil professional responsibilities, or meet legal, regulatory and safeguarding obligations. Information may be shared with relevant University colleagues and, where appropriate, external organisations on a need-to-know basis.

This may include:

- Providing advice, guidance and specialist support.
- Assessing support needs and implementing reasonable adjustments.
- Managing accommodation and residential support.
- Supporting student wellbeing and safety.
- Making referrals to appropriate internal or external services where required.
- Assessing eligibility for financial support and student funding schemes.
- Monitoring, evaluating and improving services.
- Producing anonymised management information and service reports

Whilst Student Services operates as an integrated department, the nature and sensitivity of information held varies across our services.

Information shared with specialist wellbeing services, including Counselling, Mental Health Advice, and Disability and Mental Health Support, is treated as particularly sensitive and will not normally be shared outside the relevant service without the student's knowledge and consent, except where there

is a safeguarding concern, risk of serious harm, legal requirement, or another circumstance outlined in this statement.

For operational and student support services, including Accommodation, Student Funding, Student and Residence Life, information may be shared with relevant colleagues and departments where necessary to deliver services, coordinate support, administer processes, fulfil contractual obligations, or meet legal and regulatory requirements.

Where there are concerns about a student's ability to engage safely with their studies, accommodation or professional programme, relevant information may be shared with appropriate University colleagues in accordance with the University's Fitness to Study, Fitness to Reside or Fitness to Practice procedures.

In all cases, information is shared only where there is a legitimate need to know, taking into account the sensitivity of the information, the student's privacy, and the need to provide safe, effective and coordinated support.

Where necessary to deliver services and support students effectively, Student Services may also access relevant information already held by the University, including enrolment, course and contact information.

Circumstances Where Confidentiality May Be Limited

Whilst confidentiality of sensitive information is a fundamental principle of Student Services, there are circumstances in which information may need to be shared without consent.

These circumstances may include:

- Concerns that a student or another person may be at risk of serious harm.
- Safeguarding concerns.
- Emergency situations where information must be shared to protect the vital interests of a student or another person
- Situations where disclosure is required or permitted by law.
- Circumstances where the University is required to meet statutory, regulatory or legal obligations.
- Situations where there is a serious risk to the University community, its operations, or its reputation.

Where appropriate and safe to do so, we will seek to discuss any disclosure with the student before information is shared.

Trusted and Nominated Contacts

As part of our commitment to supporting student wellbeing and safety, students may choose to provide the University with details of a trusted contact. A trusted contact is someone the student authorises the University to contact if there are serious concerns about their safety, wellbeing, welfare, or ability to engage with support.

This is not someone we will contact routinely, nor does it give them access to information about a student's studies or support arrangements. However, where there are significant concerns about a

student's wellbeing and it is considered appropriate to do so, we may contact them to help support the student.

Wherever possible, this will be discussed with the student first and any information shared will be limited to what is necessary.

Students can also provide consent for Student Services to share information regarding specific matters with a nominated third party, such as a parent, family member or supporter in addition to the student. This consent must normally be provided in writing and will only apply to the matter and service area for which consent has been given. Students may withdraw this consent at any time.

Disability and Mental Health Support

The Disability and Mental Health Service provides a confidential service for students seeking advice, guidance and support in relation to a disability, specific learning difference, long-term health condition, mental health condition or other support need.

To implement reasonable adjustments, the Disability and Mental Health Team may liaise with academic faculties, Registry Services and other relevant University departments. Where a student wishes to access reasonable adjustments, details of agreed support measures are normally shared through a Learning Support Form (LSF). The LSF will only be shared with the student's knowledge and consent.

Students may choose not to consent to the sharing of a Learning Support Form; however, this may limit the University's ability to implement, coordinate or maintain reasonable adjustments and support arrangements effectively.

Counselling

The Counselling Service provides a confidential and professional service for students seeking support with personal, emotional, psychological or mental health difficulties.

Counsellors work within the Ethical Framework of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) and are committed to maintaining confidentiality. Information shared during counselling sessions will not normally be disclosed outside the Counselling Service without the student's knowledge and consent.

Accommodation Service

To support students living in University accommodation, relevant information will be shared with Residence Life, Security, Housekeeping, Maintenance, Catering, the Post Room, Fees Office and other departments involved in the delivery of residential services where this is necessary to provide accommodation, support student wellbeing, maintain safety, or fulfil operational requirements.

The collection, use and sharing of accommodation related information is carried out in accordance with the student's Licence Agreement, the Accommodation Application Terms and Conditions, and the St Mary's Accommodation Privacy Notice. Students are provided with this information during the application process and before accepting an accommodation offer.

Where there are concerns about a student's welfare, wellbeing or safety, relevant information may be shared with appropriate colleagues to coordinate support, manage risk and ensure the safety of individuals and the wider residential community.

Student and Residence Life

The Student and Residence Life Team provides advice, guidance and practical support to help students navigate personal, welfare and study-related challenges. This includes supporting students who have experienced crime, harassment, domestic abuse, hate incidents, sexual misconduct or sexual violence, including through the Report and Support system and Sexual Violence Liaison Officers (SVLOs).

To provide effective support, staff may work with colleagues across Student Services and the wider University. Information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis where this is necessary to coordinate support, address concerns within the residential community, manage conduct matters, fulfil safeguarding responsibilities, or protect the wellbeing and safety of students and others. The team may also help students access specialist support within the University or from external organisations.

Students should be aware that where a disclosure indicates a crime, safeguarding concern, or risk of harm to the student or others, information may need to be shared with appropriate University colleagues and, where necessary, external agencies such as the Police or Local Authority.

Student Funding

The Student Funding Service may collect and process personal information to assess eligibility for hardship funding, bursaries, emergency financial assistance and other student support schemes.

This may include reviewing information provided by students regarding their financial, personal or support circumstances and obtaining confirmation of relevant information from other University departments where necessary.

Information may be shared with relevant University departments, auditors and funding bodies where necessary to administer support, process payments, verify eligibility and fulfil legal, safeguarding or regulatory responsibilities.

Where students disclose a disability, medical condition, eligibility under St Mary's Cares or other support need, information may be shared with appropriate University services where necessary to coordinate support and ensure students receive appropriate assistance.

External Services and Support

Student Services may, where appropriate, recommend, facilitate or liaise with external services to support a student's wellbeing, health, safety or academic success. This may include GPs, NHS services, Mental Health Crisis Services, Local Authorities, healthcare providers, emergency services and specialist support agencies.

Wherever possible, a student's consent will be obtained before information is shared with an external service. However, information may be disclosed without consent where there is an immediate risk of harm, a safeguarding concern, or a legal obligation to do so.

Professional Supervision

Counsellors and Mental Health Advisors receive regular professional supervision in accordance with relevant professional standards and best practice frameworks. Supervision supports safe, ethical and effective practice and helps ensure students receive an appropriate standard of care.

Information discussed in supervision remains confidential and identifying information is minimised wherever possible.

Record Keeping, Complaints and Reporting

Student Services staff maintain records of appointments, interactions, support plans, referrals, interventions and related documentation where necessary to deliver services, ensure continuity of support, meet professional standards, fulfil regulatory and legal obligations, support safeguarding responsibilities and manage risk appropriately.

Records are stored securely and are accessible only to authorised staff with a legitimate business need. Access may also be provided to University IT staff or approved software suppliers where necessary to investigate technical issues, maintain systems or support the operation of secure record-keeping platforms.

If a student makes a complaint about Student Services or a service received, relevant information relating to the complaint may be shared with the Student Complaints team and other appropriate University colleagues responsible for investigating, responding to or resolving the complaint. Information will be limited to that which is necessary to investigate and address the concerns raised.

Information used for management reporting, service evaluation or statistical analysis is anonymised wherever possible.

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