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## **Eckington Parish Council Confidentiality Policy**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this Confidentiality Policy is to lay down the principles that must be observed by all who work within or for Eckington Parish Council including volunteers that have access to personal information.

All employees and Councillors working for Eckington Parish Council are bound by legal duty to protect personal information that they may come into contact with during the course of their work. This is not just a requirement of their contractual responsibilities but also a requirement within the common law duty of confidentiality and the General Data Protection Regulation 2018.

### **This policy applies to:**

- Eckington Parish Councillors
- Eckington Parish Council employees
- Anyone who works for Eckington Parish Council on a voluntary basis

### **1.General Principles**

1.1 During the course of the Councillors term of office and the Employees employment they will have access to and be entrusted with Confidential Information and know-how. In most cases such information will not be stated as confidential. All exchange of data must be treated as confidential through what ever means received unless otherwise indicated.

1.2 Colleagues shall not, during the period of their employment hereunder, except in the proper course of their duties, and shall not at any time and in any circumstances after a Councilor ceases to be a Councilor, the termination of

their employment use or divulge or disclose any Confidential Information or know-how.

1.3 Colleagues are able to share information with their line manager in order to discuss issues and seek advice.

1.4 Colleagues should avoid exchanging personal information or comments (gossip) about individuals with whom they have a professional relationship.

1.5 It is not appropriate to discuss a person's sexual orientation or religious beliefs without the persons consent.

1.6 Colleagues and Councilors should avoid talking about organisations or individuals in social settings and social media. Please refer to social media policy.

1.7 Colleagues will not disclose to anyone, other than their line manager, any information considered sensitive, personal, financial or private without the knowledge or consent of the individual, or an officer, in the case of an organisation unless they deem it to be a safeguarding incident. Please refer to our safeguarding policy.

1.8 Where there is a legal duty of Eckington Parish Council to disclose information, the person whom the confidentiality is owed will be informed that the disclosure has or will be made.

## **2. Access to information**

2.1 Information is confidential to Eckington Parish Council as an organisation and may be passed to colleagues, line managers or trustees to ensure the best quality service for users in line with the policy.

2.2 When photocopying or working on confidential documents, colleagues must ensure they are not seen by people in passing. This also applies to information on computer screens.

### **3 Breach of confidentiality**

3.1 Employees who are dissatisfied with the conduct or actions of their colleagues or Eckington Parish Council should raise this with their line manager using the grievance procedure, if necessary, and not discuss their dissatisfaction outside Eckington Parish Council. Breaches in confidentiality will be treated as a serious matter and where needed will be treated as a disciplinary matter. Please see our Disciplinary Procedure.

3.2 Colleagues accessing unauthorised files or breaching confidentiality may face disciplinary action. Councillors and/or ex-employees breaching confidentiality may face legal action.