



Ponteland Community Middle School

Data Protection

Schools, Local Authorities (LAs) the (DCSF), the government department which deals with education, the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA), Ofsted and the Learning and 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. We are, therefore, writing to tell you about the types of data held, why that data is held, and to whom it may be passed on.

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 this data to the Local Authority, the DCSF and to agencies, such as QCA, Ofsted and the Learning Skills Council, that are prescribed by law.

The **Local Authority (LA)** 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 performance of schools and set targets for them. The statistics are used in such a way that individual pupils cannot be identified from them.

The **Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA)** 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 DCSF 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. Inspection reports do not identify individual pupils.

The **Learning and Skills Council (LSC)** 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 (DCFS)** 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 DCFS will feed back to Local Authorities 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 DCSF 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 the preparation of learning plan.

Pupil 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 LAs and learning institutions to support their day to day business. The DCFS may also use contact details from these sources to obtain samples for statistical surveys: these surveys may be carried out by research agencies working under contract to the Department and participation in such surveys is usually voluntary. The Department may also match data from these sources to data obtained from statistical surveys.

Pupil data may also be shared with other Government Departments and Agencies (including the Office for National Statistics) for statistical or research purposes only. In all these cases the individualised data is used in the processing operation, but that data will not be processed in such a way that it supports measures or decisions relating to particular individuals or identifies individuals in any results. This data sharing will be approved and controlled by the Department's Chief Statistician.

The DCFS 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 wish to access the personal data held about your child, then please contact the relevant organisation in writing:

- The school at Ponteland Community Middle School, Callerton Lane, Ponteland, NE20 9EY;
- The LA's Data Protection Officer at Northumberland County Council, County Hall, Morpeth, Northumberland. NE61 2RF;
- The QCA's Data Protection Officer at QCA, 83 Piccadilly, London, W1J 8QA;
- Ofsted's Data Protection Officer at Cheylesmore House, Quinton Road, Coventry, Warwickshire, CV1 2WT;
- The DCFS's Data Protection Officer at DCFS, Caxton House, Tothill Street, London, SW1H 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.

Separately from the Data Protection Act, regulations provide a pupil's parent (regardless of the age of the pupil) with the right to view, or to have a copy of their child's educational record at the school. If you wish to exercise this right you should write to the school.