



## Data Protection Act

Schools, Local Education Authorities (LEAs), the Department of Education and Skills (DfES), the government department which deals with education, the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA), Ofsted and the Learning Skills Council (LSC) all process information on pupils in order to run the education system, and in doing so have to comply with the Data Protection Act 1998. This means, among other things, that the data held about pupils must only be used for specific purposes allowed by law.

The **school** holds information on pupils in order to support their teaching and learning, to monitor and report on their progress, to provide appropriate pastoral care, and to assess how well the school as a whole is doing. This information includes contact details, National Curriculum assessment results, attendance information, characteristics such as ethnic group, special educational needs and any relevant medical information. From time to time schools are required to pass on some of data to LEAs, the DfES and to agencies, such as QCA, Ofsted and LSC, that are prescribed by law.

The **Local Education Authority** uses information about pupils to carry out specific functions for which it is responsible, such as the assessment of any special educational needs the pupil may have. It also uses the information to derive statistics to inform decisions on (for example) the funding of schools, and to assess the way that individual pupils cannot be identified from them.

The **Qualifications and Curriculum Authority** uses information about pupils to administer the National Curriculum tests and assessments for Key Stages 1 to 3. The results of these are passed on to DfES in order for it 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. Inspections reports do not identify individual pupils.

The **Learning and Skills Council** uses information about pupils for statistical purposes to evaluate and develop education policy and to monitor the performance of the education service as a whole. The statistics (including those based on information provided by the QCA) are used in such a way that individual pupils cannot be identified from them. On occasion information may be shared with other Government departments or agencies strictly for statistical or research purposes only.

The **Department for Children, Schools and Families (DfCSF)** 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 DfES will feed back to LEAs 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.

The DfES will also provide Ofsted with pupil level data for use in school inspection. Where relevant, pupil information may also be shared with post 16 learning institutions to minimise the administrative burden on application for a course and to aid preparation of learning plans. Pupils 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 LEAs and learning institutions to support their day to day business. The

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DfES may also use contact details from these sources to data obtained from statistical surveys.

Pupil data may also be shared with other Government Departments and Agencies (including the Office of 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 measure or decisions relation to particular individuals or identifies individuals in any results. This data sharing will be approved and controlled by the Department's Chief Statistician.

The DfES 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 so wish to access the personal data held about your child, then please contact the relevant organisation in writing.

- Ruishton C of E Primary School
- The C&PD Data Protection Co-ordinator, Michele Weaver, County Hall, Taunton, TA1 4DY
- The LEA's Data Protection Officer at The Records Office, Obridge Road, Taunton, TA2 7PU
- 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
- LSC's Data Protection Officer at Cheylesmore House, Quinton Road, Coventry, Warwickshire, CV1 2WT
- The DfES's Data Protection Officer at DfES, Caxton House, Caxton House, Tothill Street, LONDON, SW1 9NA

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 information requested.

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