



How schools handle your child's personal information

A guide to how we process information about your child

Schools hold information on their pupils and from time to time, by law, they have to share some of the information with various government departments. Schools will also share information with other organisations where there is a need to protect a child or someone else from harm.

The Data Protection Act 1998 calls schools, local authorities and other organisations that process children's information 'data controllers'. This means, among other things that the information held about children must only be used for specific purposes allowed by law. Please see our website for further information.

We have set out below:

- what type of information is held about your child
- why this information is held
- some of the organisations that may see it
- what some of the organisations do with the information.

Schools process information on their pupils for the following reasons.

- To support their teaching and learning
- To monitor and report on their pupil's progress
- To make sure children get the help and support that they need at school
- To assess how well the school is doing in general

Schools hold the following information.

- Basic information such as your child's date of birth and details about you (such as your name and address)
- Characteristics such as your child's ethnic origin
- Information about your child's attendance in school
- Information about your child if they are excluded from school
- Information about child protection (if this applies)
- Information about antisocial incidents like bullying and racism
- Your child's national curriculum assessment results
- Your child's special educational needs (if any) and any relevant medical information

The **Local Authority** uses information about children for whom it provides services to carry out specific functions for which it is responsible, such as the assessment of any special educational needs the child may have. It also uses the information to derive statistics to inform decisions on (for example) the funding of schools, and to assess the performance of schools and set targets for them. The statistics are used in such a way that individual children cannot be identified from them. LAs also have a duty under the Children Act 2004 to cooperate with their partners in health and youth justice to improve the well-being of children in their areas.

The Local Authority has responsibility for the Admissions procedures for children entering schools and uses information about children and their parents/carers for this purpose. The Authority will also process information from School Workforce Census Datasets for the purposes of provision of Free School Meals.

The **Qualifications and Curriculum Authority** uses information about pupils to administer national curriculum assessments throughout Key Stages 1 and 2. This includes both assessments required by statute and those that are optional. The results of these are passed on to DfE to compile statistics on trends and patterns in levels of achievement. The QCA uses the information to evaluate the effectiveness of the national curriculum and the associated assessment arrangements, and to ensure that these are continually improved.

Ofsted uses information about the progress and performance of pupils to help inspectors evaluate the work of schools, to assist schools in their self-evaluation, and as part of Ofsted's assessment of the effectiveness of education initiatives and policy. Inspection reports do not identify individual pupils.

The Learner Registration Service will let organisations that have legal permission see the information held about your child using the reference number. You can see the details about these organisations at www.miap.gov.uk You can choose not to allow these organisations to see your child's information. You can find details of how to do this at www.miap.gov.uk.

The **Department of Health** uses aggregate information (at school year group level) about pupils' height and weight for research and statistical purposes, to inform, influence and improve health policy and to monitor the performance of the health service as a whole. The DH will base performance management discussions with Strategic Health Authorities on aggregate information about pupils attending schools in the PCT areas to help focus local resources and deliver the Public Service Agreement target to halt the year on year rise in obesity among children under 11 by 2010, in the context of a broader strategy to tackle obesity in the population as a whole. The Department of Health will also provide aggregate PCT level data to the Healthcare Commission for performance assessment of the health service.

Primary Care Trusts use information about pupils for research and statistical purposes, to monitor the performance of local health services and to evaluate and develop them. The statistics are used in such a way that individual pupils cannot be identified from them. Information on the height and weight of individual pupils may however be provided to the child and its parents and this will require the PCTs to maintain details of pupils' names for this purpose. PCTs may also provide individual schools and LAs with aggregate information on pupils' height and weight.

The **Department for Education** uses information about pupils for research and statistical purposes, to inform, influence and improve education policy and to monitor the performance of the education service as a whole. The DfE will feed back to LAs and schools information about their pupils for a variety of purposes that will include data checking exercises, use in self-evaluation analyses and where information is missing because it was not passed on by a former school.

Pupil information may be matched with other data sources that the Department holds in order to model and monitor pupils' educational progression; and to provide comprehensive information back to LAs and learning institutions to support their day to day business. The DfE may also use contact details from these sources to obtain samples for statistical surveys: these surveys may be carried out by research agencies working under contract to the Department and participation in such surveys is usually voluntary. The Department may also match data from these sources to data obtained from statistical surveys.

Pupil data may also be shared with other Government Departments and Agencies (including the Office for National Statistics) for statistical or research purposes only. In all these cases the matching will require that individualised data is used in the processing operation, but that data will not be processed in such a way that it supports measures or decisions relating to particular individuals or identifies individuals in any results. This data sharing will be approved and controlled by the Department's Chief Statistician.

The DfE may also disclose individual pupil information to independent researchers into the educational achievements of pupils who have a legitimate need for it for their research, but each case will be determined on its merits and subject to the approval of the Department's Chief Statistician.

Pupils, as data subjects, have certain rights under the Data Protection Act, including a general right of access to personal data held on them, with parents exercising this right on their behalf if they are too young to do so themselves. If you wish to access the personal data held about your child, then please contact the relevant organisation in writing:

- The school at **Handsworth Primary, Handsworth Avenue, London, E4 9PJ**
- Information Governance Officer, London Borough of Waltham Forest, Children & Young People Services, Silver Birch House, Uplands Business Park, Blackhorse Lane, London E17 5SD;
- The QCA's Data Protection Officer at QCA, 83 Piccadilly, London, W1J 8QA;
- Ofsted's Data Protection Officer at Alexandra House, 33 Kingsway, London WC2B 6SE;
- Public Communications Unit, Department for Education, Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, London, SW1P 3BT
- the Department of Health Data Protection Officer at Skipton House 80 London Road London SE1 6LH;
- your local PCT.

In order to fulfil their responsibilities under the Act the organisation may, before responding to this request, seek proof of the requestor's identity and any further information required to locate the personal data requested.

Separately from the Data Protection Act, regulations provide a pupil's parent (regardless of the age of the pupil) with the right to view, or to have a copy of, their child's educational record at the school. If you wish to exercise this right you should write to the school.