



Bexhill
Academy

Data Protection Policy

Adopted: January 2025
Next Review: January 2026
Reviewed by: Mr F Tumi

Date	Changes	Page number
Jan 25	Changes made as per JCQ updates	

Key staff involved in the policy

Role	Name(s)
Head of centre	Dr Neal
Exams Officer	Mrs Heynes
Senior leader(s)	Mr Tumi
Data Protection Officer	
IT manager	Mr Kent
Data manager	Mr Williams

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Purpose of the policy

This policy details how Bexhill Academy, in relation to exams management and administration, ensures compliance with the regulations as set out by the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA 2018) and 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 6.1) 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.

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
- not transferred outside the European Economic Area without adequate protection

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
- Department Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ)
- for Education, Local Authority, Further Education Colleges

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

- hard copy
- email
- secure extranet site(s) – e.g. AQA Centre Services; OCR Interchange; Pearson Edexcel Online; WJEC Portal; Secure Website; City & Guilds Walled Garden; etc.
- a Management Information System (MIS) (provided by Capita 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

Bexhill Academy ensures that candidates are fully aware of the information and data held.

All candidates are:

- informed via assemblies, the school website and letters home
- given access to this policy via the school website

Candidates are made aware of the above at the start of a course leading to a vocational qualification or when the 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.

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
Desktop computers	Anti virus purchased 2/3/2024 – 36 month term	No warranty
Laptop computers	Anti virus purchased 2/3/2024 – 36 month term Some have warranty - those bought less than 3 years ago – 30 machines in 23/02/2023	1/3/2024 (Some machines)

Software/online system	Protection measure(s)
MIS	Restricted users access in MIS
File Server	Strong passwords. Restricted file access permissions. A/V updated daily and monitored centrally. All access changes through IT department.
A2C	Restricted username/password

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

Michelle Hercock (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

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 weekly (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 in hard copy in the file marked 'policies' above the Exams Officer's desk and is available on the Academy website (within 'Exams Policy').

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 Michelle Hercock - Data Protection Officer in writing. ID (ie passport, driving licence) 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.

Responding to requests

As stated by the Information Commissioner's Office, 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, Bexhill Academy 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?

Bexhill Academy 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 Bexhill Academy will have a legitimate reason for publishing examination results, consent is not required from students or their parents or guardians for publication, however, if a student has a specific concern about the publication of their results, they have the right to object. We therefore ask students to sign a consent form on Results Day. This form asks for the student to confirm that they have collected their GCSE results, that the centre is allowed access to their scripts in order for them to be used in the classroom without their name and candidate showing and that, if necessary, their results may be published. We would consider objections from students and parents before making the decision to publish.

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 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 In secure office (SENCo)	6 years
Alternative site arrangements		Candidate name Candidate DOB Gender	MIS Lockable metal filing cabinet	Secure user name and password In secure Exams Office	6 years
Attendance registers copies		Candidate name Candidate Number	Secure Storage	In secure Exams Office	After Post Results Services
Candidates' scripts		Candidate Legal Name Candidate Number	Secure Storage	Packaged in Exam Room – Stored in Secure Exams Office until collected	That day – next day at latest depending on Parcel Force collection time
Candidates' work		Candidate Legal Name Candidate Number	Teaching classrooms	Secure cupboards	End of academic year – Those kept for teaching and learning will have

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
					the candidate name and any personal information removed
Centre consortium arrangements for centre assessed work	N/A				
Certificates		Candidate Legal Name	Secure Storage	Within secure exams cupboard – only 4 staff members have access to the storage	1 year
Certificate destruction information		Candidate name Candidate number	Centre secure network	Secure username and password	Indefinite
Certificate issue information		Candidate name	Secure Storage	Within secure exams cupboard – only 4 staff members have access to the storage	1 year
Conflicts of Interest records		Candidate name Candidate number	Centre secure network Hard copy in file in exams office	Secure username and password Secure exams office	
Entry information		Candidate name & Legal name Candidate number	MIS Hard copy in file in exams office	Secure exams office while live and secure storage after 1 st year	6 years
Exam room incident logs		Candidate name Candidate number	Paper format in exams office	Secure exams office	After Post Results Services

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
Invigilator and facilitator training records		Invigilator name	Centre secure network & Hard copy in Policies file for the inspection visit.	Secure exams office	1 year
Overnight supervision information	This has not yet been relevant				
Post-results services: confirmation of candidate consent information		Candidate name	Hard copy in exams office	Secure exams office	After Post Results Service
Post-results services: requests/outcome information		Candidate name Candidate number	Hard copy in exams office / secure network	Secure exams office / username and password	After Post Results Service
Post-results services: scripts provided by ATS service		Candidate name Candidate number	Given to Head of Department and placed in their secure storage	Candidate information is removed	End of PRS or longer of used for teaching and learning
Post-results services: tracking logs		Candidate name Candidate number	A spreadsheet is created and stored on the centre secure network	Username and password	After Post Results Services
Private candidate information	We do not accept Private Candidates				
Resilience arrangements: Evidence of candidate performance					
Resolving timetable clashes information		Candidate name Candidate number	MIS, Centre secure network	Username and password	6 years
Results information		Candidate name Candidate number	MIS, secure Exam Board websites, secure storage	Username and password / only 4	6 years

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
				staff have access to the secure storage	
Seating plans		Candidate name Candidate number	Secure exams office until the day before the exams when an enlarged copy is put in a locked display cabinet. A copy is given to invigilators and centre staff to complete registers and set up exam rooms	Only accessible by Exams Officer until the day prior to the exam, locked display cabinet is only accessible by exams staff. All copies are returned to the exams officer after each exams – completed registers are held in secure storage	After Post Results Services
Special consideration information		Candidate name Candidate number	File in exams office	Secure office in a secure area	6 years
Suspected malpractice reports/outcomes		Candidate name Candidate number	File in exams office	Secure office in a secure area	10 years
Transferred candidate arrangements	Transferred candidate arrangements	Candidate name Candidate number	MIS if our candidate, Centre secure network if candidate belongs to another Centre. Paperwork in exams office	Secure office in a secure area	6 years
Very late arrival reports/outcomes	Very late arrival reports/outcomes	Candidate name Candidate number	Exams office, centre secure network, relevant secure Exam Board website	Secure office in a secure area, username and password	6 years