

BURE PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY



Learning, Caring, Growing, Sharing

Role	Name	Signature	Date
Co-Ordinator	Yvonne Hewson		
Headteacher	Yvonne Hewson		
Governor	Clare Merendidis		

Next Review	June 2023
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Bure Park Primary School's policy on Confidentiality exists in conjunction with the school's other policies, including our Child Protection and Safeguarding policy; Relationships and Sex Education (RSE); Anti-bullying; Intimate Care; Allegations against staff and volunteers; but also with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) policies and procedures. The safety and wellbeing of all pupils in the school is paramount in any sharing of information between professionals or decisions that staff make regarding confidentiality.

This policy will allow all members of the community to feel supported, safe and comfortable in discussing personal issues and concerns and know that such information will be handled with respect. It is in place to protect the child at all times and give staff unambiguous, clear guidance as to their legal and professional duties, plus ensure good practice throughout the school which is understood by pupils, parents/carers and staff.

Sensitive information will be shared on a strictly need to know basis. However, there are some rare occasions when we do have to share some information if it is in the best interests of the child's safety and well being, and a child's parents or guardians would normally be informed of this if it is deemed safe to share, and in the child's best interests.

Definition:

Confidential, in this policy, is understood as "something which is spoken or given in confidence; private, entrusted with another's secret affairs." The school aims to strike a balance between establishing an atmosphere of trust and ensuring the safety of everyone in its community. It is for this reason that only limited confidentiality can be offered and that this must be made clear at the start of any conversation broaching confidential issues. This principle applies to all members of the school community: teachers, support staff and external visitors involved with pupils. Where a need arises when it is in the best interests to share information, pupils will be informed when and why a confidence has been broken, and will be encouraged to do this for themselves where possible and dependent upon the age or maturity of the pupil.

Objectives:

1. To provide a consistent approach in school about handling confidential information.
2. To foster an ethos of trust within the school.
3. To ensure that staff, parents and pupils are aware of the school's confidentiality policy and procedures, and adhere to it.
4. To reassure pupils that their best interests will be maintained.
5. To encourage children to talk to trusted adults about any concerns.
6. To ensure that pupils and parents/carers know that school staff cannot offer unconditional confidentiality where there is a safeguarding concern.
7. To ensure that there is equality of provision and access for all including rigorous monitoring of cultural, gender and special educational needs.
8. To ensure that if there are child protection issues then the correct procedure is followed.
9. To ensure that all staff understand the importance of confidentiality and are regularly trained in applying this policy.
10. To understand that health professionals are bound by a different code of conduct.
11. To ensure that parents/carers with parental responsibility have a right of access to any records the school may hold on their child, unless there is an open safeguarding issue in which it could compromise a child's safety

Guidelines

1. All information about individual children is private and should only be shared with those staff who have a legitimate reason to have access to it.
2. All social services, medical and personal information about a child should be held in a safe and secure place which cannot be accessed by individuals other than key school staff.

3. The school continues to actively promote a positive ethos and respect for the individual:
 - a. There is clear guidance for the handling of child protection incidents.
 - b. There is clear guidance for procedures if a member of staff is accused of abuse.
 - c. Staff are aware that effective relationship and sex education which brings an understanding of what is and is not acceptable in a relationship, can lead to disclosure of a child protection issue.
 - d. Staff are aware of the need to handle all issues about families in a sensitive manner.
 - e. Any intolerance about gender, faith, race, culture or sexuality is unacceptable.
 - f. Information collected for one purpose should not be used for another.
 4. Parents/carers and children need to be aware that the school cannot guarantee total confidentiality and the school has a legal and moral duty to report child protection issues.
 5. The school prides itself on good communication with parents and carers and staff are always available to talk to both children and parents/carers about issues that are causing concern. The school encourages children to talk to parents/carers about issues causing them concern and may in some cases support the children to talk to their parents. The school would share, where appropriate, with parents any child protection disclosure before going on to inform the correct authorities.
 6. Parents/carers and children should feel reassured that only in exceptional circumstances confidentiality will be broken.
 7. All children have a right to the same level of confidentiality irrespective of gender, race, religion, medical concerns and special educational needs. A lot of data is generated in schools, **such as personal details, photos, academic, medical and social data, and as such is anonymised.**
 8. Photographs of children should not be used without parents/carers permission especially in the press and internet. The school gives clear guidance to parents, **via messages home, parental permission slips from newsletters, notices in the reception area and at live performances/public events** about the use of phones, cameras and video whilst on school premises. **The school will take appropriate steps to address any complaints relating to a violation of this data or where parents post this data.**
 9. Information about children will be shared with parents/carers but only about their child. Parents should not have access to any other child's attainment information. However, this information will be shared with the receiving school when they change school. All personal information about children including social services records should be regarded as confidential. It should be clearly understood by those who have access to it, and whether those concerned have access to all, or only some of the information. Information regarding health reports such as speech therapy, medical reports, SEND reports, SEND minutes of meetings and social services minutes of meetings and reports will be **accessed by those who have a legitimate reason to do so, as deemed appropriate by the Headteacher and/or SENDCo**, should be returned for secure filing.
- Logs of administration of medication to children should be kept secure and each child should have their own individual log.
- In all other notes, briefing sheets etc a child should not be able to be identified. Addresses and telephone numbers of parents and children will not be passed on except in exceptional circumstances or to a receiving school.
10. Governors need to be mindful that from time to time issues are discussed or brought to their attention about staff and children. All such papers should be marked as confidential. These confidential papers should be destroyed. Governors must observe complete confidentiality when asked to do so by the governing body. **Governors receive regular training in GDPR. A Complaint process will be put in place in the event that a complaint is brought against a governor.**

Types of confidential information

Information that is regarded as confidential can relate to:

1. A variety of people e.g.

- pupils
- parents/carers
- staff
- governors
- volunteers
- job applicants.

2. A variety of matters, e.g.

- home addresses & telephone numbers
- conduct and performance
- performance & development review/performance management
- health/medical;
- pay and contracts;
- references;
- internal minutes, memos etc.
- confidential budgetary or policy information
- other personal information.

These lists are not exhaustive but will extend to cover any other information of a sensitive nature relating to employees, pupils and others connected with, and to the work of, the school itself.

Confidential information can take various forms and be held and transmitted in a variety of ways, e.g.

- manual records (files)
- CPOMS electronic safeguarding records
- computerised records
- written reports/minutes/agendas/file notes etc.
- letters, memos, messages
- telephone calls
- face-to-face
- Email
- Intranet/internet.

Disclosures:

The school is aware that issues of confidentiality can arise at any time, and it is important that we have clear guidelines in order for staff to make the parameters of confidentiality clear, particularly in cases of sensitive information disclosure. Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed by the school or its staff (please refer to our 'Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy')

If a pupil discloses information which is sensitive, and which the pupil asks not to be passed on, the request should be honoured unless this is unavoidable for teachers to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities

Varying contexts of confidentiality:**In the classroom:**

In the course of a lesson given by a member of teaching staff or an outside visitor, including health professionals. Lessons follow the RSE policy guidelines on respect and establishing ground rules and setting boundaries for the disclosure of sensitive information. When a health professional is contributing to a school 'health education programme' in a school setting, s/he is working with the same boundaries of confidentiality as a teacher.

One to one disclosures to members of school staff, including voluntary staff:

All staff know the boundaries of confidentiality and further procedures upon disclosure. They encourage pupils to discuss difficult issues with their parents or carers, and vice versa. However, the needs of the pupil are paramount and school staff will not automatically share information about the pupil with his/her parents/carers unless it is considered to be in the child's best interests.

The legal position of staff:

No pupils should have the expectation that any member of teaching, nonteaching or voluntary staff can promise confidentiality, as the well-being and protection of any child is paramount in decisions relating to confidentiality. Whilst staff are under no obligation to break confidentiality in cases not pertaining to child protection, staff are encouraged to share information with the DSL in order to ensure safety.

Visitors and non-teaching staff:

All such staff are expected to report any disclosures from pupils or parents/carers to the DSL on site.

Complex cases:

Where there are areas of doubt about the sharing of information, seek a consultation with Oxfordshire Children's Safeguards Service Child Protection Co-ordinator.

Links to other school policies and procedures:**This policy is intended to be used in conjunction with our other policies:**

Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy

Support for Staff & referral

Bure Park is aware of the need to offer support or supervision to staff in dealing with pupils' safeguarding. In all cases where child protection is not an issue, the member of staff should refer to the SENDCO or Headteacher, who will be able to offer internal support, or refer students on for counselling or external agency support as necessary.