Belmont Community Primary School

Confidentiality Policy

2026/27

Review: Every three years, or sooner if legislation or guidance changes

This policy should be read alongside the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, the Data Protection Policy, the IT Security and Cyber Security Policy, the Staff Code of Conduct, the Whistleblowing Policy, the Governors' Code of Conduct and the Equality Policy.

1. Purpose and Scope

This policy provides guidance and information on confidentiality procedures in the school for staff, volunteers, visitors, pupils, parents/carers and governors.

2. Moral and Values Framework

The Confidentiality Policy reflects the school ethos and demonstrates and encourages the following values:

- respect for self;
- respect for others;
- responsibility for their own actions;
- responsibility for their family, friends, school and the wider community.

3. Policy Statement

The school operates in a way that respects every individual's and family's right to privacy. All staff, volunteers, governors and visitors are therefore expected to work within the guidelines of this policy. In practice this means:

- making it clear that gossip is discouraged;
- keeping personal records of behaviour confidential;
- not discussing pupil, family or staff personal matters in a general way;
- using teaching methods which protect confidentiality;
- always encouraging pupils to talk to their parents/carers about any anxieties they may have, while at the same time offering support for individuals and families from staff specialising in pastoral care.

4. Personal Disclosures and Safeguarding

Pupils will be made aware that some information cannot be held confidentially and will be helped to understand that if certain disclosures are made, certain actions must be taken. Any action that is taken as a result of a disclosure will always consider the best interests of the child first and foremost. At the same time, pupils will be offered sensitive and appropriate support.

The procedures in the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed by all adults when a child makes a disclosure or there is a suspicion of possible abuse. No adult may promise a child absolute confidentiality. If an adult receives information from any source that leads them to believe there is a safeguarding concern, they must pass it to the Designated Safeguarding Lead straight away.

Data protection law does not prevent the sharing of information for the purpose of keeping children safe. Concerns about a child's safety must never be withheld because of confidentiality.

5. Confidentiality in the Classroom

All teaching will be done in a way that re-affirms respect for everyone in the school and those associated with it. The following strategies for maintaining confidentiality in a class situation will be used in this school.

Setting ground rules

Teaching staff will work with pupils to develop rules for lessons and discussions and show why these need to be agreed and respected by everybody, for example:

- no one will have to answer a personal question or disclose any personal details;
- everyone has the right to pass on a question if they want to;
- no one will be forced to take part in a discussion;
- everyone has the right to be listened to and have their views respected;
- no teasing or bullying of any kind.

Depersonalising discussions

Teaching staff will protect pupils' privacy in the class by depersonalising discussions. Pupils can explore the issues being raised without having their personal lives or those of their families implicated or invaded and used inappropriately by other pupils.

All staff must remain aware of their terms of employment and that they cannot promise children absolute confidentiality.

6. Other Professionals Working in School

Pupils may come into contact with a number of other professionals within the school. The involvement of these professionals raises a number of confidentiality issues.

Maintaining confidentiality in a classroom

Other professionals may need some support in working with groups in a way that protects confidentiality. In a one-to-one setting it is good practice for other professionals to talk to a child personally, to make sure that their concerns are identified and that they understand the advice they are given. In a classroom setting it is not appropriate to talk directly to individuals about their personal experiences.

Professional codes of conduct

Teachers are bound by their terms of employment and cannot promise pupils absolute confidentiality. Other professionals, when working with individual pupils, are bound by their professional codes of conduct, which give pupils the right to confidentiality, and it would be unreasonable to expect a professional to act outside their professional code within a school setting. Confidentiality in these situations should only be breached in exceptional cases, such as a safeguarding concern, and where possible not without first informing the child.

Professionals working in school are expected to follow the school's safeguarding and data protection procedures and to report any safeguarding concern to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

7. Handling Confidential Information

Confidentiality does not just relate to disclosures of information which could have legal implications, such as abuse. Staff should not handle any confidential information carelessly, as pupils and other members of staff may regard this as the norm and respond in a similar manner if a confidence is passed to them. Personal information about pupils, families and staff is handled in line with the UK General Data Protection Regulation, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the school's Data Protection Policy.

The following measures are in place to ensure that confidential information is dealt with appropriately:

Storage and records

- Paper pupil records are kept in locked storage. Electronic records are held only on school-approved systems, with individual accounts and multi-factor authentication, in line with the IT Security and Cyber Security Policy.
- Information about health, speech and language, special educational needs and similar reports is kept secure, in locked storage or on access-controlled systems, and is shared only with staff who need to know it.
- Pupil records are kept and securely destroyed in line with the school's record retention arrangements.
- When a pupil leaves, their file is forwarded to the new school. Child protection records are transferred separately and securely, from one Designated Safeguarding Lead to the next, as soon as possible and within five days for an in-year transfer.

Sharing information

- All information about pupils, families and staff is strictly confidential and must not be discussed with third parties outside the school.

- Personal pupil information must not be stored in the staffroom or displayed on notice boards, except for health and safety notices about specific children's allergies or medical needs.
- Discussing pupil, family or staff members' personal matters in a general way is discouraged.
- No pupil personal details should be given over the telephone until the validity of the request has been established, for example by a return call.
- No adult should enter into detailed discussion about a child's behaviour or academic progress with other pupils or their parents/carers.
- Information about pupils will be shared with parents/carers, but only about their own child. Parents/carers will not have access to any other child's marks or progress at any time. Information about pupils will be shared with receiving schools if and when they change school.
- Any document containing personal information about a pupil or family that is shared with an outside agency must be sent securely, using encryption or the school's approved secure sharing method. Recipient addresses and attachments must be checked before sending.
- Personal email accounts, personal cloud storage, unapproved messaging services and online tools, including artificial intelligence tools, must not be used to store or share pupil, parent or staff information.
- Staff, volunteers and governors must not post information about pupils, families or colleagues on social media or in messaging groups.

Breaches of confidentiality

Any accidental disclosure, misdirected email or loss of confidential information must be reported immediately to the Headteacher and the Data Protection Officer. Some personal data breaches must be reported to the Information Commissioner's Office within 72 hours, so prompt reporting is essential. Staff who raise concerns about wrongdoing in good faith are protected under the Whistleblowing Policy.

8. Governors

Governors, in particular those sitting on panels or committees that consider pupil discipline, staff matters or complaints, and anyone attending governing body or governance circle meetings, will not divulge details about individuals (staff, families or individual children) to any person outside of the meeting.

Governors need to be mindful that from time to time issues are discussed or brought to their attention about staff and pupils. 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/carers. Confidential papers and minutes must be kept secure and shared only through the Clerk or the school's approved systems, and governors must follow the Governors' Code of Conduct.

9. Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years, and sooner where there is a change in legislation, guidance or the school's arrangements. The Governing Body will consider the effectiveness of the policy as part of its monitoring arrangements.

Approved by the Governing Body at its meeting on	October 2026
Signed	
Review date	October 2029