Cotsford Primary School

Data Protection Policy

September 2026

1. Aims

Our school aims to ensure that all personal data collected about staff, pupils, parents, governors, visitors and other individuals is collected, stored and processed in accordance with UK data protection law.

This policy applies to all personal data, regardless of whether it is in paper or electronic format.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the:

- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) – the EU GDPR was incorporated into UK legislation, with some amendments, by The Data Protection, Privacy and Electronic Communications (Amendments etc) (EU Exit) Regulations 2020
- Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA 2018)
- Data Use and Access Act 2025 (DUAA)
- Updated DfE Data Protection in Schools Guidance (17 June 2026)
- Updated ICO guidance on childrens data protection and online services used by children (2026)
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Keeping Children Safe in Education

It is based on guidance published by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) on the GDPR.

It also reflects the ICO's code of practice for the use of surveillance cameras and personal information.

In addition, this policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3. Definitions

TERM	DEFINITION
Personal data	Any information relating to an identified, or identifiable, living individual. This may include the individual's: › Name (including initials) › Identification number › Location data › Online identifier, such as a username It may also include factors specific to the individual's physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural or social identity.

TERM	DEFINITION
Special categories of personal data	Personal data which is more sensitive and so needs more protection, including information about an individual's: › Racial or ethnic origin › Political opinions › Religious or philosophical beliefs › Trade union membership › Genetics › Biometrics (such as fingerprints, retina and iris patterns), where used for identification purposes › Health – physical or mental › Sex life or sexual orientation
Processing	Anything done to personal data, such as collecting, recording, organising, structuring, storing, adapting, altering, retrieving, using, disseminating, erasing or destroying. Processing can be automated or manual.
Data subject	The identified or identifiable individual whose personal data is held or processed.
Data controller	A person or organisation that determines the purposes and the means of processing of personal data.
Data processor	A person or other body, other than an employee of the data controller, who processes personal data on behalf of the data controller.
Personal data breach	A breach of security leading to the accidental or unlawful destruction, loss, alteration, unauthorised disclosure of, or access to, personal data.

4. The data controller

Our school processes personal data relating to parents, pupils, staff, governors, visitors and others, and therefore is a data controller.

The school is registered with the ICO and has paid its data protection fee to the ICO, as legally required.

5. Roles and responsibilities

This policy applies to **all staff** employed by our school, and to external organisations or individuals working on our behalf, including supply staff and volunteers. Staff who do not comply with this policy may face disciplinary action.

5.1 Governing board

The governing board has overall responsibility for ensuring that our school complies with all relevant data protection obligations.

5.2 Data protection officer

The data protection officer (DPO) is responsible for overseeing the implementation of this policy, monitoring our compliance with data protection law, and developing related policies and guidelines where applicable. These include the Acceptable Use Policy, Record Keeping and Retention Policy, Photographic and Video Policy and Freedom of Information statements.

They will produce an annual audit of the schools GDPR compliance which they will report directly to the governing body along with their advice and recommendations on school data protection issues.

The DPO is also the first point of contact for individuals whose data the school processes, and for the ICO.

Our DPO is Darren Hobson and is contactable via email info@mobile-sbm.com or by telephone on 07368508685.

5.3 Headteacher

The headteacher acts as the representative of the data controller on a day-to-day basis.

5.4 All staff

Staff are responsible for:

- Collecting, storing and processing any personal data in accordance with this policy
- Informing the school of any changes to their personal data, such as a change of address
- Contacting the DPO in the following circumstances:
    - With any questions about the operation of this policy, data protection law, retaining personal data or keeping personal data secure
    - If they have any concerns that this policy is not being followed
    - If they are unsure whether or not they have a lawful basis to use personal data in a particular way
    - If they need to rely on or capture consent, draft a privacy notice, deal with data protection rights invoked by an individual, or transfer personal data outside the UK
    - If there has been a data breach
    - Whenever they are engaging in a new activity that may affect the privacy rights of individuals
    - If they need help with any contracts or sharing personal data with third parties

5.5 Data Protection Complaints

Under the Data Use and Access Act 2025, individuals have the right to raise concerns directly with the school regarding the processing of their personal data. The school will:

- Maintain a documented complaints policy
- Acknoweldge complaints promptly
- Investigate concerns fairly and promptly
- Respond within reasonable timescales
- Inform complainants of their right to escalate concerns to the Information Commissioners Office

All complaints relating to personal data must be forwarded to the Data Protection Officer.

6. Data protection principles

The UK GDPR is based on data protection principles that our school must comply with.

The principles say that personal data must be:

- Processed lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner
- Collected for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes

- Adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary to fulfil the purposes for which it is processed
- Accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date
- Kept for no longer than is necessary for the purposes for which it is processed
- Processed in a way that ensures it is appropriately secure

This policy sets out how the school aims to comply with these principles.

7. Collecting personal data

7.1 Lawfulness, fairness and transparency

We will only process personal data where we have one of 6 'lawful bases' (legal reasons) to do so under data protection law:

- The data needs to be processed so that the school can **fulfil a contract** with the individual, or the individual has asked the school to take specific steps before entering into a contract
- The data needs to be processed so that the school can **comply with a legal obligation**
- The data needs to be processed to ensure the **vital interests** of the individual or another person i.e. to protect someone's life
- The data needs to be processed so that the school, as a public authority, can **perform a task in the public interest or exercise its official authority**
- The data needs to be processed for the **legitimate interests** of the school (where the processing is not for any tasks the school performs as a public authority) or a third party, provided the individual's rights and freedoms are not overridden
- The individual (or their parent/carer when appropriate in the case of a pupil) has freely given clear **consent**

For special categories of personal data, we will also meet one of the special category conditions for processing under data protection law:

- The individual (or their parent/carer when appropriate in the case of a pupil) has given **explicit consent**
- The data needs to be processed to perform or exercise obligations or rights in relation to **employment, social security or social protection law**
- The data needs to be processed to ensure the **vital interests** of the individual or another person, where the individual is physically or legally incapable of giving consent
- The data has already been made **manifestly public** by the individual
- The data needs to be processed for the establishment, exercise or defence of **legal claims**
- The data needs to be processed for reasons of **substantial public interest** as defined in legislation
- The data needs to be processed for **health or social care purposes**, and the processing is done by, or under the direction of, a health or social work professional or by any other person obliged to confidentiality under law
- The data needs to be processed for **public health reasons**, and the processing is done by, or under the direction of, a health professional or by any other person obliged to confidentiality under law
- The data needs to be processed for **archiving purposes**, scientific or historical research purposes, or statistical purposes, and the processing is in the public interest

For criminal offence data, we will meet both a lawful basis and a condition set out under data protection law. Conditions include:

- The individual (or their parent/carer when appropriate in the case of a pupil) has given **consent**

- The data needs to be processed to ensure the **vital interests** of the individual or another person, where the individual is physically or legally incapable of giving consent
- The data has already been made **manifestly public** by the individual
- The data needs to be processed for or in connection with legal proceedings, to obtain legal advice, or for the establishment, exercise or defence of **legal rights**
- The data needs to be processed for reasons of **substantial public interest** as defined in legislation

Whenever we first collect personal data directly from individuals, we will provide them with the relevant information required by data protection law.

We will always consider the fairness of our data processing. We will ensure we do not handle personal data in ways that individuals would not reasonably expect, or use personal data in ways which have unjustified adverse effects on them.

7.2 Limitation, minimisation and accuracy

We will only collect personal data for specified, explicit and legitimate reasons. We will explain these reasons to the individuals when we first collect their data.

If we want to use personal data for reasons other than those given when we first obtained it, we will inform the individuals concerned before we do so, and seek consent where necessary.

Staff must only process personal data where it is necessary in order to do their jobs.

We will keep data accurate and, where necessary, up-to-date. Inaccurate data will be rectified or erased when appropriate.

In addition, when staff no longer need the personal data they hold, they must ensure it is deleted or anonymised. This will be done in accordance with the school's record retention schedule.

8. Sharing personal data

We will not normally share personal data with anyone else without consent, but there are certain circumstances where we may be required to do so. These include, but are not limited to, situations where:

- There is an issue with a pupil or parent/carer that puts the safety of our staff at risk
- We need to liaise with other agencies – we will seek consent as necessary before doing this
- Our suppliers or contractors need data to enable us to provide services to our staff and pupils – for example, IT companies. When doing this, we will:
    - Only appoint suppliers or contractors which can provide sufficient guarantees that they comply with UK data protection law
    - Establish a contract with the supplier or contractor to ensure the fair and lawful processing of any personal data we share
    - Only share data that the supplier or contractor needs to carry out their service

We will also share personal data with law enforcement and government bodies where we are legally required to do so.

We may also share personal data with emergency services and local authorities to help them to respond to an emergency situation that affects any of our pupils or staff.

Where we transfer personal data internationally, we will do so in accordance with UK data protection law.

9. Subject access requests and other rights of individuals

9.1 Subject access requests

Individuals have a right to make a ‘subject access request’ to gain access to personal information that the school holds about them. This includes:

- Confirmation that their personal data is being processed
- Access to a copy of the data
- The purposes of the data processing
- The categories of personal data concerned
- Who the data has been, or will be, shared with
- How long the data will be stored for, or if this isn’t possible, the criteria used to determine this period
- Where relevant, the existence of the right to request rectification, erasure or restriction, or to object to such processing
- The right to lodge a complaint with the ICO or another supervisory authority
- The source of the data, if not the individual
- Whether any automated decision-making is being applied to their data, and what the significance and consequences of this might be for the individual
- The safeguards provided if the data is being transferred internationally

Subject access requests can be submitted in any form, but we may be able to respond to requests more quickly if they are made in writing and include:

- Name of individual
- Correspondence address
- Contact number and email address
- Details of the information requested

If staff receive a subject access request in any form they must immediately forward it to the DPO.

Our procedure for handling of subject access requests is set out in Appendix 1.

9.2 Children and subject access requests

Personal data about a child belongs to that child, and not the child's parents or carers. For a parent or carer to make a subject access request with respect to their child, the child must either be unable to understand their rights and the implications of a subject access request, or have given their consent.

Children below the age of 12 are generally not regarded to be mature enough to understand their rights and the implications of a subject access request. Therefore, most subject access requests from parents or carers of pupils at our school may be granted without the express permission of the pupil. This is not a rule and a pupil’s ability to understand their rights will always be judged on a case-by-case basis.

Children aged 12 and above are generally regarded to be mature enough to understand their rights and the implications of a subject access request. Therefore, most subject access requests from parents or carers of pupils at our school may not be granted without the express permission of the pupil. This is not a rule and a pupil’s ability to understand their rights will always be judged on a case-by-case basis.

9.3 Responding to subject access requests

When responding to requests, we:

- May ask the individual to provide 2 forms of identification
- May contact the individual via phone to confirm the request was made
- Will respond without delay and within 1 month of receipt of the request (or receipt of the additional information needed to confirm identity, where relevant)
- Will provide the information free of charge

- May tell the individual we will comply within 3 months of receipt of the request, where a request is complex or numerous. We will inform the individual of this within 1 month, and explain why the extension is necessary
- Will undertake reasonable and proportionate searches for personal data in accordance with the Data Use and Access Act 2025 and associated ICO guidance
- Are not required to conduct searches that would be disproportionate to the nature of the request

We may not disclose information for a variety of reasons, such as if it:

- Might cause serious harm to the physical or mental health of the pupil or another individual
- Would reveal that the child is being or has been abused, or is at risk of abuse, where the disclosure of that information would not be in the child's best interests
- Would include another person's personal data that we can't reasonably anonymise, and we don't have the other person's consent and it would be unreasonable to proceed without it
- Is part of certain sensitive documents, such as those related to crime, immigration, legal proceedings or legal professional privilege, management forecasts, negotiations, confidential references, or exam scripts

If the request is unfounded or excessive, we may refuse to act on it, or charge a reasonable fee to cover administrative costs. We will take into account whether the request is repetitive in nature when making this decision.

When we refuse a request, we will tell the individual why, and tell them they have the right to complain to the ICO or they can seek to enforce their subject access right through the courts.

9.4 Other data protection rights of the individual

In addition to the right to make a subject access request (see above), and to receive information when we are collecting their data about how we use and process it (see section 7), individuals also have the right to:

- Withdraw their consent to processing at any time
- Ask us to rectify, erase or restrict processing of their personal data (in certain circumstances)
- Prevent use of their personal data for direct marketing
- Object to processing which has been justified on the basis of public interest, official authority or legitimate interests
- Challenge decisions based solely on automated decision making or profiling (i.e. making decisions or evaluating certain things about an individual based on their personal data with no human involvement)
- Be notified of a data breach (in certain circumstances)
- Make a complaint to the ICO
- Ask for their personal data to be transferred to a third party in a structured, commonly used and machine-readable format (in certain circumstances)

Individuals should submit any request to exercise these rights to the DPO. If staff receive such a request, they must immediately forward it to the DPO.

9.5 Automated decision making and profiling

The school does not routinely make decisions based solely on automated processing. Where automated systems or artificial intelligence technologies are used to support decision-making, appropriate human oversight will always be maintained.

Individuals have the right to request human intervention, express their views and challenge decisions where data protection legislation applies.

10. Parental requests to see the educational record

Parents, or those with parental responsibility, have a legal right to free access to their child's educational record (which includes most information about a pupil) within 15 school days of receipt of a written request.

If the request is for a copy of the educational record, the school may charge a fee to cover the cost of supplying it.

This right applies as long as the pupil concerned is aged under 18.

There are certain circumstances in which this right can be denied, such as if releasing the information might cause serious harm to the physical or mental health of the pupil or another individual, or if it would mean releasing exam marks before they are officially announced.

11. CCTV

We may use CCTV in various locations around the school site to ensure it remains safe. We will follow the ICO's guidance for the use of CCTV, and comply with data protection principles.

We do not need to ask individuals' permission to use CCTV, but we make it clear where individuals are being recorded. Security cameras are clearly visible and accompanied by prominent signs explaining that CCTV is in use.

See our CCTV policy for further information.

12. Photographs and videos

As part of our school activities, we may take photographs and record images of individuals within our school.

We will obtain written consent from for photographs and videos to be taken of our pupils for communication, marketing and promotional materials. We will clearly explain how the photograph and/or video will be used and will set this information out in photograph consent forms. There may be a need to obtain one off consent during the year for specific events not covered by our photo consent form.

Any photographs and videos taken by parents/carers at school events for their own personal use are not covered by data protection legislation. However, we will ask that photos or videos with other pupils are not shared publicly on social media for safeguarding reasons, unless all the relevant parents/carers have agreed to this. It may be necessary for us to prevent any photography by parents if we feel this is necessary to safeguard our pupils at particular events or in certain circumstances. See our Photographic and Video Policy for further information.

Where the school takes photographs and videos, uses may include:

- Within school on notice boards and in school brochures, newsletters, etc.
- Outside of school by external agencies such as the school photographer, newspapers, campaigns
- Online on our school website or social media pages

Consent can be refused or withdrawn at any time. If consent is withdrawn, we will delete the photograph or video and not distribute it further.

When using photographs and videos in this way we will not accompany them with any other personal information about the child, to ensure they cannot be identified.

See our Photographic and Video Policy for more information on our use of photographs and videos.

13. Data protection by design and default

We will put measures in place to show that we have integrated data protection into all of our data processing activities, including:

- Appointing a suitably qualified DPO, and ensuring they have the necessary resources to fulfil their duties and maintain their expert knowledge
- Only processing personal data that is necessary for each specific purpose of processing, and always in line with the data protection principles set out in relevant data protection law (see section 6)
- Completing data protection impact assessments where the school's processing of personal data presents a high risk to rights and freedoms of individuals, and when introducing new technologies (the DPO will advise on this process)
- Integrating data protection into internal documents including this policy, any related policies and privacy notices
- Regularly training members of staff on data protection law, this policy, any related policies and any other data protection matters; we will also keep a record of attendance
- Regularly conducting reviews and audits to test our privacy measures and make sure we are compliant
- Appropriate safeguards being put in place if we transfer any personal data outside of the UK, where different data protection laws may apply
- Maintaining records of our processing activities, including:
    - For the benefit of data subjects, making available the name and contact details of our school and DPO and all information we are required to share about how we use and process their personal data (via our privacy notices)
    - For all personal data that we hold, maintaining an internal record of the type of data, type of data subject, how and why we are using the data, any third-party recipients, any transfers outside of the UK and the safeguards for those, retention periods and how we are keeping the data secure

13. Artificial Intelligence

Where the school uses AI systems including generative tools, it will ensure that:

- Data protection impact assessments are completed where required
- Appropriate safeguards are implemented
- Personal data is only processed lawfully
- Human oversight is maintained
- Safeguarding considerations are fully assessed
- Children's rights and freedoms are protected

Staff must not input any personal, confidential or safeguarding data into AI systems unless expressly authorised and risk assessed by the DPO. For more information see the schools AI Policy.

14. Data security and storage of records

We will protect personal data and keep it safe from unauthorised or unlawful access, alteration, processing or disclosure, and against accidental or unlawful loss, destruction or damage.

In particular:

- Paper-based records and portable electronic devices, such as laptops and hard drives that contain personal data, are kept under lock and key when not in use
- Papers containing confidential personal data must not be left on office and classroom desks, on staffroom tables, or left anywhere else where there is general access
- Where personal information needs to be taken off site, staff must sign it in and out from the school office
- Passwords that are at least 10 characters long containing letters and numbers are used to access school computers, laptops and other electronic devices. Staff and pupils are reminded that they should not reuse passwords from other sites

- Encryption software is used to protect all portable devices and removable media, such as laptops and USB devices
- Staff, pupils or governors who store personal information on their personal devices are expected to follow the same security procedures as for school-owned equipment (see our E-Safety and Acceptable Use Policies)
- Where we need to share personal data with a third party, we carry out due diligence and take reasonable steps to ensure it is stored securely and adequately protected (see section 8)

14.1 Cyber Security

The school recognises the increasing cyber security risks faced by educational establishments. Appropriate technical and organisational measures will be implemented including;

- Multi factor authentication where available
- Secure backups
- Regular software updates
- Network monitoring
- Access control procedures
- Staff cyber awareness training
- Incident response planning

Cyber security will be reviewed regularly as part of the school's wider safeguarding and risk management arrangements.

15. Disposal of records

Personal data that is no longer needed will be disposed of securely. Personal data that has become inaccurate or out of date will also be disposed of securely, where we cannot or do not need to rectify or update it.

For example, we will shred or incinerate paper-based records, and overwrite or delete electronic files. We may also use a third party to safely dispose of records on the school's behalf. If we do so, we will require the third party to provide sufficient guarantees that it complies with data protection law.

16. Personal data breaches

The school will make all reasonable endeavours to ensure that there are no personal data breaches.

In the unlikely event of a suspected data breach, we will follow the procedure set out in our Data Breach Procedure document.

When appropriate, we will report the data breach to the ICO within 72 hours after becoming aware of it. Such breaches in a school context may include, but are not limited to:

- A non-anonymised dataset being published on the school website which shows the exam results of pupils eligible for the pupil premium
- Safeguarding information being made available to an unauthorised person
- The theft of a school laptop containing non-encrypted personal data about pupils

All data breaches, however minor, must be reported to our DPO. A breach register is maintained in accordance with ICO accountability requirements.

17. Training

All staff and governors are provided with data protection training as part of their induction process.

Data protection will also form part of continuing professional development, where changes to legislation, guidance or the school's processes make it necessary.

18. Children's Data and Online Services

Where online services, digital learning platforms or educational applications are likely to be accessed by children, the school will ensure that children's personal data receives enhanced protection. The school will have regard to;

- The ICO Children's Code (Age Appropriate Design Code)
- ICO guidance on children's data
- Data Use and Access Act 2025 provisions relating to children's information

Any new systems used by children will be subject to appropriate safeguarding and privacy assessments

19. Monitoring arrangements

The DPO is responsible for monitoring and reviewing this policy.

This policy will be reviewed annually and approved by the governing body.

20. Links with other policies

This data protection policy is linked to our:

- Freedom of information publication scheme
- Photographic and Video Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Data Breach Procedure
- Record Keeping and Retention Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- E-Safety Policy

Appendix 1: Subject Access Request Procedure

Individuals can submit a subject access request (SAR) to the school in any form. There are designated forms that can be filled in for such requests and these are available in school. However, requests can also be made verbally or in writing in other formats, for example via email.

The school may need to undertake checks where necessary on the identity of the individual making the request before releasing the information if this is not clear.

The process to be followed in the event of a member of staff receiving a SAR is as follows;

