

Confidentiality within the Chaplaincy

Students and staff should expect that personal information about them will be treated confidentially by Chaplains and Chaplaincy staff.

1. 'Strict' confidentiality

- a. The default position within the Chaplaincy is one of strict confidentiality.
- b. 'Strict' (as opposed to 'shared') confidentiality requires that the colleague to whom a piece of information has been disclosed seek the permission of the student each and every time that information is passed on to another colleague, before it is passed.
- c. Students who wish to disclose information on the understanding that it be treated as strictly confidential should be aware that there are nonetheless certain types of information which we are simply unable to keep strictly confidential (for example, details of involvement or suspected involvement in criminal activity or information suggesting a real and imminent danger to life). They should also be aware that for certain kinds of University processes to operate effectively in their favour, notably Mitigating Circumstances pre-Boards, the student is required to give permission for that information to be shared with colleagues if they wish their application to be considered.

2. 'Shared' confidentiality

- a. Chaplains may seek permission from a student or staff member to acknowledge that there may be other times sharing information may be helpful for the individual concerned. Even here, information about students and staff will only be passed between colleagues within the Chaplaincy or the University when there is a well-founded need to know on the part of the colleague to whom the information is being passed.
- b. This is known as 'shared confidentiality'; in other words, confidential information may be shared between colleagues when and only when the colleague to whom the information is being passed has a well-founded need to know that information in order to properly discharge their professional duties.

3. Supervision

- a. The only exception to the policy set out above is for temporary members of staff or placement students and ministers. In these cases, all confidential information may be shared between the placement student or temporary member of staff and their supervisor to ensure effective support; learning opportunities and a continuation in the support for the person whose information is shared. The supervisor will then keep this information in strict accordance with this policy document.

4. External Enquiries

- a. The staff at the University of Warwick are unable to give any information about a student either applying for a place at the University or a student currently studying at the University, to a third party. This includes parents, spouses, siblings, friends, fellow students, etc.
- b. This is because UK law (the 1998 Data Protection Act) and University policy prohibit the disclosure of an individual's information. All Universities in the UK follow similar guidelines and are bound by the same legislation.
- c. In certain exceptional circumstances we may, in agreement with the student, communicate with a third party, if the University deems it is in the interests of those concerned.
- d. In an emergency University staff will contact the next of kin (without the student's permission), if it is deemed appropriate. This will normally only be if, for example, medical personnel advise that it is required.
- e. If a person is worried about a student, in an emergency they can contact the University 24-hour Security line: +44 (0)24 7652 2083. Whilst, for the reasons outlined above, the University is unable to confirm the student's identity or attendance at the institution, concerns will be taken seriously and responded to appropriately.

University of Warwick Chaplaincy

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