



Department
for Education

Privacy notices

An explanation of privacy notices

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Version history

Version	Author	Date	Change history
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1.3	Kirsty Knox	November 2021	Document updated to reflect UK GDPR, refreshed links and clarified child friendly notices guidance
1.4	Alan Brooks	September 2022	Document and links updated
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1.6	Simon Summers	October 2023	Links to NPD Updated
1.7	Simon Summers	August 2024	Document substantially updated and revised

Privacy notice guide

This document explains the importance of using a privacy notice to educational establishments and local authorities. It contains information to explain what a privacy notice is, when it should be issued and what information we would expect it to contain. This document was substantially revised as part of a data protection review in 2024. It can also be accessed via a link in the privacy notices section of the [data protection in schools policies and procedures guide](#).

It is important to note that this document provides tips and guidance only. **It does not constitute formal legal guidance, a school / local authority is ultimately responsible for its own data protection procedures and compliance with legislation.** As you will process personal data that isn't solely for use within the Department for Education (DfE) data collections, this information **must** be expanded and amended to reflect local needs and circumstances.

A set of [privacy notice model documents](#) may also be found on GOV.UK. Please note these templates are also suggestions and must be reviewed and amended to reflect the type of institution and local circumstances.

Under UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018, every school must make its privacy notices freely available to those whose personal data it handles.

A privacy notice explains:

- why a school needs to collect personal data
- what it plans to do with it
- how long it will keep it
- whether it will be sharing it with any other organisation

Privacy notices need to be clear and accessible, and regularly reviewed and updated. Being transparent builds trust, avoids confusion and lets everyone in the school community know what to expect.

Privacy Notices should be reviewed by your data protection officer on at least an annual basis and should also be reviewed whenever you make a significant change to how you process personal data.

What to include in a privacy notice

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) has a list of [what a privacy notice should contain](#).

Your school's privacy notice must include what personal data your school shares with DfE. You can read examples of this text in [DfE's privacy notice model documents](#).

DfE's model privacy notices include suggested wording that schools can tailor to inform staff, parents, carers, and pupils about the collection of data.

A privacy notice can be in any format, provided it is accessible. For example, you can provide a short version of your privacy notice, along with details of how to view further information. This is known as a [layered approach to privacy notices](#).

Data subjects' rights

Data subjects' rights over the use of their personal data are key to a privacy notice. They are:

- the right to be informed
- the right of access
- the right to rectification
- the right to erasure
- the right to restrict processing
- the right to data portability
- the right to object
- rights in relation to automated decision-making and profiling

Your school should clearly communicate to data subjects:

- what personal data is being processed
- why their personal data is being processed
- on what lawful basis their personal data is being processed
- with whom their personal data will be shared and why
- how and for how long their personal data will be stored
- how they can exercise their rights over their personal data
- whom to contact if they have any questions or concerns

The information in your [record of processing activities](#) will be a useful source of information in this regard.

Inform data subjects about their privacy rights

Privacy notices are the most common way of complying with data subjects' right to be informed.

There are several ways you can keep data subjects informed about how your school deals with their personal data.

For pupils, these include sharing the school's privacy notice:

- in an induction pack, when joining the school
- at the start of each school year
- when they provide extra personal data during the school year
- through the school website

For staff, these include:

- when they apply for a role, accept a contract, are appraised, or leave the school
- ensuring existing staff members are made aware of the privacy notice at the start of each school year
- making the notice visible on the staff notice board and intranet

For pupils and staff, you must make sure the privacy notice is accessible at all times.

Download this [example template](#), which offers a simple way for a school to seek parents' and carers' consent to process children's personal data at the same time as they ask them to confirm or amend it.

Inform children about their privacy rights

Children have the same rights over their personal data as adults. Schools can be inventive in the way they present child-friendly privacy rights information, using diagrams, graphics, comic strips, videos and so on.

For example, DfE has a [privacy notice specifically for children and young people](#).

Introducing the idea of data privacy within wider online safety lessons will allow teachers to use age-appropriate language, ensure understanding and encourage pupils to ask questions.

Personal information shared with DfE

DfE collects personal information from educational settings, local authorities, and other organisations, via various statutory data collections. Each data collection or census guide contains the legislation detailing the lawful basis for collection.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education/about/personal-information-charter#how-we-use-your-information>

This data is used for many purposes, including to inform funding, monitor education policy and school accountability, and to support research.

Your school's privacy notice must include what personal data is shared with DfE. You can read examples of this text in [DfE's privacy notice model documents](#).



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