**DATA PROTECTION POLICY (Exams)**

2024/25

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

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| Approved/reviewed by | |
|  | |
| Date of next review |  |

Key staff involved in the policy

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Role | Name(s) |
| Head of centre |  |
| Exams officer |  |
| Senior leader(s) | DATA PROTECTION POLICY (Exams) TEMPLATE  **Delete this text box when the information contained below is understood**  **Changes made to the contents of this template since the previous (2023/24) version are highlighted for easy identification**.A change may not always signify a regulation change/update, but rather to provide clarity.  This template has been provided as an example **only** and is intended to provide a starting point/framework on which to build a policy for exams-related information.  ([GR](https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations/), section 5.3) It is the responsibility of the **head of centre** to ensure that their centre: ...has in place the following policies for inspection that must be reviewed and updated annually... a written data protection policy  To ensure compliance, an organisation needs to identify and record:   * the information it holds on an individual * the personal/sensitive data on an individual this information contains * how the information is managed, stored and protected * how the information can be accessed by an individual and third parties * how and when the information is disposed of * how any security breaches will be dealt with   This template only provides a suggestion of how the above could be achieved in a centre and refers to information relating to the external examination process (You may also wish to include information relating to the internal examination process where/if relevant). Ideally you should liaise with the person in your centre assigned the role of Data Protection Officer to ensure compliance (in relation to exams-related information) is achieved.  The table (in Section 3) provides suggestions **only** in relation to hardware and software; add to the list or delete items as relevant to your centre.  In the table (Section 8) the list of information types provided **is not exhaustive** and has been taken from the table of record types (which may contain information relating to an individual) detailed in the example EXAMS ARCHIVING POLICY TEMPLATE. If your centre has made use of this template and added/deleted any record types, then remember to match the information types in this table.  ***The premise behind the publication of this template is to promote good practice in the handling of data - even that which does not come under any data protection regulations.***  Grey font provides example suggestions as illustration of how the tables could be completed – keep or edit this information accordingly; change the font colour to automatic.  [**Insert**…] fields are in coloured font to highlight them – this is to ensure the need to insert relevant centre-specific details stands out and is not overlooked – change colour to ‘automatic’ when inserted.  **Customise** the template to reflect ways of working and types of information held and managed in your centre in line with any centre-wide Data Protection Policy.  For more information and guidance consult the [Information Commissioner’s Office](https://ico.org.uk/) (or <https://ico.org.uk/for-the-public/schools/>) |
| IT manager |  |
| Data manager |  |

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The contents page has been produced by inserting a table of contents. The bold headings in the template have been formatted in ‘heading style’ so that they appear in the automated contents page. If you make changes to any of these headings, delete them, add extra pages to the document or remove pages, your table of contents should be updated.

To do this, go to the beginning of the contents page and click on the word **Contents** – the tab below appears.

 Click on the drop-down arrow, select ‘Update Table’ Graphical user interface, text

Description automatically generated

If you wish to remove the automated table of contents – either select the option shown above or in the ‘References’ menu, click on the ‘Table of Contents’ drop-down arrow and select ‘Remove Table of Contents’.You can then create your own contents page if required.

Purpose of the policy

This policy details how [insert centre name], in relation to exams management and administration, ensures compliance with the regulations as set out by the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA 2018) and UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

The delivery of examinations and assessments involve centres and awarding bodies processing a significant amount of personal data (i.e. information from which a living individual might be identified). It is important that both centres and awarding bodies comply with the requirements of the UK General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018 or law relating to personal data in any jurisdiction in which the awarding body or centre are operating.

In JCQ’s [General Regulations for Approved Centres](https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/general-regulations/) (section 6.1) reference is made to ‘data protection legislation’. This is intended to refer to UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018 and any statutory codes of practice issued by the Information Commissioner in relation to such legislation.

~~Students are given the right to find out what information the centre holds about them, how this is protected, how this can be accessed and how data breaches are dealt with.~~

It is the responsibility of the centre to inform candidates of the processing that the centre undertakes. For example, that the centre will provide relevant personal data including name, date of birth, gender to the awarding bodies for the purpose of examining and awarding qualifications.

All exams office staff responsible for collecting and sharing candidates’ data are required to follow strict rules called ‘data protection principles’ ensuring the information is:

* used fairly and lawfully
* used for limited, specifically stated purposes
* used in a way that is adequate, relevant and not excessive
* accurate
* kept for no longer than is absolutely necessary
* handled according to people’s data protection rights
* kept safe and secure

To ensure that the centre meets the requirements of the DPA 2018 and UK GDPR, all candidates’ exam information – even that which is not classified as personal or sensitive – is covered under this policy.

Section 1 – Exams-related information

There is a requirement for the exams office(r) to hold exams-related information on candidates taking external examinations. For further details on the type of information held please refer to Section 5 below.

Candidates’ exams-related data may be shared with the following organisations:

* Awarding bodies
* Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ)
* [insert (by listing) any other organisations as relevant to your centre e.g. Department for Education; Local Authority; Multi Academy Trust; Consortium; the Press; etc.]

This data may be shared via one or more of the following methods:

* hard copy
* email
* secure extranet site(s) – [insert as appropriate to your centre e.g. AQA Centre Services; OCR Interchange; Pearson Edexcel Online; WJEC Portal; City & Guilds Walled Garden; etc.]
* [insert any other methods as appropriate to your centre e.g. a Management Information System (MIS) provided by [insert MIS provider detail (e.g. ESS SIMS)] sending/receiving information via electronic data interchange (EDI) using A2C (<https://www.jcq.org.uk/about-a2c>) to/from awarding body processing systems; etc.]

This data may relate to exam entries, access arrangements, the conduct of exams and non-examination assessments including controlled assessments and coursework, special consideration requests and exam results/post-results/certificate information.

Section 2 – Informing candidates of the information held

[Insert centre name] ensures that candidates are fully aware of the information and data held.

All candidates are:

* informed via [insert how, e.g. centre newsletter, electronic communication, etc.]
* given access to this policy via [insert how e.g., centre website, written request, etc.]

Candidates are made aware of the above [insert when, e.g. at the start of a course ~~leading to a vocational qualification, or, where candidates are following GCE and GCSE qualifications,~~ or when the registrations/entries are submitted to awarding bodies for processing.].

Materials which are submitted by candidates for assessment may include any form of written work, audio and visual materials, computer programmes and data (“Student Materials”). Candidates will be directed to the relevant awarding body’s privacy notice if they require further information about how their Student Materials may be used by the awarding body.

~~At this point, the centre also brings to the attention of candidates the annually updated JCQ document~~ **~~Information for candidates~~** ~~–~~ **~~Privacy Notice~~** ~~which explains how the JCQ awarding bodies process their personal data in accordance with the DPA 2018 and UK GDPR (or law relating to personal data in any jurisdiction in which the awarding body or centre are operating).~~

Candidates eligible for access arrangements/reasonable adjustments which require awarding body approval using *Access arrangements online* are also required to provide their consent by signing the GDPR compliant JCQ candidate personal data consent form before approval applications can be processed online.

Section 3 – Hardware and software

The table below confirms how IT hardware, software and access to online systems is protected in line with DPA & GDPR requirements.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Hardware | Date of purchase and protection measures | Warranty expiry |
| [List the hardware used to manage/administer candidate information. Insert each as a new row in the table. Examples might include: Desktop computer; Laptop/tablet; etc.] | [Insert purchase date]  [Insert protection measures (liaise with the IT manager to determine these). Examples might include: when hardware is checked; by who; what is checked (hard drive scans etc.); antivirus protection up to date; etc.] | [Include if applicable or indicate N/A] |
|  |  |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Software/online system | Protection measure(s) |
| [Insert details of any software or system used where candidate information is stored] | [Insert the measures in place to protect the information from unauthorised/unlawful access (liaise with the IT/Data manager to determine these)] |
| [Insert each as a new row in the table. Examples might include: MIS; Intranet; Internet browser(s); Awarding body secure extranet site(s); A2C; etc.] | [Example measures might include: protected usernames and passwords; rules for password setting (use of a mix of upper/lower cases letters and numbers); rules for regularity of password changing; centre administrator has to approve the creation of new user accounts and determine access rights; regular checks to Firewall/Antivirus software; etc.] |
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Section 4 – Dealing with data breaches

Although data is handled in line with DPA/GDPR regulations, a data breach may occur for any of the following reasons:

* loss or theft of data or equipment on which data is stored
* inappropriate access controls allowing unauthorised use
* equipment failure
* human error
* unforeseen circumstances such as a fire or flood
* hacking attack
* ‘blagging’ offences where information is obtained by deceiving the organisation who holds it
* cyber-attacks involving ransomware infections

If a data protection breach is identified, the following steps will be taken:

1. **Containment and recovery**

[Insert staff name and/or role e.g. Data Protection Officer] will lead on investigating the breach.

It will be established:

* who needs to be made aware of the breach and inform them of what they are expected to do to assist in the containment exercise. This may include isolating or closing a compromised section of the network, finding a lost piece of equipment and/or changing the access codes
* whether there is anything that can be done to recover any losses and limit the damage the breach can cause. As well as the physical recovery of equipment, this could involve the use of back-up hardware to restore lost or damaged data or ensuring that staff recognise when someone tries to use stolen data to access accounts
* which authorities, if relevant, need to be informed

1. **Assessment of ongoing risk**

The following points will be considered in assessing the ongoing risk of the data breach:

* what type of data is involved?
* how sensitive is it?
* if data has been lost or stolen, are there any protections in place such as encryption?
* what has happened to the data? If data has been stolen, it could be used for purposes which are harmful to the individuals to whom the data relates; if it has been damaged, this poses a different type and level of risk
* regardless of what has happened to the data, what could the data tell a third party about the individual?
* how many individuals’ personal data are affected by the breach?
* who are the individuals whose data has been breached?
* what harm can come to those individuals?
* are there wider consequences to consider such as a loss of public confidence in an important service we provide?

1. **Notification of breach**

Notification will take place to enable individuals who may have been affected to take steps to protect themselves or to allow the appropriate regulatory bodies to perform their functions, provide advice and deal with complaints.

1. **Evaluation and response**

Once a data breach has been resolved, a full investigation of the incident will take place. This will include:

* reviewing what data is held and where and how it is stored
* identifying where risks and weak points in security measures lie (for example, use of portable storage devices or access to public networks)
* reviewing methods of data sharing and transmission
* increasing staff awareness of data security and filling gaps through training or tailored advice
* reviewing contingency plans

Section 5 – Candidate information, audit and protection measures

For the purposes of this policy, all candidates’ exam-related information – even that not considered personal or sensitive under the DPA/GDPR – will be handled in line with DPA/GDPR guidelines.

An information audit is conducted [detail the regularity].

The table below details the type of candidate exams-related information held, and how it is managed, stored and protected

Protection measures may include:

* password protected area on the centre's intranet
* secure drive accessible only to selected staff
* information held in secure area
* updates undertaken every [XX] months (this may include updating antivirus software, firewalls, internet browsers etc.)

Section 6 – Data retention periods

Details of retention periods, the actions taken at the end of the retention period and method of disposal are contained in the centre’s [insert e.g. Exams Archiving Policy] which is available/accessible from [insert who and/or where].

Section 7 – Access to information

(With reference to ICO information <https://ico.org.uk/your-data-matters/schools/exam-results/>)

The GDPR gives individuals the right to see information held about them. This means individuals can request information about them and their exam performance, including:

* their mark
* comments written by the examiner
* minutes of any examination appeals panels

This does not however give individuals the right to copies of their answers to exam questions.

**Requesting exam information**

Requests for exam information can be made to [insert staff name and/or role e.g. the Data Protection Officer] in [insert how e.g. writing/email and how ID will need to be confirmed if a former candidate is unknown to current staff].

The GDPR does not specify an age when a child can request their exam results or request that they aren’t published. When a child makes a request, those responsible for responding should take into account whether:

* the child wants their parent (or someone with parental responsibility for them) to be involved; and
* the child properly understands what is involved.

The ability of young people to understand and exercise their rights is likely to develop or become more sophisticated as they get older. As a general guide, a child of 12 or older is expected to be mature enough to understand the request they are making. A child may, of course, be mature enough at an earlier age or may lack sufficient maturity until a later age, and so requests should be considered on a case by case basis.

A decision will be made by [insert who/role] as to whether the student is mature enough to understand the request they are making, with requests considered on a case by case basis.

**Responding to requests**

If a request is made for exam information before exam results have been published, a request will be responded to:

* within five months of the date of the request, or
* within 40 days from when the results are published (whichever is earlier).

If a request is made once exam results have been published, the individual will receive a response within one month of their request.

**Third party access**

Permission should be obtained before requesting personal information on another individual from a third-party organisation.

Candidates’ personal data will not be shared with a third party [insert your centre’s process for sharing data with a third-party e.g. unless a request is accompanied with permission from the candidate and appropriate evidence (where relevant), to verify the ID of both parties, provided].

In the case of looked-after children or those in care, agreements may already be in place for information to be shared with the relevant authorities (for example, the Local Authority). The centre's Data Protection Officer will confirm the status of these agreements and approve/reject any requests.

**Sharing information with parents**

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| --- |
| **[Insert here any information or centre policy regarding sharing information with parents. Example provided below. Where not considered relevant to include in your centre policy here, delete this table and the heading above it]**  The centre will take into account any other legislation and guidance regarding sharing information with parents (including non-resident parents and a local authority (the ‘corporate parent’), as example guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) regarding parental responsibility and school reports on pupil performance:   * **Understanding and dealing with issues relating to parental responsibility** [www.gov.uk/government/publications/dealing-with-issues-relating-to-parental-responsibility/understanding-and-dealing-with-issues-relating-to-parental-responsibility](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dealing-with-issues-relating-to-parental-responsibility/understanding-and-dealing-with-issues-relating-to-parental-responsibility) (Updated 24 August 2023 to include guidance on the role of the 'corporate parent', releasing GCSE results to a parent and notifying separated parents about a child moving school) * **School reports on pupil performance**   [www.gov.uk/guidance/school-reports-on-pupil-performance-guide-for-headteachers](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/school-reports-on-pupil-performance-guide-for-headteachers) |

**Publishing exam results**

|  |
| --- |
| **[Insert here any information or centre policy regarding publishing exam results (where applicable). Examples provided below. Where not considered relevant to include in your centre policy here, delete this table and the heading above it]**  When considering publishing exam results, [insert centre name] will make reference to the  ICO (Information Commissioner’s Office) <https://ico.org.uk/your-data-matters/schools/exam-results>/Can schools give my exam results to the media for publication?  OR  [Insert centre name] will publish exam results to the media or within the centre (e.g. on an honours board) in line with the following principles:   * Refer to guidelines as published by the Joint Council for Qualifications * Act fairly when publishing results, and where people have concerns about their or their child’s information being published, taking those concerns seriously * Ensure that all candidates and their parents/carers are aware as early as possible whether examinations results will be made public and how this will be done * Explain how the information will be published. For example, if results will be listed alphabetically, or in grade order   As [insert centre name] will have a legitimate reason for publishing examination results, consent is not required from students or their parents/carers for publication. However, if a student or their parents/carers have a specific concern about publication of their results, they have the right to object. This objection must be made in writing to [insert name/role of individual], who will consider the objection before making a decision to publish and reply with a good reason to reject the objection to publish the exam results. |

Section 8 – Table recording candidate exams-related information held

For details of how to request access to information held, refer to section 7 of this policy (**Access to information**)

For further details of how long information is held, refer to section 6 of this policy (**Data retention periods**)

| Information type | Information description (where required) | What personal/sensitive data is/may be contained in the information | Where information is stored | How information is protected | Retention period |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Access arrangements information |  | Candidate name  Candidate DOB  Gender  ~~Data protection notice (candidate signature)~~ Signed candidate personal data consent form  Diagnostic testing outcome(s)  Specialist report(s) (may also include candidate address)  Evidence of normal way of working | Access Arrangements Online  MIS  Lockable metal filing cabinet | Secure user name and password  [insert]  In secure office (SENCo) |  |
| Alternative site arrangements |  |  |  |  |  |
| Attendance registers copies |  |  |  |  |  |
| Candidates’ scripts |  |  |  |  |  |
| Candidates’ work |  |  |  |  |  |
| Centre consortium arrangements for centre assessed work |  |  |  |  |  |
| Certificates |  |  |  |  |  |
| Certificate destruction information |  |  |  |  |  |
| Certificate issue information |  |  |  |  |  |
| Conflicts of interest records |  |  |  |  |  |
| Entry information |  |  |  |  |  |
| Exam room incident logs |  |  |  |  |  |
| Invigilator and facilitator training records |  |  |  |  |  |
| Overnight supervision information |  |  |  |  |  |
| Post-results services: confirmation of candidate consent information |  |  |  |  |  |
| Post-results services: requests/outcome information |  |  |  |  |  |
| Post-results services: scripts provided by ATS service |  |  |  |  |  |
| Post-results services: tracking logs |  |  |  |  |  |
| Private candidate information |  |  |  |  |  |
| Resilience arrangements: Evidence of candidate performance |  |  |  |  |  |
| Resolving timetable clashes information |  |  |  |  |  |
| Results information |  |  |  |  |  |
| Seating plans |  |  |  |  |  |
| Special consideration information |  |  |  |  |  |
| Suspected malpractice reports/outcomes |  |  |  |  |  |
| Transferred candidate arrangements |  |  |  |  |  |
| Very late arrival reports/outcomes |  |  |  |  |  |
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