



DATA PROTECTION POLICY

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Approved by	Staffing, Staff Wellbeing and Development Committee
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DATA PROTECTION POLICY

1.0 Introduction

Whitley Bay High School Data Protection Policy has been produced to ensure compliance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and associated legislation and incorporates guidance from the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

The Data Protection Policy gives individuals rights over their personal data and protects individuals from the erroneous use of their personal data.

Whitley Bay High School is registered with the ICO (ICO registration number: Z8845007) as a Data Controller for the processing of living individuals' personal information.

2.0 Purpose

Whitley Bay High School Data Protection Policy has been produced to ensure its compliance with the UK GDPR laws and Data Protection Act 2018. It also incorporates updates following the introduction of the Data Use and Access Act (DUAA) 2025 which aims to amend and build on existing UK GDPR regulations.

The Policy incorporates guidance from the ICO and outlines the school's overall approach to UK GDPR including its responsibilities and individuals' rights.

3.0 Scope

This Policy applies to all employees (including temporary, agency staff and contractors, consultants and suppliers working for, or on behalf of, the school), governors, third parties and others who may process personal information on behalf of the school.

The Policy also covers any staff, governors, pupils and parents who may be involved in research or other activity that requires them to process or have access to personal data, for instance as part of a research project or as part of professional practice activities. If this occurs, it is the responsibility of the school to ensure the data is processed in accordance with UK GDPR and that pupils and staff are advised about their responsibilities.

4.0 Data covered by the Policy

A detailed description of this definition is available from the ICO, however briefly; personal data is information relating to an individual where the structure of the data allows the information to be accessed i.e. as part of a relevant filing system. This includes data held manually and electronically and data compiled, stored or otherwise processed by the school, or by a third party on its behalf.

In a school, Department of Education (DfE) guidance on Data Protection highlights the following as examples of personal data:

- identity details (for example, a name, title or role)
- contact details (for example, an address or a telephone number)
- information about pupil behaviour and attendance
- assessment and exam results
- staff recruitment information
- staff contracts
- staff development reviews
- staff and pupil references

Special category data is personal data that's considered more sensitive and given greater protection in law. Special category data includes:

- race;
- ethnic origin;
- politics;
- religion;
- trade union membership;
- genetics;
- biometrics (where used for ID purposes);
- health;
- sex life; or
- sexual orientation.

In line with DfE best practice guidance, the school also treats as special category data any personal data regarding:

- a safeguarding matter
- pupils in receipt of pupil premium
- pupils with special educational needs and disability (SEND)
- child in need (CIN)

- children looked after by a local authority (CLA)

Criminal offence data is personal data that's treated in a similarly sensitive way to special category data. It records criminal convictions and offences or related security measures.

Criminal offence data includes:

- the alleged committing of an offence
- the legal proceedings for an offence that was committed or alleged to have been committed, including sentencing

The school processes criminal offence data in storing the outcome of a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check on employees, non-employed staff and volunteers. As this data relates to criminal convictions, collecting and retaining it means the school is processing criminal offence data. This applies even though the check has not revealed any conviction.

5.0 The Seven Data Protection Principles

UK GDPR requires Whitley Bay High School, its staff and others who process or use any personal information to comply with the seven data protection principles.

The principles require that personal data shall be:

- 1) processed lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner in relation to individuals; principle summarised as 'lawfulness, fairness and transparency'
- 2) collected for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes and not further processed in a manner that is incompatible with those purposes; principle summarised as 'purpose limitation'
- 3) adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary in relation to the purposes for which they are processed; principle summarised as 'data minimisation'
- 4) accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date; principle summarised as 'accuracy'
- 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 are processed; principle summarised as 'storage limitation'
- 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, using appropriate technical or organisational measures; principle summarised as 'integrity and confidentiality (security)'

7) The controller (Whitley Bay High School) shall be responsible for and be able to demonstrate compliance with paragraph 1 (i.e. the previous six principles); principle summarised as 'accountability'

6.0 Responsibilities

Whitley Bay High School has an appointed Data Protection Officer to handle day-to-day issues which arise, and to provide members of the School with guidance on Data Protection issues to ensure they are aware of their obligations.

All new staff will be required to complete mandatory information governance training as part of their induction and existing staff will be required to undertake refresher training on a regular basis as part of Safeguarding Training.

All employees at Whitley Bay High School have access to a secure account and email via Office 365. The majority of roles within the school involving sensitive data and information can be carried out using these professional accounts. Therefore, staff must check with the Data Protection Officer or a member of the Senior Leadership Team if they intend to use other applications or programmes involving school information.

Employees and Governors of Whitley Bay High School are expected to:

- Familiarise themselves and comply with the seven data protection principles.
- Ensure any possession of personal data is accurate and up to date.
- Ensure their own personal information is accurate and up to date.
- Keep personal data for no longer than is necessary in line with retention guidelines.
- Ensure that any personal data they possess is secure and in compliance with Whitley Bay High School's information related policies and strategies.
- Acknowledge data subjects' rights (e.g. right of access to all their personal data held by Whitley Bay High School) under UK GDPR, and comply with access to those records.
- Ensure personal data is only used for those specified purposes and is not unlawfully used for any other business that does not concern Whitley Bay High School.
- Obtain consent when collecting, sharing or disclosing personal data. Students will be asked whether they have opted out of giving their consent when publishing information online.
- Read the E-Safety Policy ([Whitley Bay High School - Policies](#)) to ensure they:
 - Take care to ensure the safe keeping of personal data stored on both hardware and software, minimising the risk of its loss or misuse.

- Use personal data only on secure password protected computers and other devices, ensuring that they are properly “logged-off” at the end of any session in which they are using personal data. The school will automatically lock any screen after 5 minutes.
- Transfer data using encryption and secure password protected devices.
- When storing personal data on any portable computer system, mobile device, memory stick or any other removable media, staff must ensure:
 - The data must be encrypted and password protected.
 - The device must be password protected. (many memory sticks / cards and other mobile devices cannot be password protected – staff have the responsibility to check anything they may use)
 - The device must offer approved virus and malware checking software.
 - The data must be securely deleted from the device, in line with school policy (below) once it has been transferred or its use is complete.
- Take care when contacting a student, parent, or guardian, to ensure they are using the correct contact details – this includes checking phone numbers via SIMS for calls and double-checking they have selected the correct recipient for an e-mail, letter or text. When e-mailing a generic message to 2 or more recipients, the ‘bcc’ option on e-mails must be selected so as not to send parental e-mail addresses to other parents.
- Be cautious regarding data and information that is listed in any e-mails or written communication concerning a student or parent to ensure that only relevant data is recorded, and a professional tone is maintained at all times. Such communication may be requested as part of a Freedom of Information request, or as evidence logs for pastoral issues.
- Contact the Data Protection Officer for any concerns or doubt relating to data protection to avoid any infringements of UK GDPR.

Pupils, of Whitley Bay High School are expected to:

- Comply with the seven data protection principles
- Comply with any security procedures implemented by Whitley Bay High School.
- Complete their consent regarding the use of their personal data on induction to the school. All of our pupils are over 13 on admission, therefore can consent without parental feedback.
- Notify the school Data Protection Officer that they do not consent to the sharing of their data (in any form) online on the school website and social media accounts. An example could be when part of a team photo with the intended use of sharing this on the school Twitter account.

7.0 Obtaining, Disclosing and Sharing

Only personal data that is necessary for a specific School related business reason should be obtained.

Pupils and their parents and or Carers will be informed about how their data will be processed.

Upon acceptance of employment at Whitley Bay High School, members of staff also consent to the processing and storage of their data.

Data must be collected and stored in a secure manner as detailed in the school's E-Safety Policy.

Personal information must not be disclosed to any third party organisation without prior consent of the individual concerned. This also includes information that would confirm whether or not an individual is or has been an applicant, pupil or employee of Whitley Bay High School.

Whitley Bay High School may have a duty to disclose personal information in order to comply with legal or statutory obligations. UK GDPR allows the disclosure of personal data to authorised bodies, such as the police and other organisations that have a crime prevention or law enforcement function.

Personal information that is shared with third parties on a more regular basis shall be carried out under written agreement to stipulate the purpose and boundaries of sharing. For circumstances where personal information would need to be shared in the case of ad hoc arrangements, sharing shall be undertaken in compliance with UK GDPR.

8.0 Biometric Data

Biometric Data and its use in schools

Biometric data means personal information about an individual's physical or behavioural characteristics that can be used to identify that person; this can include their fingerprints, facial shape, retina and iris patterns, and hand measurements. All biometric information is considered to be personal data as defined by the Data Protection Act 1998; this means that it must be obtained, used and stored in accordance with that Act. Furthermore, the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 includes provisions which relate to the use of biometric data in schools and colleges when used as part of an automated biometric recognition system. These provisions are in addition to the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998.

One use of such data is for an automated biometric recognition system. This uses technology which measures an individual's physical or behavioural characteristics by using equipment that operates 'automatically' (i.e. electronically). Information from the individual is automatically compared with biometric information stored in the system to see if there is a match in order to recognise or identify the individual.

Schools that use pupils' biometric data must treat the data collected with appropriate care and must comply with the data protection principles as set out in the Data Protection Act 1998, UK GDPR, and DfE (2026) 'Protection of biometric data of children in schools and colleges'.

Where the data is to be used as part of an automated biometric recognition system, schools must also comply with the additional requirements in sections 26 to 28 of the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012.

Schools must ensure that each parent of a child is notified of the school's intention to use the child's biometric data as part of an automated biometric recognition system. The written consent of at least one parent must be obtained before the data is taken from the child and used. This applies to all pupils in schools and colleges under the age of 18. In no circumstances can a child's biometric data be processed without written consent.

Schools must not process the biometric data of a pupil (under 18 years of age) where:

- The child (whether verbally or non-verbally) objects or refuses to participate in the processing of their biometric data;
- No parent has consented in writing to the processing; or
- A parent has objected in writing to such processing, even if another parent has given written consent.

Schools and colleges must provide reasonable alternative means of accessing services for those pupils who will not be using an automated biometric recognition system.

Use of Biometric Data at Whitley Bay High School

Facial recognition is used to identify students as they order food from the school's catering contractor.

Just before ordering food, a camera will identify a child via their facial characteristics and match them to their catering account.

In order to do this, the school will arrange for a photo to be taken using the camera system. This system will take measurements of a child's face and convert these

measurements into a template to be stored on the system. The software reads key features including distance between facial features and compares this against the database of registered users. When it finds a match, it automatically opens the students cashless catering account allowing the operator to complete the sale of their school meal.

The system does not store an image of a child's face. The template (i.e. measurements taken from the child's face) is what will be used to permit the child to access their account.

Biometric information will only be shared with the payment provider CRB Cunninghams Ltd. The information will only be used for the purpose stated above. WBHS is responsible for ensuring that the information is stored securely and it is held on the schools own servers.

Before implementing this system, a Data Protection Impact Assessment was completed – this will be maintained and updated as appropriate by the Data Protection Officer.

Before any data is captured by the school, parents will receive information on its proposed use, and be asked to give written consent. Once consent from one parent has been given, student consent will also be sought and obtained. Should a parent or student not give consent then the data of that student will not be gathered. Similarly, should consent be withdrawn, then the data will be removed. The school will not use the biometric data of a child if a parent has objected to this in writing, even if the above mentioned consent process has previously been satisfied.

Alternative options to use of biometric data are available to students and parents including accessing their accounts via a pin, and use of payment cards.

Biometric data will be permanently deleted once a child is no longer at the school, or if consent is withdrawn after their data has been gathered.

9.0 Retention, Security and Disposal

Recipients responsible for the processing and management of personal data need to ensure that the data is accurate and up-to-date. If an employee, student or applicant is dissatisfied with the accuracy of their personal data, then they must inform Whitley Bay High School.

Personal information held in paper and electronic format shall not be retained for longer than is necessary. In accordance with Article 5 of the General Data Protection Regulations, personal information shall be collected and retained only for business, regulatory or legal purposes.

In accordance with the provisions of the UK GDPR, all staff whose work involves processing personal data, whether in electronic or paper format, must take personal responsibility for its secure storage and ensure appropriate measures are in place to prevent accidental loss or destruction of, or damage to, personal data.

The school also adheres to Cybersecurity Standards for Schools, and additionally tests the network and trains staff on keeping data safe and being aware of phishing attacks.

In accordance with Whitley Bay High School E-Safety Policy, staff working from home will be responsible for ensuring that personal data is stored securely and is not accessible to others. We advise no data is stored on any home device, but expect staff to follow the guidelines outlined above in Section 6 and within the E-Safety Policy.

All departments should ensure that data is destroyed in accordance with the Information and Records Management Society (IRMS) toolkit Retention Schedule when it is no longer required. This follows guidance from the DfE and the Schedule, taken from the IRMS Toolkit for Schools.

Personal data in paper format must be shredded or placed in the confidential waste bins provided. Personal data held in electronic format should be deleted, and CDs and pen drives that hold personal data passed to the I.T. team for safe disposal. Hardware should be appropriately disposed of in compliance with the ICT service provider contract and to ensure conformity with UK GDPR requirements – this process will be managed onsite by the I.T. Team.

10.0 Transferring Personal Data

Any transfer of personal data must be done securely in line with Whitley Bay High School's E-Safety Policy (outlined above in section 6).

Email communication is not always secure and sending personal data via external email should be avoided unless it is encrypted with a password provided to the recipient by separate means.

Care should be taken to ensure emails containing personal data are not sent to unintended recipients. It is important that emails are addressed correctly and care is taken when using reply all or forwarding or copying others in to emails. Use of the blind copy facility should be considered when sending an email to multiple recipients to avoid disclosing personal information to others.

Personal email accounts should not be used to send or receive personal data for work purposes.

11.0 Data Subjects Right of Access (Subject Access Requests)

Under UK GDPR, individuals (both staff and Pupils) have the right of access to their personal data held by Whitley Bay High School. This applies to data held in both paper and electronic format, and within a relevant filing system.

Whitley Bay High School shall use its discretion under UK GDPR to encourage informal access at a local level to a data subject's personal information, but it will also have a formal procedure for the processing of Subject Access Requests.

Any individual who wishes to exercise this right should make the request in writing by contacting the Data Protection Officer at Whitley Bay High School (via the general enquiry tab on the ['Contact Us'](#) page of our website).

Whitley Bay High School will not charge a fee. It will only release information upon receipt of a written request along with proof of identity or proof of authorisation where requests are made on the behalf of a data subject by a third party.

DUAA clarifies that organisations are only obliged to conduct searches that are 'reasonable and proportionate' when responding to Subject Access Requests. Should the school receive a request that we feel is overly broad, the requester will be asked to specify the specifics of their request. DUAA also clarifies that the school does not need to send information as part of a subject access request which has previously been provided.

The requested information will be provided within the statutory timescale of 1 month from receipt of the necessary documentation. This timescale will only be extended, in line with ICO guidance, where:

- The request is complex; or
- We have received several requests from the same person at the same time

Complex requests are defined as where the school is:

- experiencing technical difficulties with retrieving the information (eg if information is electronically archived).
- applying an exemption that involves large volumes of particularly sensitive information.
- clarifying potential issues around disclosing information about a child to a legal guardian.
- requiring specialist work to obtain the information or communicate it in an intelligible form.
- clarifying potential confidentiality issues around disclosing sensitive medical information to an authorised third party.
- needing to obtain specialist legal advice.

Where the school identifies that your request meets the definitions of a complex request, we will detail this to you and confirm the extended completion date that we will be working towards. The extension can be no more than a further two months, meaning that for complex requests you will receive a response no more than three months after your request officially started.

Privacy notices for students, staff, parents and suppliers are all available in the [GDPR](#) page of our website.

WBHS currently shares student, parent or staff information with external providers in order to facilitate teaching and learning and to ensure the smooth running of the school. A list of all providers is available in the GDPR section of our website (link above).

12.0 Reporting a Data Security Breach or making a complaint related to the use of data

It is important Whitley Bay High School responds to a data security breach quickly and effectively. A breach may arise from a theft, a deliberate attack on School systems, and unauthorised use of personal data, accidental loss or equipment failure. Any data breach should be reported to the Data Protection Officer (via the general enquiry tab on the '[Contact Us](#)' page of our website) and if it relates to an IT incident (including information security), should also be reported to the Headteacher.

Any breach will be investigated in line with the procedures within the UK GDPR. In accordance with that Policy, Whitley Bay High School will treat any breach as a serious issue. Each incident will be investigated and judged on its individual circumstances and addressed accordingly.

The Staffing, Staff Wellbeing and Development Committee will receive an annual report of data breaches at their first meeting of each academic year.

Data breaches that are reportable will be brought to the governors at the first available meeting of the Staffing, Staff Wellbeing and Development Committee. Serious breaches will be reported to the Chair of Governors straight away.

In line with GDPR, the school has a complaints policy which should be utilised by a data subject wishing to make a complaint regarding how their personal data has been used. Information on how to submit a complaint can be found on the following web page: [Whitley Bay High School - Policies](#).