



Confidentiality  
Policy  
September 2016

# CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

## 1. Introduction

This policy reflects the values and philosophy of Bury School in relation to issues regarding confidentiality. It will be shared with all interested parties both in the school and in the wider community and will apply to all staff, visitors and volunteers to the school except where they are working explicitly under their own professional guidelines. The school will only in exceptional circumstances handle information without parental knowledge.

## 2. School Ethos

The school staff, governors, parents and most importantly, children, work together to create a caring and friendly atmosphere. We believe that this active partnership is vital to the life and work of the school. We are a school where we are all learning and it is safe to make mistakes and take controlled risks. Mistakes are forgiven, and seen as opportunities for improvement. This positive approach to school life spans all areas of the curriculum and all school activities.

## 3. Aims of the school

The broad aims of the school are:

- to enable the child to realise his/her potential through the acquisition and development of the necessary skills, concepts and knowledge
- to foster the intellectual, physical, aesthetic, spiritual, emotional, moral and social development of each child
- to provide an ordered, stimulating environment, which is meaningful in the context of children's experience
- to foster kindness and understanding between children and their peers in relation to differences of any kind – cultural, physical or intellectual
- to enrich experiences with the variety of culture, linguistic and social backgrounds within our school and its neighbouring community
- to foster good manners, self-discipline and awareness of the needs of others.

## 4. Aims of the Policy

To protect the child at all times and to give all staff involved clear, unambiguous guidance as to their legal and professional roles and to ensure good practice throughout the school which is understood by pupils, parents/carers and staff.

We wish to create an atmosphere where pupils feel able to speak to staff. In order to support staff, pupils, visitors and volunteers it is important to have a clear and explicit policy on confidentiality so that all parties involved are aware of the boundaries and legal frameworks to which they have to adhere. The school at all times puts the safety and welfare of the child first and any issue will be referred to the school's Designated Senior Person for Child Protection (DSP) if necessary. This policy is in effect for all situations inside and outside of the classroom.

## 5. Objectives:

- To provide consistent messages in school about handling information about children once it has been received.
- To foster an ethos of trust within the school.
- To ensure that staff, parents and pupils are aware of the school's confidentiality policy and procedures.
- To encourage children to be aware of confidentiality issues relating to their peers.
- To reassure pupils that their best interests will be maintained.
- To encourage children to talk to their parents and carers.
- To ensure that pupils and parents/carers know that school staff cannot offer unconditional confidentiality.
- To ensure that parents have a right of access to any records the school may hold on their child but not to any other child that they do not have parental responsibility for.

## 6. Definition of Confidentiality

For the purpose of this policy the following definition of confidentiality will apply:

*'Discretion in keeping private information'*

## 7. Guidelines

1. All information about individual children is private and should only be shared with those staff that have a need to know.
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 school staff.
3. The school prides itself on good communication with parents and carers and staff are 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.

4. 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 by these categories but individual children should not be able to be identified.
5. Confidentiality is a whole school issue. Clear ground rules must be set for any classroom work such as circle time and other PHSCE session dealing with sensitive issues such as sex and relationships and drugs.
6. All matters are dealt with according to the school's procedures. It is important that:
  - Staff do not discuss details of individual cases arising in staff meetings to any person without direct professional connection to and interest in the welfare and education of the individual concerned.
  - No member of staff discusses an individual child's behaviour in the presence of another child in school.
  - Staff do not enter into detailed discussion about a child's behaviour with other children or the parents of the other children.
  - Governors, in particular those sitting on Discipline Committees, do not divulge details about individuals (be they staff, families or individual children) to any person outside of the meeting.
  - Parents in school, working as volunteers do not report cases of poor behaviour or pupil discipline to other parents in the school. This allows teachers to deal with such matters in line with school policy.
  - At full Governing Body meetings matters such as pupil exclusion, personnel issues and personal details of any member of the school community will be dealt with as a confidential minute. This is not for the knowledge of persons outside the Governing Body meeting. Confidential minutes are kept separately and are not made public.
  - Staff Performance Management will be carried out privately. Targets for individuals, named lesson observation sheets and other performance data will be in the Headteacher's office.
  - Matters of Child Protection are made known to staff on a need to know basis.
  - It is important that class teachers and support staff are aware of some confidential matters in order to support individuals. These staff will respect the sensitivity of such cases and not divulge information to people unconnected professionally with the individual concerned.
  - When volunteers, such as parents and friends of the school are working in classes, they do not discuss educational matters outside the classroom. For example the specific use of teaching assistant time for particular pupils or groups of pupils, teaching assistants have different roles within a class, including the support of children with special educational needs, the provision and work with these children is for the teacher to discuss with the relevant parents or carers.
  - Volunteers and students are asked to sign the Guidance for Volunteers and Helpers before working in school.
  - Staff should be aware of children with medical needs. This information should be accessible to staff who need it but not on general view to other parents/carers and children.
  - Photographs of children should not be used without parents/carers permission especially in the press and internet. This is often a cultural issue of which the school needs to be aware. At no time should the child's name be used with a photograph so that they can be identified. The school gives clear guidance to parents about the use of cameras and videos during public school events, eg, we remind parents that it is not acceptable to upload photographs or video clips of your child which include other children, onto social networking sites such as Facebook without the permission of their parents.
  - Information about children will be shared with parents but only about their child. However parents should be aware that information about their child 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, SEN reports, SEN minutes of meetings and social services minutes of meetings and reports will be circulated in envelopes and once read should be returned for secure filing.
  - Logs of administration of medication to children should be kept secure.
  - Addresses and telephone numbers of parents and children will not be passed on except in exceptional circumstances or to a receiving school.

## **8. Governors and Other Professionals**

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 and these confidential papers should be collected and destroyed. Governors must observe complete confidentiality when asked to do so by the Governing Body, especially in relation to matters concerning individual staff, pupils or parents. Although decisions reached at Governors' meetings are normally made public through the minutes or otherwise, the discussions on which decisions are based should be

regarded as confidential. Governors should exercise the highest degree of prudence when discussion of potentially contentious issues arises outside the Governing Body.

Health professionals are bound by their professional codes of conduct to maintain confidentiality when working in a one to one situation. When working in a classroom, they are bound by relevant school policies. In line with best practice guidance, like other school staff, they will seek to protect privacy and prevent inappropriate personal disclosures in a classroom setting, by negotiating ground rules and using distancing techniques.

### **9. Monitoring and Evaluation**

This policy will be the subject of ongoing review by the Senior Leadership Team and Governors.

To assist with the monitoring process, the following should be considered:

- whether appropriate procedures are being consistently adhered to
- the means by which the policy is being regularly communicated to all members of the school community, especially new and non-teaching staff, and is regularly and openly publicised
- whether the policy continues to comply with all statutory requirements
- to what extent the policy evolves in the light of emergent good practice elsewhere.

### **10. Arrangements for Review of this Policy**

This policy will be reviewed every three years.

Policy reviewed and approved on 28-09-2016