



# Bluebell Park School Confidentiality Policy

**Approved by Governors .....**

**Signed ..... Date... Nov 2021**

**Due for renewal .....**

**Committee .....Stakeholders.....**



## **Bluebell Park**

### **Confidentiality Policy**

At Bluebell Park we believe that:

The safety, well-being and protection of our pupils are the paramount consideration in all decisions staff at Bluebell Park make about confidentiality. The appropriate sharing of information between the staff is an essential element in ensuring our pupils well-being and safety.

It is an essential part of our ethos that trust is established to enable pupils, staff and parents/carers to seek help both within and outside Bluebell Park in order to minimise the number of situations when personal information is shared to ensure pupils and staff are supported and safe.

Pupils, parents/carers and staff need to know the boundaries of confidentiality in order to feel safe and comfortable discussing personal issues and concerns, including sex and relationships.

The attitude to confidentiality at Bluebell Park is easily understood and everyone should be able to trust the boundaries of confidentiality operating within the school.

Issues concerning personal information including sex and relationships and other personal matters can arise at any time.

Everyone in our community needs to know that no-one can offer absolute confidentiality.

Everyone in our community needs to know the limits of confidentiality that can be offered by individuals so they can make informed decisions about the most appropriate person to talk to about any health, sex and relationship or other personal issues they want to discuss.

#### **POLICY DEVELOPMENT**

The final policy was agreed by the leadership team and the school's governing body, and has been widely disseminated to staff, pupils, parents/carers and partner agencies. The policy is disseminated to all new staff joining the school.

#### **DEFINITION OF CONFIDENTIALITY**

Confidentiality is defined as 'something which is spoken or given in private, entrusted with another's secret affairs'. The confider is asking for the content of the conversation to be kept secret. Anyone offering absolute confidentiality to someone else would be offering to keep the content of his or her conversation completely secret and discuss it with no-one.



In practise there are few circumstances where absolute confidentiality is offered at Bluebell Park. We strive to strike a balance between ensuring the safety, well-being and protection of our pupils and staff, ensuring there is an ethos of trust where pupils and staff can ask for help when they need it and ensuring that when it is essential to share personal information, child protection issues and good practice are followed. This means that in most cases what is offered is limited confidentiality. Disclosure of the content of a conversation could be discussed with professional colleagues, but the confider would not be identified except in certain circumstances.

Staff should make it clear that there are limits to confidentiality at the beginning of the conversation. These limits relate to ensuring children's safety and well-being. The pupil will be informed when a confidence has to be broken for this reason and be involved in the information sharing.

Different levels of confidentiality are appropriate for different circumstances:

## 1. In the classroom in the course of a lesson

Given by a member of teaching staff or an outside visitor including health professionals. Careful thought needs to be given to the content of the lesson setting the climate and establishing ground rules to ensure confidential disclosures are not made. When a health professional is contributing to a pupil's needs, they are working with the same boundaries of confidentiality as a teacher or Teaching Assistant.

## 2. One-to-one disclosures to members of school staff

It is essential all members of staff know the limits of the confidentiality they can offer to both pupils and parents and carers and any required actions and sources of further support or help available both for the pupil or parent/carer, within the school and from other agencies where appropriate. All staff at Bluebell Park encourage pupils to discuss different issues with their parents or carers and vice versa. However, the needs of the pupil are paramount and the staff will not automatically share information about the pupil with his/her parents unless it is considered to be in the child's best interests.

## 3. Disclosures to a school nurse or health professional operating within the school

Health professionals such as school nurses can give confidential medical advice to pupils provided they are competent to do so and follow the Fraser Guidelines (guidelines for doctors and other health professionals on giving medical advice to under 16's). School nurses are skilled in discussing issues and possible actions with young people and always have in mind the need to encourage pupils to discuss issues with their parents or carers.

## THE LEGAL POSITION FOR SCHOOL STAFF



# Bluebell Park School



All school staff should not promise confidentiality. Pupils do not have the right to expect they will not be reported to their parents or carers and may not, in the absence of an explicit promise, assume that information conveyed outside that context is private. No member of Bluebell Park staff can or should give such a promise.

The safety, well-being and protection of the child is the paramount consideration in all decisions staff at this school make about confidentiality.

School staff are not obliged to break confidentiality except where child protection is or may be an issue, however at Bluebell Park, we believe it is important staff are able to share their concerns about pupils' safety and well-being is maintained.

## Teachers, Teaching Assistants and Health Professionals

Professional judgement is required by a teacher, Teaching Assistant and health professional in considering whether he or she should indicate to a child that the child could make a disclosure in confidence and whether such a confidence could then be maintained having heard the information. In exercising their professional judgement the teacher, teaching assistant or health professional must consider the best interests of the child, including the need to both ensure trust to provide safeguards for our children and possible child protection issues.

All teachers and teaching assistants at this school receive basic training in child protection and are expected to follow the school's safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures.

## Visitors/volunteers and student placements

At Bluebell Park, we expect all visitors/volunteers and student placements to report any disclosures by pupils or parents/carers of a concerning nature to the designated Child Protection/Safeguarding Officers as soon as possible after the disclosure and in an appropriate setting, so others cannot over hear. The designated Child Protection/Safeguarding co-ordinator will decide what, if any, further action needs to be taken.

## Parents/carers

Bluebell Park believes that it is essential to work in partnership with parents and carers and we endeavour to keep parents/carers abreast of their child's progress at school, including any concerns about their progress or behaviour.

However, we also need to maintain a balance so that our pupils can share any concerns and ask for help when they need it. Where a pupil does discuss a difficult personal issue with staff, they will be encouraged to also discuss the matter with their parents or carers and may be supported to do so where it is appropriate.

The safety, well-being and protection of our pupils is the paramount consideration in all decisions staff at Bluebell park make about confidentiality.

## COMPLEX CASES

Where there are areas of doubt about the sharing of information, Bluebell park will consult with the local area Safeguarding Board.



# Bluebell Park School



Bluebell Park Child Protection/Safeguarding Officers/ Designated Teachers are Michelle Slater, Teri-Ann Steele, Jamie Campbell.

## SUPPORT FOR STAFF

Staff may have support needs themselves in dealing with some of the personal issues of our pupils. At Bluebell Park, we prefer staff to ask for help rather than possibly making a poor decision because they don't have all the facts or the necessary training, or take worries about pupils home with them.

Staff should discuss any concerns with AHT's, Deputy Headteacher or Headteacher.

## LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES

This policy has links with the following school policies:

Safeguarding/Child Protection

PHSE

RSHE: Sex and Relationships

Bullying

Whistleblowing

## DISSEMINATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

This policy has been distributed to all staff. A copy of the policy can always be found with the headteacher. All new staff will receive a copy of the policy when they join the school.

## REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed annually and amended as necessary.

Review November 2021.