

Working definition of case confidentiality

As discussed in Safeguarding Team Huddle 31/1/25 - Jenny B, Steffie S, Franklyn R, C'tri, Sammi Searle, Simone Last.

Updated March 2026 to match our emerging practice.

Please note this is a working document and is liable to further evolution.

The Safeguarding Team acknowledges that the current definitions in our Policies and Procedures of the requirement for complainants, witnesses and subjects of complaints are extremely vague.

This causes confusion and distress to people who are genuinely trying to follow the rules, and creates a space where people just have to give their best guess in the moment. It also allows people who disagree with the spirit of the rules space to bend them without a clear boundary.

We agreed on these working definitions for BFS's requirements of confidentiality for people involved in complaints cases. We plan to stick by this working definition with the intention to seek experienced advice about it then write it into our updated policies, including sharing it with the Membership once it is settled.

Requests for clarification, feedback or questions welcome to safeguarding@beltane.org

While a case is being investigated confidentiality means

- Not telling people that you are involved in an open safeguarding case
- Being discreet about what happened when talking to other community members. It's your life and your experience, so we aren't asking for a vow of silence, but community gossip and outrage make cases much harder to investigate and ultimately less likely to reach the right outcome.
 - By "discreet" we mean sharing carefully and in limited contexts. This may include talking with a small number of trusted people for support, but avoiding wider discussion, speculation, or sharing identifying details in community spaces (including rehearsals, events, group chats, or social media).
- You may have a "confidentiality bubble" of a few trusted friends you can talk freely about the case with and seek support from, but please let us know who this is and ask them to be very discreet too.

The reasoning for this is so that the Safeguarding Team's investigation isn't compromised by second-hand information or community gossip. It also prevents well-meaning community members who only know half of the story from trying to fix it themselves.

After a case is closed, or after you have sent us a Note of Concern with no further investigation confidentiality means

- You can tell people about your personal experience
- You can tell people that you made a complaint or went through a resolutions process
- Please don't share things you learned as part of the complaints process or from reading the Outcome Report

- Please be discreet about sharing the outcome of the complaint.

The reasoning for this is that It's fine to say "XXX was asked to leave the Society" but BFS Safeguarding isn't a court so even when we've made the best judgement we can, it doesn't prove anything. Either yourself or us could be accused of slander if we advertise that (e.g.) "XXX was kicked out for stealing money".