



## **Our Christian Values**

God teaches us to forgive and always accept forgiveness

We receive the Christian way of life as a gift from God

We believe and trust in God who loves each one of us

We are all unique children of God

Whatever you wish that men would do to you do to them

We are all equally precious and loved by God

# **CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY**

## **Rationale**

At Burham CE Primary school we believe that:

- The safety, well-being and protection of our pupils are the paramount consideration in all decisions staff at this school make about confidentiality. The appropriate sharing of information between school staff is an essential element in ensuring our pupils well-being and safety
- It is an essential part of the ethos of the school that trust is established to enable pupils, staff and parents/carers to seek help both within and outside the school in order to minimize 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 school's attitude to confidentiality 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 the school community needs to know that no-one can offer absolute confidentiality.
- Everyone in the school community needs to know the limits of confidentiality that can be offered by individuals within the school community so that they can make informed decisions about the most appropriate person to talk to about health, sex and relationship or other personal issue they want to discuss.

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

In practice there are few circumstances where absolute confidentiality is offered in our school. 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 what is offered in most cases 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.

### 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/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 this school encourage pupils to discuss different issues with their parents or carers and vice versa. However the needs of the pupil are paramount and the school 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.

### Disclosures to a Counsellor, School Nurse or Health Professional operating a Confidential Service in the School.

Health professionals such as school nurse 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 16s). 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. However, the needs of the pupil are paramount and the school nurse will not insist that a pupil's parent or carers are informed about any advice or treatment they give.

### **The Legal Position for School Staff**

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 this school's 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 a child protection is or may be an issue, however at Burham CE Primary school we believe it is important staff are able to share their concerns about pupil's safety and well-being is maintained.

### Teachers, Consellers and Health Professionals

Professional judgement is required by a teacher, counsellor or 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, counselor 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 at this school receive annual training in child protection and as part of their induction to this school and are expected to follow the school's child protection policy and procedures.

#### Visitors and Non-Teaching Staff

At Burham CE Primary school we expect all non-teaching staff to report any disclosures by pupils or parents/carers of a concerning nature to the designated Safeguarding Lead (the Headteacher) as soon as possible after the disclosure and in an appropriate setting, so others cannot over hear. The designated child protection coordinator will decide what, if any, further action needs to be taken.

#### Parents/Carers

Burham CE Primary school 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 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 at Burham CE Primary school, 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 this school make about confidentiality.**

#### Support for Staff

Staff may have support needs themselves in dealing with some of the personal issues of our pupils. At Burham CE Primary school we prefer staff to ask for help rather than possibly make a poor decision because you don't have all the facts or the necessary training, or taking worries about pupils home with you.

Staff should discuss any concern with the Headteacher.

### **Links with Other Policies**

This policy has links with the following school policies:

- Child Protection
- PSHE
- Sex & Relationships
- Drug Education
- Anti-Bullying
- Safeguarding
- Behaviour
- Whistle-Blowing
- Looked after Children

### **Dissemination and Implementation**

A copy of the policy can always be found in the office, the Headteacher's room and staff room.

### **Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually and amended as necessary

Date of this Policy: January 2008

Updated: January 2012

Reviewed: March 2014

May 2015

Reviewed April 2017

September 2018