Boundary Oak School

DATA PROTECTION POLICY

1. Background

Data protection is an important legal compliance issue for Boundary Oak School. During the course of the School's activities it collects, stores and processes personal data (sometimes sensitive in nature) about staff, pupils, their parents, its contractors and other third parties (in a manner more fully detailed in the School's Privacy Notice). The School, as "data controller", is liable for the actions of its staff and (directors/proprietors) in how they handle data. It is therefore an area where all staff have a part to play in ensuring we comply with and are mindful of our legal obligations, whether that personal data handling is sensitive or routine.

The law changed on 25 May 2018 with the implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation (**GDPR**) – an EU Regulation that is directly effective in the UK, regardless of Brexit status – and a new Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA 2018) was also passed to deal with certain issues left for national law. The DPA 2018 included specific provisions of relevance to independent schools: in particular, in the context of our safeguarding obligations, and regarding the right of access to personal data.

Without fundamentally changing the principles of data protection law, and while providing some helpful new grounds for processing certain types of personal data, in most ways this new law has strengthened the rights of individuals and placed tougher compliance obligations on organisations including schools that handle personal information. The Information Commissioner's Office (**ICO**) is responsible for enforcing data protection law, will typically look into individuals' complaints routinely and without cost, and has various powers to take action for breaches of the law.

2. Definitions

Key data protection terms used in this data protection policy are:

- **Data controller** – a person or body that determines the purpose and means of the processing of personal data, and who is legally responsible for how it is used. For example, the School (including by its (directors/proprietors) is a controller. An independent contractor who makes their own such decisions is also, separately, likely to be a data controller.

- **Data processor** – an organisation that processes personal data on behalf of a data controller, for example a payroll or IT provider or other supplier of services with whom personal data may be shared but who is not authorised to make any decisions about how it is used.

- **Personal data breach** – a breach of security leading to the accidental or unlawful destruction, loss, alteration, unauthorised disclosure of, or access to, personal data.

- **Personal information (or 'personal data'):** any information relating to a living individual (a data subject) by which that individual may be identified by the controller. That is not simply a name but any form of identifier, digital or contextual, including unique ID numbers, initials, job titles or nicknames. Note that personal information will be created almost constantly in the ordinary course of work duties (such as in emails, notes of calls, and minutes of meetings). the definition includes expressions of opinion about the individual or any indication of the school's, or any person's, intentions towards that individual.

- **Processing** – virtually anything done with personal information, including obtaining or collecting it, structuring it, analysing it, storing it, sharing it internally or with third parties (including making it available to be viewed electronically or otherwise), altering it or deleting it.

- **Special categories of personal data –** data relating to racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, health and medical conditions, sex life or sexual orientation, genetic or biometric data used to identify an individual. There are also separate rules for the processing of personal data relating to criminal convictions and offences.

3. Application of this policy

This policy sets out the School's expectations and procedures with respect to processing any personal data we collect from data subjects (including parents, pupils, employees, contractors and third parties).

Those who handle personal data as employees or proprietors of the School are obliged to comply with this policy when doing so. For employees, breaches of this policy may result in disciplinary action. Accidental breaches of the law or this policy in handling personal data will happen from time to time, for example by human error, and will not always be treated a disciplinary issue. However, failure to report breaches that pose significant risks to the School or individuals will be considered a serious matter.

In addition, this policy represents the standard of compliance expected of those who handle the School's personal data as contractors, whether they are acting as "data processors" on the School's behalf (in which case they will be subject to binding contractual terms) or as data controllers responsible for handling such personal data in their own right.

Where the School shares personal data with third party data controllers – which may range from other schools, to parents, to appropriate authorities, to casual workers and volunteers – each party will need a lawful basis to process that personal data and will be expected to do so lawfully and with due regard to security and confidentiality, as set out in this policy.

If you are a volunteer or contractor, you will be a data controller in your own right, but the same legal regime and best practice standards set out in this policy will apply to you by law.

4. Person responsible for Data Protection at the School

In accordance with the Data Protection Act ('the Act'), the school has notified the Information Commissioner's Office of its processing activities. The school's ICO registration number is **ZA072493** and its registered address is Boundary Oak School, Roche Court, Wickham Road, Fareham, Hampshire PO17 5BL.

The school has appointed Thomas Kates, the Commercial Manager as the Compliance Officer who will endeavour to ensure that all personal data is processed in compliance with this policy and the principles of applicable data protection legislation. Any questions about the operation of this policy or any concerns that the policy has not been followed should be referred in the first instance to the Data Protection Lead.

5. The Principles

The GDPR sets out six principles relating to the processing of personal data which must be adhered to by data controllers (and data processors). These require that personal data must be:

1. Processed **lawfully, fairly** and in a **transparent** manner;

2. Collected for **specific and explicit purposes** and only for the purposes it was collected for;

3. **Relevant** and **limited** to what is necessary for the purposes it is processed;
4. **Accurate** and kept **up to date**;
5. **Kept for no longer than is necessary** for the purposes for which it is processed; and
6. Processed in a manner that ensures **appropriate security** of the personal data.

The GDPR's broader 'accountability' principle also requires that the School not only processes personal data in a fair and legal manner but that we are also able to *demonstrate* that our processing is lawful. This involves, among other things:

- keeping records of our data processing activities, including by way of logs and policies;
- documenting significant decisions and assessments about how we use personal data (including via formal risk assessment documents called Data Protection Impact Assessments); and
- generally having an 'audit trail' vis-à-vis data protection and privacy matters, including for example when and how our Privacy Notice(s) were updated; when staff training was undertaken; how and when any data protection consents were collected from individuals; how personal data breaches were dealt with, whether or not reported (and to whom), etc.

6. Lawful grounds for data processing

Under the GDPR there are several different lawful grounds for processing personal data. One of these is consent. However, because the definition of what constitutes consent has been tightened under GDPR (and the fact that it can be withdrawn by the data subject) it is considered preferable for the School to rely on another lawful ground where possible.

One of these alternative grounds is 'legitimate interests', which is the most flexible basis for processing. However, it does require transparency and a balancing assessment between the rights of the individual and the interests of the School. It can be challenged by data subjects and also means the School is taking on extra responsibility for considering and protecting people's rights and interests. The School's legitimate interests are set out in its Privacy Notice, as GDPR requires.

Other lawful grounds include:

- compliance with a legal obligation, including in connection with employment, engagement of services and diversity;
- contractual necessity, e.g. to perform a contract with staff or parents, or the engagement of contractors;
- a narrower set of grounds for processing special categories of personal data (such as health information), which includes explicit consent, emergencies, and specific public interest grounds.

7. Headline responsibilities of all staff

Record-keeping

It is important that personal data held by the School is accurate, fair, and adequate. Staff are required to inform the School if they believe that any personal data is inaccurate or untrue or if they are dissatisfied with how it is recorded. This applies to how staff record their own data and the personal data of others – in particular colleagues, pupils and their parents – in a way that is professional and appropriate.

Staff should be aware of the rights set out below, whereby any individuals about whom they record information on School business (notably in emails and notes) digitally or in hard copy files may have the right to see that information. This absolutely must not discourage staff from recording necessary and sometimes difficult records of incidents or conversations involving colleagues or pupils, in accordance with the School's other policies, and grounds may sometimes exist to withhold these from such requests. However, the starting position for staff is to **record every document or email in a form they would be prepared to stand by should the person about whom it was recorded ask to see it**.

Data handling

All staff have a responsibility to handle the personal data which they come into contact with fairly, lawfully, responsibly and securely and in accordance with the staff handbook and all relevant School policies and procedures (to the extent applicable to them). In particular, there are data protection implications across a number of areas of the School's wider responsibilities such as safeguarding and IT security, so all staff should read and comply with the following policies:

Privacy Notice
Acceptable Use of ICT Policy
Taking Storing and Using Images of Pupils Policy
Boundary Oak School Privacy Impact Assessment Procedures
Data Breach Policy

Responsible processing also extends to the creation and generation of new personal data / records, as above, which should always be done fairly, lawfully, responsibly, and securely.

Avoiding, mitigating, and reporting data breaches

One of the key new obligations contained in the GDPR is on reporting personal data breaches. Data controllers must report certain types of personal data breach (those which risk an impact to individuals) to the ICO within 72 hours.

In addition, data controllers must notify individuals affected if the breach is likely to result in a "high risk" to their rights and freedoms. In any event, the School must keep a record of any personal data breaches, regardless of whether we need to notify the ICO. If staff become aware of a personal data breach they must notify the Compliance Officer, Thomas Kates and/or the Head Sophie Savage. If staff are in any doubt as to whether to report something internally, it is always best to do so. A personal data breach may be serious, or it may be minor; and it may involve fault or not; but the School always needs to know about them to make a decision.

As stated above, the School may not need to treat the incident itself as a disciplinary matter – but a failure to report could result in significant exposure for the School, and for those affected, and could be a serious disciplinary matter whether under this policy or the applicable staff member's contract.

Care and data security

More generally, we require all School staff (and expect all our contractors) to remain mindful of the data protection principles (see section 3 above), and to use their best efforts to comply with those principles whenever they process personal information. Data security is not simply an online or digital issue but one that effects daily processes: filing and sending correspondence, notably hard copy documents. Data handlers should always consider what they most assured and secure means of delivery is, and what the consequences would be of loss or unauthorised access.

We expect all those with management / leadership responsibilities to be particular champions of these principles and to oversee the swift reporting of any concerns about how personal information is used by

the School to the Head, Sophie Savage, and to identity the need for (and implement) regular staff training. Staff must attend any training we require them to. Staff are required to participate in the yearly training courses and any training sessions run by the Compliance Officer, Thomas Kates.

8. Rights of Individuals

In addition to the School's responsibilities when processing personal data, individuals have certain specific rights, perhaps most significantly that of access to their personal data held by a data controller (i.e. the School). This is known as the 'subject access right' (or the right to make 'subject access requests'). Such a request must be dealt with promptly and does not need any formality, nor to refer to the correct legislation. If you become aware of a subject access request (or indeed any communication from an individual about their personal data), you must tell the Head as soon as possible.

Individuals also have legal rights to:

- require us to correct the personal data we hold about them if it is inaccurate.
- request that we erase their personal data (in certain circumstances);
- request that we restrict our data processing activities (in certain circumstances);
- receive from us the personal data we hold about them for the purpose of transmitting it in a commonly used format to another data controller;
- object, on grounds relating to their particular situation, to any of our particular processing activities where the individual feels this has a disproportionate impact on them; and

None of the above rights for individuals are unqualified and exceptions may well apply. However, certain rights are absolute and must be respected, specifically the right to:

- object to automated individual decision-making, including profiling (i.e. where a significant decision is made about the individual without human intervention);
- object to direct marketing; and

  withdraw one's consent where we are relying on it for processing their personal data (without affecting the lawfulness of processing carried out prior to that point in reliance on consent, or of any processing carried out on some other legal basis other than consent).

In any event, however, if you receive a request from an individual who is purporting to exercise one or more of their data protection rights, you must tell the Head as soon as possible.

9. Data Security: online and digital

The School must ensure that appropriate security measures are taken against unlawful or unauthorised processing of personal data, and against the accidental loss of, or damage to, personal data. Please refer to our AUP policy for further detail. In summary:

- No member of staff is permitted to remove personal data from School premises, whether in paper or electronic form and wherever stored, without the prior consent of the Head or Bursar.
- No member of staff should provide personal data of pupils or parents to third parties, including a volunteer or contractor, unless there is a lawful reason to do so. The Compliance officer is able to offer guidance on this ensuring that if data needs to be shared with third parties such as cloud-based systems, that there is an appropriate Data Sharing Agreement in place.

- Where a worker is permitted to take data offsite on memory sticks or personal devices it will need to be encrypted including School Laptops/Tablets.
- Use of personal email accounts or unencrypted personal devices by proprietors or staff for official School business is not permitted. All personal devices should be checked by the IT Manager.

10. Processing of Financial / Credit Card Data

The School complies with the requirements of the PCI Data Security Standard (PCI DSS). Staff who are required to process credit card data must ensure that they are aware of and comply with the most up-to-date PCI DSS requirements. If you are unsure in this regard, please seek further guidance from the Bursar. Other categories of financial information, including bank details and salary, or information commonly used in identity theft (such as national insurance numbers or passport details), may not be treated as legally sensitive but can have a material impact on individuals and should be handled accordingly.

11. Updates for 2025

Artificial Intelligence and Automated Decision-Making

- The school ensures that any use of AI in data processing complies with the ICO's AI auditing framework, emphasising transparency, human oversight, and safeguarding individual rights.

Data Breach Reporting

- Staff must report breaches to the Compliance Officer within 24 hours. High-risk breaches will be reported to the ICO within 72 hours.

Subject Access Requests (DSARs)

- Processes for responding to DSARs are streamlined to meet increased demand. Staff must notify the Head, a member of SLT or the compliance officer immediately upon receiving a request.

Training and Awareness

- Annual staff training will include updates on regulatory changes and enforcement trends. Senior management must attend additional sessions on governance responsibilities.

Digital Security Enhancements

- Mandating multi-factor authentication (MFA) for data access.
- Encrypting all sensitive data on portable devices.
- Enhancing ransomware and phishing awareness training.

It is in everyone's interests to get data protection right and to think carefully about data protection issues: this means handling all personal information with which you come into contact fairly, lawfully, securely and responsibly.

A good rule of thumb here is to ask yourself questions such as:

- *Would I be happy if my own personal information were being used (for example, shared with a third party) in the way I am proposing? Would I expect it?*

- *Would I wish to stand by how I have recorded this information in an email or official record if the person concerned was able to see it?*
- *What would be the consequences of my losing or misdirecting this personal data?*

Data protection law is, therefore, best seen not as oppressive red tape, or a reason not to do something necessary or important, but a code of useful and sensible checks and balances to improve how handle and record personal information and manage our relationships with people. This is an important part of the School's culture and all its staff and representatives need to be mindful of it.

Person responsible for the latest revision	GDPR Compliance Officer
Signed off by	Head
Last review	Jan 2025
Next review:	Jan 2026