STUDENT ADVICE SERVICE

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT

The Student Advice Service is committed to providing all students of Cambridge University with individual support in all areas pertaining to their academic and welfare needs. We are a confidential service – we believe that all students have a right to confidentiality and that offering confidentiality gives students confidence in sharing personal information with us.

The Student Advice Service understands confidentiality to mean that no information regarding a student who has approached the Service shall be given (directly or indirectly) to any third party individual outside the Service, without that student's prior, explicit and informed consent. Confidentiality also includes not confirming that any student has used or is using the Service without the student's consent.

The staff members of the Service will share information about individual students with each other on a regular basis. This will usually occur in weekly reflective practice meetings. When having informal discussions, staff members will ensure that they are speaking privately and that confidentiality is maintained.
Staff members will ensure that all meetings between themselves and students take place in a confidential meeting environment and will ensure to the best of their ability that no inadvertent breaches of confidentiality take place.

CASE RECORDS

Staff members will keep an electronic record of the student's situation, advice offered, and action taken. The student will also be asked to complete a registration form. These details, along with the student's name, college, faculty and other relevant information, will be kept on our confidential student case management system and any accompanying paperwork that cannot be stored electronically or that is required for a staff member to refer to will be locked away in our filing cabinet. Staff members will log off the student case management system when not in use, and the login details will not be shared with anyone.

All records are treated with strict confidentiality in accordance with Data Protection legislation, and Cambridge SU data policies. Records are retained for six years following the student's initial engagement with the Service.

We will generate reports and statistics from all cases and enquiries the Student Advice Service receives – these statistics will be used in written reports on the work of the Service, for research purposes and to identify trends and patterns that may contribute to the Cambridge SU's mission to improve the student experience at the University of Cambridge. Individual students and cases will not be able to be identified from these reports.

For more details about the personal information we collect on our service-users and how we process this information, please read the Student Advice Service Privacy Notice.

Last updated: September 2026

PROCEDURE FOR BREACHING CONFIDENTIALITY

In very rare circumstances, we may feel the need to break confidentiality:

i. Where there appears to be a serious and imminent risk to the student's own or to others' safety;

ii. Where the law requires disclosure for the prevention and detection of terrorism (Terrorism Act 2000) or of money laundering (Drug Trafficking Act 1994)

The Student Advice Service recognises that breaching confidentiality will only be done in extreme cases, and even in these circumstances we would normally seek to speak to the student first before contacting anyone else. If confidentiality is to be breached, at least one other staff member should be informed and asked for their advice. Ultimately it is up to the staff member involved to make the final decision as to whether confidentiality should be breached under the requirements made above.

The breach of confidentiality must be recorded with the following information provided:

i. Name of the student and a brief outline of the situation, specifying the reason that confidentiality is being breached;

ii. Who has been asked for advice before making this decision;

iii. What would be achieved by breaching confidentiality;

iv. To whom confidentiality has been breached.