DATA PROTECTION POLICY (Exams)

2025/26

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Key staff involved in the policy

Role	Name(s)
Head of centre	Miss K Stephenson
Exams officer	Mrs C Bauwens
Senior leader(s)	Mr R Grierson, Mrs P Town, Mrs T Godsell-Wright, Mrs S Bloomfield

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Purpose of the policy

This policy details how Boroughbridge High School, 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 (section 6) 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.

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 and 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)
- Local Authority
- Consortium
- Press
- Department for Education

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

- hard copy
- email
- ▶ secure extranet site(s) – AQA Centre Services, OCR Interchange, Pearson Edexcel Online WJEC Secure Services, GL Assessment, SISRA Analytics, FFT Aspire.
- ▶ Management Information System (MIS) provided by Bromcom
- Sending/receiving information via electronic data interchange (EDI) using A2C (https://www.jcq.org.uk/about-a2c) to/from awarding body processing systems

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

Boroughbridge High School ensures that candidates are fully aware of the information and data held.

All candidates are:

- informed via school website and electronic communication
- given access to this policy via the school website

Candidates are made aware of the above when 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 programs 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.

Candidates eligible for access arrangements which require awarding body approval will be informed that an application for access arrangements will be processed using *Access arrangements online*, complying with the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Candidates involved in suspected or alleged malpractice will be informed that their personal data will be provided to the awarding body (or bodies) whose examinations/assessments are involved, and that personal data about them may also be shared with other awarding bodies, the qualifications regulator or professional bodies, in accordance with the JCQ document *Suspected Malpractice – Policies and Procedures*.

Candidates will be informed:

- that awarding bodies may be required to provide a candidate's personal data to educational agencies, such as DfE, Welsh Government, Department of Education (Northern Ireland), ESFA, regulators, HESA, UCAS, Local Authorities and the Learning Records Service (LRS)
- that their personal data may be provided to a central record of qualifications approved by the awarding bodies for statistical and policy development purposes
- of the processing that the centre undertakes, for example, that the centre will provide relevant personal data, including name, date of birth and gender, to the awarding bodies for the purpose of examining and awarding qualifications

Candidates may obtain access to their personal data, such as examination results by applying to the appropriate awarding body's data protection officer.

Candidates are also referred to the centre's parents and pupil's privacy notice (which is on the school website) which explains:

- why Boroughbridge High 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

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
Desktop computer Laptop	February 2022 2020 Encrypted disks; administrator access restricted to IT Staff; PC protected by real time Sophos antivirus; monthly security updates automatically deployed via MDT; users access profiles created for role specific requirements; user password policy rigorously enforced. Data transfer via Internal/External networks pass through successive levels of filtering and content/email checking to block Malware/Suspicious attachments and files

Software/online system	Protection measure(s)
Bromcom MIS Microsoft Office (Excel and Word)	Internal servers are hosted in secure, dedicated on site computer room with nightly backups taken to a secure location in a separate school location. These systems have restricted administrator access, full back-up regime, and user access to data is controlled by full AD authentication. Full event logging is in place. External access to networks and by default all IT equipment is protected by a combination of layers of security. Every network perimeter point has a firewall. Full support and maintenance agreement for all critical business systems User system security Regularly reviewed and monitored
User System security & MIS	Regularly reviewed and monitored Inactive or no longer required accounts are disabled and held in a graveyard account. Archive and deletion is dependent on users role and need for making data available for ex- students. Passwords are valid for 90 days then are compulsory changed, they must be a minimum of 8 mixed characters and cannot re-use the 5 previously used passwords
A2C	Integrated into Bromcom, only the Exams Officer will use.
Access to Internet	Via broadband suppliers' managed Firewall and Netsweeper web filter

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

Kathryn Stephenson Headteacher will lead on investigating the breach or nominate a member of staff to investigate.

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

2. 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?

3. 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.

4. 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 annually.

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 daily (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 Exams Archiving Policy which is available/accessible from the Exam Officer and the Headteacher.

Section 7 – Access to information

(With reference to ICO information https://ico.org.uk/for-the-public/schools/exam-results/)

The UK 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 the Exams Officer in writing, if the former candidate is unknown to current staff ID will need to be confirmed via Birth Certificate, Passport or suitable ID. All requests will be dealt with within 40 calendar days.

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 Kathryn Stephenson, Headteacher 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 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

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 (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

Publishing exam results

When considering publishing exam results, Boroughbridge High School 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?

As Boroughbridge High School 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 the Exams Officer, 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	Information collected by SENCo to process access arrangements	Candidate name Candidate DOB Gender 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	MFA: Secure user name and password In secure area soley assigned to exams and SENCo	Retained as long as pupil records as defined in NYCC Retention Policy
Attendance registers copies	Registers record attendance at each written exam, are kept with seating plan and exam room incident log	Candidate Name Gender Candidate Number Attendance at exam	MIS Lockable metal filing cabinet	Secure user name and password In secure area solely assigned to exams	Retained until the post-results period has been completed for that exam series
Candidates' scripts	Scripts held in Secure Exam Storage until collection by Parcelforce	Candidate name Candidate signature	Exam Secure Storage	In secure area solely assigned to exams	
Candidates' work	Controlled assessments, coursework and nonexamination assessments	Candidate name Candidate number Candidate marks and grades	Lockable metal filing cabinet	In secure area solely assigned to exams	Retained until the post-results period has been completed for that exam series
Certificates	Record of achievement	Candidate name Candidate DOB	Lockable metal filing cabinet	In secure area solely assigned to exams staff	Retained securely for a minimum of

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
		Gender Result			12 months from date of issue.
Certificate issue information	A record of certificates that have been issued to candidates	Candidate name Candidate DOB Gender Result	Certificate collection file/book and stored in lockable metal filing cabinet	In secure area solely assigned to exams	Indefinite
Entry information	A record of which qualifications candidates have been entered for.	Candidate name Candidate DOB Gender Qualification information	MIS	Secure user name and password Accessible only to EO and SLT	Retained until post results period is completed for relevant exam series
Exam room incident logs	Logs detailing activity in exam rooms from start to finish	Candidate name Candidate DOB Gender Access Arrangements used Any toilet breaks or interruptions	With corresponding attendance registers and seating plans in exams office (locked room)	Only accessible to EO	To be retained until deadline for RORs or resolution of any outstanding enquiries/appeals for relevant exam series
Invigilator and facilitator training records	Logs detailing attendance of training sessions for invigilation	Invigilator Name Invigilator address Invigilator telephone numbers	Computer drive	Only accessible to EO/ EO line manager	To be retained until deadline for RORs or resolution of any outstanding enquiries/appeals for relevant academic year
Post-results services: confirmation of candidate consent information	Hard copy or email record of candidate consent for an EAR or ATS request to be	Candidate name Candidate DOB Candidate result information	Post results file for relevant academic year in secure area	Secure user name and password	ROR consent to be retained for at least six months following the outcome of the

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
	submitted to an awarding body			In secure area solely assigned to exams	enquiry or any subsequent appeal. ATS consent to be retained for at least six months from the date consent given.
Post-results services: requests/outcome information	Any hard or digital copies of information relating to a post-results service request (EARs, appeals, ATS) submitted to an awarding body.	Candidate name Candidate number Candidate results information	Post-results services file for relevant academic year	Only accessible by EO staff. Only shared with Head of Centre and Senior Leadership Team	Retained for at least six months following the outcome of the enquiry or any subsequent appeal.
Post-results services: scripts provided by ATS service	Copy, digital or original exam scripts returned to the centre by the awarding body.	Candidate name Candidate number Candidate results information	Where scripts are retained by the centre, they are securely stored (including any electronic versions) and not edited in any way or disposed of until after the awarding body deadline.		Returned to the requester after the postresults period is complete
Post-results services: tracking logs	A log tracking to resolution all post-results service requests submitted to awarding bodies.	Candidate name Candidate number Candidate results information	Post-results services file for relevant academic year	Only accessible by EO	Retained for at least six months following the outcome of the enquiry or any subsequent appeal.
Resolving timetable clashes information	Any information relating to the resolution of a candidate's clash of exam papers or a timetable variation.	Candidate name Candidate number	MIS	Only accessible by EO	To be retained until the deadline for EARs or the resolution of any outstanding enquiries/appeals

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
					for the relevant exams series.
Results information	Broadsheets of results summarising candidate	Candidate name, candidate number, DOB, gender, result information	MIS Results file for relevant academic year in secure area	Secure user name and password In secure area solely assigned to exams	Records for current year plus previous 6 years to be retained as a minimum
Seating plans	Plans showing the seating arrangements of all candidates for every exam taken	Candidate name Candidate number Candidate toilet breaks Access arrangements	MIS Lockable metal filing cabinet	Only accessible by EO staff	To be kept until the deadline for EARs and the resolution of any outstanding enquiries/appeals for the relevant exams series.
Special consideration information	Any hard or digital copies of information relating to a special consideration request and supporting evidence submitted to an awarding body for a candidate.	Candidate name Candidate number Candidate date of birth Candidate medical information	Lockable filing cabinet	Only accessible by EO	To be kept until the deadline for EARs and the resolution of any outstanding enquiries/appeals for the relevant exams series.
Suspected malpractice reports/outcomes	Any hard or digital copies of information relating to a suspected malpractice investigation/report submitted to an awarding body and outcome information from the awarding body.	Candidate name Candidate number	Malpractice for relevant academic year in secure area	Only accessible by EO, Head of Centre and member of SLT who carried out investigation	To be kept until the deadline for EARs and the resolution of any outstanding enquiries/appeals for the relevant exam series.

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
Very late arrival reports/outcomes	Any hard or digital copies of information relating to a very late arrival report submitted to an awarding body for a candidate and outcome information from the awarding body.	Candidate name Candidate number	In Exams: Late Arrivals for relevant academic year in secure area	Only accessible by EO	To be kept until the deadline for EARs and the resolution of any outstanding enquiries/appeals or the relevant exams series.