



**BELMONT  
ACADEMY**



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## Confidentiality Policy

<b>Responsible post holder</b>	Headteacher
<b>Approved by</b>	Governing Body
<b>Reviewed</b>	September 2020
<b>Reviewed</b>	September 2021

### **Introduction**

This policy was prepared following consultation with school staff, governors and pupils

## **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 and the conversation to be kept secret. Anyone offering absolute confidentiality to someone else would be offering to keep the content of his/her conversation completely secret and discuss it with no one.

In practice there are few circumstances where absolute confidentiality is offered in our school. We strive to keep a balance between ensuring the safety, wellbeing and protection of our pupils and staff. It is, however, essential that our school community gives due regard to confidentiality regarding school matters.

## **Objectives**

- For all members of staff working on the school site to be clear about the levels of confidentiality that they can offer to the school community and expect themselves.
- For each adult member of the school's community to understand the varying levels of confidentiality which might be offered in different circumstances, eg teacher to teacher, teacher to adult.
- For each child to be able to talk to an adult, with confidence, knowing that his/her problem will be respected.
- For each child to know that the adult will do everything in their power to keep that child out of danger and that this may involve outside agencies.

## **Policy into Practice**

### **This policy refers to:**

- All teaching and support staff employed by the school.
- All visiting staff working with young people on the school site during the school day.
- All volunteers including governors/parent helpers working on the school site or assisting with school trips and school journeys.

## **Training**

This will be done through:

- INSET
- Induction of new staff/volunteers

## **All school staff members: confidentiality and pupils**

We recognise that there are occasions when pupils are worried about something and feel that they cannot talk about it to their parents/carers. This can result in enormous stress for the individual, which impacts on their education and health. Some pupils may feel that they can turn to teachers and other staff members for support and we want to be as helpful as we can, whilst recognising that they may be some potential difficulties in being supportive.

*You should adhere to the following policy:*

When talking with pupils, it is important for you to be aware of maintaining your professional boundaries.

You must be clear to pupils that you cannot offer unconditional confidentiality when a pupil first begins to talk about something where confidentiality may become an issue.

Pupils should be warned that, if there is a safeguarding issue where the pupil (or others) is likely to be at risk of significant harm, you are under a duty a member of the Designated Safeguarding Officer who is the Headteacher, Miss Childs or in her absence other members of the DSL team who are Mr Lynch (Deputy Head), Mrs Law (Assistant Headteacher) or Mrs Knight (School Counsellor) who may have to involve other agencies. It is important that each member of staff deals with this sensitively and explains to the pupil that they must inform the appropriate people who can help the child, but that they will only tell those who need to know in order to help.

In all cases where you feel that you have to break confidentiality with the pupil, you must inform the pupil (unless there is a good reason not to inform them, eg risk of harm) and reassure them that their best interests will be maintained.

In talking with pupils, you need to encourage them to talk to their parents/carers about the issue that may be troubling them and support in doing this should be offered where appropriate.

Appendix 3 is an agreement between the Governing Body and every member of the school community not to use any information outside the school and to share relevant information with other agencies in a safeguarding situation.

### **Parents/Carers and Families**

We recognise that sometimes there may be family issues, which may affect a pupil and which the family will only disclose to us if they can be sure the information will be treated confidentially. We will respect the wishes of the family and where it is felt necessary to share the information given to us, this will be discussed with the parents/carers first, unless a pupil is considered to be at immediate risk and/or there is an overriding safeguarding concern.

### **Staff and Governors**

All staff can normally expect that their personal situations and health will remain confidential unless:

- It impinges on their terms of contract or
- Endangers pupils or other members of staff or
- There is a legal obligation to disclose such information or
- It is necessary for legal proceedings or
- Despite the duty of confidence, the staff member's interest or the wider public interest justifies disclosure.

### **Confidentiality and Visitors**

A 'visitor' in this context is any person who works in school, either in a paid or in a voluntary capacity. There may be occasions when a visitor becomes privy to information regarding pupils, parents, staff or procedures which is confidential.

Appendix 3 is an agreement between the Governing Body and every member of the school community not to use any information outside the school and to share relevant information with other agencies in a safeguarding situation.

## **Linked Policies**

The following policies are linked and supported by the Confidentiality Policy:

- Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Trust Code of Conduct

## **Dissemination**

This policy is publicised to all in the school community through:

- Access to the school policy file
- Training and induction
- Occasional assemblies/circle time discussions as appropriate
- Staff Handbook

## **Statement for Parents and Carers Concerning Confidentiality and Pupils**

There is increasing national concern for the emotional health and well-being of young people growing up in today's society. We recognise that parents and carers want to do all they can to support their child, but even in the most supportive of relationships, where there is excellent communication between parent/carer and child, there can be occasions when they are worried about something and feel that they cannot talk about it with you.

This may result in enormous stress for the pupil, which can impact on their education, health and behaviour.

Whilst we recognise that parents and carers will naturally be disappointed if their child does not choose to talk with you about what is troubling them, we feel there could be even more distress if the pupil is unable to cope with the issue themselves. On this basis we have agreed the following:

### ***School staff***

Our staff will be supportive to pupils who approach them with concerns, but will make it clear that they cannot offer confidentiality to the pupil on anything that involves an illegal activity or anything that is a potential child protection issue where the pupil or others are likely to be at risk of significant harm.

The Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher/Assistant Headteacher will liaise with parents/carers as appropriate in cases where a staff member has reported an issue over which they cannot offer confidentiality.

Staff will support pupils to inform their parents/carers about issues that are troubling them as appropriate.

## **Statement for Pupils Concerning Confidentiality**

We understand that there may be times when there are things which may be worrying you, but you can't talk about them with your family. Teachers and other members of school staff will do all we can to help you, but need to know the following:

- If you really want to talk to someone confidentially (without anyone else knowing you have said, you can speak to any adult that you trust and know). This will most likely be your class teacher or your teaching assistant. The Head Teacher, Deputy Head Teacher and Assistant Head Teacher are always happy to listen to you and hear your worries.
- The teachers and other members of staff in the school will often be able to help you with many of the things that may be worrying you, but they cannot promise to keep everything to themselves. For example, if you tell them about some things like stealing, they will have to speak to the Head Teacher and Deputy Head Teacher who might then have to speak to your parents.
- If the staff member feels that they have to tell someone else what you have talked about, they will normally tell you first and help you sort it out, perhaps helping you to speak to your parents/carers if you want this.
- Very rarely there are things which you talk about that can be very dangerous for you or for other young people, eg someone trying to harm you. The staff member may have to tell someone else about what you have said, but they will normally tell you first and always help you to sort things out.

