

Data Protection Policy 2026

EKC Schools Trust

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1. Introduction and Scope

Collecting and using personal information is vital for the operation of EKC Schools Trust (the Trust) as an educational organisation and the Trust views the correct and lawful handling of data about individuals as key to its success.

The Trust is committed to complying with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), the UK Data Protection Act 2018 and the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025, which aims to make organisations fully accountable for the data that they process about individuals. This Policy sets out the steps that the Trust takes to demonstrate that it has robust and effective processes in place to protect individuals' data.

The Policy applies to Trust staff, Members, Trustees, Governors, contractors, consultants, trainee teachers, volunteers and third-party agents.

2. Definitions

2.1. Consent

Any freely given, specific, informed and unambiguous indication of the data subject's wishes by which they, by a statement or by a clear affirmative action, signifies agreement to the processing of personal data relating to them.

2.2. Data

Any data which identifies a living individual (subject). There are two categories of data in relation to individuals:

Personal data is any data which could be used directly or indirectly to identify a living individual e.g., name, contact details (address, telephone number, and email address), date of birth, age, gender, bank details, next of kin, photographs, CCTV images, audio recordings.

****Special category personal data** is any data which an individual may not wish others to be aware of e.g., ethnicity/nationality, mental/physical health, criminal convictions, socio economic status, personal life (marital status, pregnancy/maternity, interests/hobbies), genetic/biometric profile*, sexuality*, faith/religion*, membership of Trades Unions*. Special category data merits specific protection and should be treated with greater care because use of this data could create significant risks to the individual's fundamental rights and freedoms.

Items marked *may not be processed by the Trust unless the parent/carer/employee gives their consent for this data to be processed for specific and lawful purposes. In most cases, the Trust has to process special category personal data to meet vital interests and legal obligations but will always seek explicit consent for processing.

****Special category data** was known as sensitive data under the Data Protection Act 1998

2.3. Data Breach

A breach of security leading to the accidental or unlawful destruction, loss, alteration, unauthorised disclosure of, or access to, personal data transmitted, stored or otherwise processed.

2.4. Data Controller

A public authority, agency or other body which, alone or jointly with others, determines the purposes and means of the processing of personal data. EKC Schools Trust is the Data Controller in relation to the processing of data for Trust purposes.

2.5. Data Processor

A person, public authority, agency or other body which processes personal data on behalf of the controller e.g., a subcontractor.

2.6. Data Subject

An identified or identifiable, living person.

2.7. Processing

Any activity in relation to personal data, e.g., collection, storage, adaptation, retrieval, consultation, use, disclosure by transmission, erasure, destruction etc.

2.8. Pseudonymisation

The processing of personal data in such a manner that the personal data can no longer be attributed to a specific data subject without the use of additional information e.g., use of an encryption code.

3. The Data Protection Principles

The UK GDPR sets out principles with which any party handling data about individuals must comply. The Regulation states that data shall be:

- 1) Processed fairly, lawfully and transparently
- 2) Collected for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes and not further processed in a manner that is incompatible with those purposes.
- 3) Adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary.
- 4) Accurate and where necessary, kept up to date, every reasonable step must be taken to ensure that personal data that is inaccurate is erased or rectified without delay.
- 5) Kept in a form which permits identification of data subjects for no longer than is necessary for the purposes for which the personal data is processed.
- 6) Processed in a manner that ensures appropriate security of the personal data, including protection against unauthorised or unlawful processing and against accidental loss, destruction or damage.
- 7) Finally, there is the "accountability principle" which requires us to take responsibility for the personal data we hold and how we comply with the other principles.

4. Lawful Basis for Processing Data

The UK GDPR imposes a requirement for organisations to determine a lawful basis for processing data to include one of the following criteria:

- Consent – where an individual has given their consent via clear, affirmative action e.g., providing a signature or ticking a box.
- Performance of a contract e.g., an employment contract, learning agreement etc.
- Legal obligations – because the law requires the data to be processed e.g., for the purposes of HMRC payments.
- Vital interests – to protect the individual in the case of an emergency.
- Public interest or exercise of official authority e.g., provision of statistical returns, to comply with government funding requirements etc.
- Legitimate interests – the Trust can evidence a legitimate reason for processing the data.

5. Data Protection Standards

Staff and any individual officially appointed to work on behalf of EKC Schools Trust in any Academy or across the Trust must abide by the principles outlined in this Policy and the data protection charter.

Specifically, they must ensure that:

- All personal data collected and processed for and on behalf of the Trust and each Academy by any party is collected and processed fairly and lawfully.
- Data subjects are made fully aware of the reasons for the collection of personal data and are given details of the purpose for which the data will be used.
- Personal data is only collected to the extent that is necessary to fulfil the stated purpose(s).
- All personal data is accurate at the time of collection; EKC Schools Trust must keep it accurate and up to date while it is being held and/or processed.
- No personal data is held for any longer than necessary in light of the stated purpose(s).
- All personal data is held in a safe and secure manner, taking all appropriate technical and organisational measures to protect the data.
- All personal data is transferred using secure means, electronically or otherwise.
- Data is not unnecessarily duplicated or distributed.
- Data protection risks will be considered and mitigated by carrying out a Data Protection Impact Assessment in certain circumstances.
- No personal data is transferred outside of the UK without first ensuring that appropriate safeguards are in place in the destination country or territory.

The Trust and Academies shall ensure that the following measures are taken with respect to the processing of personal data:

- A designated Data Protection Officer (DPO) within the Trust shall be appointed with the specific responsibility of overseeing data protection and ensuring compliance with the legislation. The DPO must have appropriate training in data protection law.
- All staff and other parties working on behalf of the Trust will be made fully aware of both their individual responsibilities and the Trust's statutory responsibilities and shall be either provided a copy of this Policy or directed to a copy available on the Trust's website.
- All staff or other parties working on behalf of Trust or Academies who process personal data will be appropriately trained to do so. New staff will undertake training in data protection when they commence employment and participate in refresher training at least every three years after that.
- All staff and other parties working on behalf of the Trust who process personal data will be appropriately supervised.
- Methods of collecting, holding and processing personal data shall be regularly evaluated and reviewed and internal data audits carried out at least every three years.
- All staff or other parties working on behalf of the Trust who process personal data will be bound to do so in accordance with data protection legislation and this Policy by contract. Failure by an employee to comply shall constitute a disciplinary offence. Failure by any contractor, agent, consultant, partner or other party to comply shall constitute a breach of contract. In all cases, failure to comply may also constitute a criminal offence under data protection legislation.
- All contractors, agents, consultants, partners or other parties working on behalf of the Trust or in any of the Academies who process personal data must ensure that any and all of their employees who are involved in the processing of personal data are held to the same conditions as those relevant employees of the Trust arising out of this Policy and data protection legislation. The Trust will carry out due diligence on all external parties prior to engagement to seek assurances in respect of compliance with data protection legislation.
- Where any contractor, agent, consultant, partner or other party working on behalf of the Trust fails in their obligations under this Policy that party shall indemnify and hold harmless the Trust against any costs, liability, damages, loss, claims or proceedings which may arise out of that failure.
- Upon terminating service to the Trust and Academies all employees, contractors, consultants, partners or other parties working on behalf of the Trust warrant that they have returned and destroyed all duplicate copies of any personal data they have held whilst undertaking activities on behalf of the Trust and will not use, retain or transfer any such information collected whilst in the services of the Trust.
- Upon terminating service to the Trust and Academies all employees, contractors, consultants, partners or other parties working on behalf of the Trust will have their work email account and access to the Trust network terminated with immediate effect.

- A data subject must inform the Trust in writing if they wish to exclude their personal data from particular data processing provisions contained within this Policy, being mindful that complete exclusion would result in the individual being unable to continue as an employee or pupil, parent or carer since the Trust would be unable to carry out basic operations.
- Under the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012, the Trust and its academies are legally obliged to seek parental consent where data are processed via biometric systems. A Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) must be completed in all such cases before the system is implemented and consent will be obtained. If consent is not given, reasonable alternative means of providing the services must be provided. In cases where a parent has given their consent for processing but a pupil objects, their objection or refusal overrides any parental consent to the processing.

6. Processing Personal Data

The EKC Schools Trust and Academies collects and processes information for various purposes, including educational administration, funding, statistical research, health and safety, employment, training, equality and disability policy monitoring, security and insurance reasons. The Trust only holds personal data which is directly relevant to its dealings with a given individual. The Trust and Academies holds data in electronic and paper form; data will be held and processed in accordance with legislative requirements and with this policy. All information concerning individuals is treated in the strictest of confidence and will not be released unless the individual gives consent.

Pupils', parents' and carers' personal data may be disclosed within the Trust or Academy for administrative purposes.

Personal data may be passed from one area to another in accordance with legislation and this policy. Under no circumstances will personal data be passed to any area or any individual within the Trust or Academies that does not reasonably require access to that personal data with respect to the purpose(s) for which it was collected and is being processed.

Personal data shall also be used by the Trust in meeting any and all relevant obligations imposed by law and for its own security, disciplinary or insurance reasons. The data will be used for administrative purposes as outlined above while the pupil is attending a Trust Academy. Personal data shall not be passed to external parties without the parent or carers' agreement. The Trust appoints external and internal auditors who have access to pupils' personal data but this information is treated in the strictest of confidence.

Staff data is used by the Trust and Academies to administer and facilitate efficient transactions with third parties including, but not limited to, its partners, associates, affiliates and government agencies and to efficiently manage its employees, contractors, agents and consultants.

EKC Schools Trust has certain statutory obligations under which it may be required to pass personal information relating to an individual to external agencies. Where possible the individual will be informed about these disclosures but in some cases it is not possible to do this. Personal data may be disclosed without an individual's permission in the case of protecting an individual's or others' vital interests, to support criminal investigations and in matters of national security.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

All individuals identified in the scope of this Policy have a responsibility to work in accordance with the Policy and legislative requirements and ensure that they have sufficient training and competence on data protection. However, the following roles have specific accountabilities:

Trustees and Governors

- Ensures that adequate resources are available for the implementation of data protection policies and procedures.

Executive

- Champions data protection and models good practice.
- Monitors compliance with the UK GDPR and other data protection laws, including managing internal data protection activities.
- Ensures that appropriate and adequate technical measures are in place to safeguard the security of data.

Data Protection Officer (DPO)

- Informs and advises the Trust and its staff about obligations to comply with the UK GDPR and other data protection laws.
- Advises and guides the Trust regarding compliance with the UK GDPR and other data protection laws, including managing internal data protection activities, advising on data protection impact assessments; training staff and conducting internal audits.
- Advises and guides on the application of policy and procedure.
- To be the first point of contact for the ICO and for individuals whose data is processed (employees, customers etc.).
- Reporting data breaches to the ICO.
- Advising the Executive, Trustees and Governors about their obligations under data protection legislation.
- Maintains and updates knowledge and expertise on data protection sufficient to effectively fulfil the role of DPO.

Headteacher

- Ensures that appropriate and adequate technical measures are in place to safeguard the security of data.
- Takes the lead on information processed with regard to staff and assures the security and integrity of personal data.
- Takes the lead on information processed with regard to pupils.
- Arranges for the archiving of student data and the disposal of data at the expiry of the data retention period.
- Reporting data breaches to the DPO (consulting with the Director of Safeguarding and Compliance as appropriate)

8. Data Protection Impact Assessments

The purpose of a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) is to consider and mitigate the risks associated with processing personal data. The Trust will conduct a DPIA in all the following circumstances:

- When introducing new systems and processes.
- When making changes to existing systems and processes which involves a higher level of risk for personal data.
- When processing 'high risk' data, e.g., data about vulnerable individuals.
- When introducing new technologies that involve personal data processing.

A DPIA form will be completed by the member of staff responsible for the area/project and sent to the DPO. There must be a clear action plan to identify and address any issues with regard to data protection. These actions must be completed and signed off by the respective Headteacher or CEO before any data processing is undertaken. The DPO will provide advice and guidance on carrying out DPIAs.

9. Data Privacy Notices

In all cases, the Trust will publish data privacy notices (also known as fair processing notices) at each stage of processing to advise individuals:

- a) What data will be collected.
- b) Why the Trust needs it.
- c) The legal basis for processing the data.
- d) Data Subjects' rights.
- e) Who will have access to the data.
- f) How long the data will be retained for.
- g) Contact Details for the DPO.

10. Data Breaches

A breach of data is defined as a security incident that has adversely affected the confidentiality, integrity or availability of personal data.

This could include:

- Access by an unauthorised third party.
- Deliberate or accidental action (or inaction) by a controller or processor.
- Sending personal data to an incorrect recipient.
- Computing devices containing personal data being lost or stolen.
- Alteration of personal data without permission.
- Loss of availability of personal data.

The Trust will comply with its statutory duty to report all relevant data breaches (where the rights and freedoms of data subjects have been adversely affected) to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) within 72 hours of becoming aware of

the breach. Staff must follow the Data Breach Procedure in all such circumstances. Failure to notify the ICO about a breach could result in significant penalties i.e., a maximum fine of €20,000,000 or 4% of annual turnover.

11. Data Security

All staff and any individuals working on behalf of the Trust or any of the academies must ensure the security of personal data by working in accordance with this Policy and the data protection charter.

12. Data Retention

The Trust has a Records Retention Schedule in place and undertakes to dispose of data upon expiry of the data's retention period.

13. Consent

Data release to parents, carers or guardians who are detailed on a pupil's records for emergency/next of kin contact will normally be made without the consent of the pupil. However, staff must always check whether they are permitted to share information with a parent, carer or guardian and must not share data in circumstances where the safety and welfare of a student may be compromised.

Details shared with parents, carers or guardians will include behaviour, attendance, academic progress, learner support, wellbeing and other details required to keep the pupil safe whilst they are at school.

The Trust will always seek consent from parents/carers/guardians for the purpose of using their data for internal or external marketing purposes.

The Trust has certain statutory obligations under which it may be required to pass personal information relating to a data subject to external agencies. Where possible the data subject will be informed about these disclosures but in some cases it is not possible to do this. Personal data may be disclosed without a data subject's consent in the case of protecting a data subject's or others' vital interests, to support criminal investigations and in matters of national security.

14. Data Subject Rights

Data Subjects have the following rights under data protection legislation. These rights are explained below together with details of how we will ensure these rights are met. The Trust undertakes to fulfil any rights exercised by a data subject within 1 month of the request being made.

14.1. Right to be Informed

The Trust will inform data subjects about the data that it processes and will do this via Privacy Notices (see Section 9) published on Schools' websites.

14.2. Right of Access

A data subject may make a subject access request ("SAR") at any time in relation to the information which the Trust or a Trust Academy holds about them. Subjects can submit their request either in writing or verbally to the Headteacher of the Academy or CEO of the Trust and will be required to validate their identity before any data is

released. Some data may be subject to an exclusion under the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018 and cannot therefore be released to the data subject even though they may have requested it.

14.3. The Right to Rectification

Data subjects may request that inaccurate or incomplete personal data is rectified.

14.4. The Right to Erasure (right to be forgotten)

Data subjects have the right to request the erasure (deletion) or removal of personal data where there is no lawful basis for its continued processing, in the following circumstances:

- Where the personal data is no longer necessary in relation to the purpose for which it was originally collected/processed.
- When the individual withdraws their consent.
- When the individual objects to the processing and there is no overriding legitimate interest for continuing the processing.
- The personal data was unlawfully processed.
- The personal data is required to be erased in order to comply with a legal obligation.
- The personal data is processed in relation to the provision of information society services, such as selling goods or services online to a child.
- In a marketing context, where personal data is collected and processed for direct marketing purposes, the individual has a right to object to processing at any time. Where the individual objects, the personal data must not be processed for such purposes.

The Trust has the right to refuse a request for erasure where the personal data is being processed for the following reasons:

- To exercise the right of freedom of expression and information.
- To comply with a legal obligation for the performance of a public interest task or exercise of official authority.
- For public health purposes in the public interest.
- For archiving purposes in the public interest, scientific research, historical research or statistical purposes.
- The exercise or defense of legal claims.
- Where personal data has been disclosed to third parties, they will be informed about the erasure of the personal data, unless it is impossible or involves disproportionate effort to do so.
- Where personal data has been made public within an online environment, we may be able to exercise the right to erasure where content has been downloaded or re-shared.
- Where personal data has been used for printed materials such as marketing leaflets and prospectuses and these have already been distributed.

The Trust will not process requests for data erasure where they have been requested by a third party. This is because it is not possible to check and validate the identity of

the third-party requestor.

14.5. The Right to Restrict Processing

Data subjects have the right to request that the Trust blocks processing of their personal data unless that restriction means that EKC Schools Trust is unable to fulfil a legal or contractual obligation or there is another lawful basis for processing.

We will restrict processing of personal data in the following circumstances:

- Where an individual disputes the accuracy of the personal data.
- Where an individual has objected to the processing and we are considering whether our legitimate grounds override those of the individual.
- Where processing is unlawful.

14.6. The Right to Data Portability

Data subjects have the right to obtain and reuse their personal data for their own purposes across different services.

The right to data portability only applies in the following circumstances:

- To personal data that an individual has provided to a controller.
- Where the processing is based on the individual's consent or for the performance of a contract.
- When processing is carried out by automated means.

We are not required to adopt or maintain processing systems, which are technically compatible with other organisations.

In the event that the personal data concerns more than one individual, we will consider whether providing the information would prejudice the rights of any individual.

14.7. The Right to Object

Data subjects have the right to object to the following:

- Processing based on legitimate interests or the performance of a task in the public interest.
- Direct marketing (we cannot refuse an objection to processing for direct marketing purposes).
- Processing for purposes of scientific or historical research and statistics.

We will not stop processing the data subject's data if the processing is for the establishment, exercise or defense of legal claims or where we can demonstrate compelling legitimate grounds for the processing, which override the interests, rights and freedoms of the data subject.

15. Complaints

If individuals have any complaints about how the Trust in accordance with the EKC Schools Trust Complaints Policy, which can be found: <https://ekcschoolstrust.org/key-information/> [See Trust Policies].