

## **Wadham College**

### **Student Welfare and Confidentiality Policy**

Version: 2.1

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In general, information relating to the health and welfare of an individual is sensitive personal data; this confidential information can only be disclosed with consent.

The College adheres to the statutory principles of privacy and respect for confidentiality, most recently defined in the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Data Protection Act 2018. Accordingly, information given in confidence by a student to an adviser<sup>1</sup> will not generally be disclosed to others.

Nonetheless, it is not appropriate to give absolute assurances of confidentiality to those who may wish to talk about health or welfare matters. The College endorses the [University's Guidance on Confidentiality in Student Health and Welfare](#)<sup>2</sup>, and the following guidance outlines the College's approach to student welfare and confidentiality, which should be used in conjunction with the University's Policy.

1. The College's duty of care for the welfare of students may make it necessary in certain circumstances for confidential information to be disclosed, but only to officers who need to know such information in order to exercise that care. Advisers will use their professional discretion to assess what information needs to be shared, and with whom.
2. At the outset of any meeting with a student, an adviser will normally explain College's principles on confidentiality and, if relevant, attempt to establish the extent of the confidentiality necessary in the particular case.
3. In cases of uncertainty as to whether information should be passed on, or where advisers wish to consult others without breaching confidence, they may do so by outlining the general circumstances of a case anonymously to another adviser or officer, or professional services.
4. All parties must also respect privacy, including communication by email and in dealings with the press. In the cases of student death, the Student Tragedy Guidance is followed.
5. Whenever possible, consent to disclose any necessary information to other officers will be sought from a student member in writing, and consent to onward disclosure recorded. The adviser will explain why others may need to know, or why it would be helpful for other advisers to be informed and for advisers to discuss the matter; and that such third parties will also be bound by the same principles.
6. If consent is not given, the adviser will explain that, in certain circumstances, some disclosure and consequent action may be necessary because of the duty to protect the student member or others from harm. Examples include circumstances where

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<sup>1</sup> The term 'adviser' is used here to denote anyone whom a student consults for welfare advice in an official capacity, from the College Sub Deans, Tutors, the Welfare Advisor, the Chaplain, the Warden and other College officers. Medical practitioners, clergy and counsellors including those at the University Counselling Service also have their own professional guidelines.

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/media/global/wwwadminoxacuk/localsites/aad/documents/swssbulletin/Guidance\\_on\\_Confidentiality\\_in\\_Student\\_Health\\_and\\_Welfare.pdf](https://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/media/global/wwwadminoxacuk/localsites/aad/documents/swssbulletin/Guidance_on_Confidentiality_in_Student_Health_and_Welfare.pdf)

this or another student member carries a serious infectious medical condition, is thought to be at risk to themselves or others, or may have committed a crime. In matters relating to the misuse of drugs and other banned substances, the Welfare Advisor, Chaplain, College Nurse, and Sub Deans are happy to talk in confidence to any student member. Disclosure will only be made in accordance with the exceptions outlined above. Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed if information concerning the misuse of drugs is disclosed to any other person.