Data Breach Policy

Approved by:	Board of Trustees	**Date:** 07/10/2025
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Monitoring & Review	HR – Every 2 years	

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1 Introduction

The UK General Data Protection Regulation (UKGDPR) (2018) aims to protect the rights of individuals about whom data is obtained, stored, processed, or supplied and requires that organisations take appropriate security measures against unauthorised access, alteration, disclosure, or destruction of personal data.

The UKGDPR places obligations on staff to report actual or suspected data breaches and our procedure for dealing with breaches is set out below. All members of staff are required to familiarise themselves with its content and comply with the provisions contained in it. Training will be provided to all staff to enable them to carry out their obligations within this policy.

Data Processors will be provided with a copy of this policy and will be required to notify the Trust of any data breach without undue delay after becoming aware of the data breach. Failure to do so may result in a breach to the terms of the processing agreement.

Breach of this policy will be treated as a disciplinary offence which may result in disciplinary action under the Trust's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure up to and including summary dismissal depending on the seriousness of the breach.

This policy does not form part of any individual's terms and conditions of employment with the Trust and is not intended to have contractual effect. Changes to data protection legislation will be monitored and further amendments may be required to this policy to remain compliant with legal obligations.

2 Definitions

2.1 Personal data

Personal data is any information relating to an individual where the individual can be identified (directly or indirectly) from that data alone or in combination with other identifiers we possess or can reasonably access. This includes special category data and pseudonymised personal data but excludes anonymous data or data that has had the identity of an individual permanently removed.

Personal data can be factual (for examples a name, email address, location, or date of birth) or an opinion about that person's actions or behaviour.

Personal data will be stored either electronically or as part of a structured manual filing system in such a way that it can be retrieved automatically by reference to the individual or criteria relating to that individual.

2.2 Special category data

Previously termed “Sensitive Personal Data”, Special Category Data is similar by definition and refers to data concerning an individual’s racial or ethnic origin, political or religious beliefs, trade union membership, physical and mental health, sexuality, biometric or genetic data and personal data relating to criminal offences and convictions.

2.3 Personal data breach

A personal data breach is a breach of security leading to the accidental or unlawful destruction, loss, alteration, unauthorised disclosure of, or access to, personal data or special category data transmitted, stored, or otherwise processed.

2.4 Data subject

Person to whom the personal data relates.

2.5 ICO

ICO is the Information Commissioner’s Office, the UK’s independent regulator for data protection and information.

3 Responsibility

The Director of Business and Operations has overall responsibility for breach notification within the Trust. They are responsible for ensuring breach notification processes are adhered to by all staff and are the designated point of contact for personal data breaches.

In the absence of the Director of Business and Operations, please do contact the School Operations Manager.

The Data Protection Officer (DPO) is responsible for overseeing this policy and developing data-related policies and guidelines.

Please contact the DPO with any questions about the operation of this policy or the UKGDPR or if you have any concerns that this policy is not being or has not been followed.

The DPO’s contact details are set out below: -

Internal Data Protection Officer: Joanna Sargeant
Address: Rockwood Academy, Naseby Road, Alum Rock, Birmingham B8 3HG
Email: js@core-education.co.uk
Telephone: 0121 566 6500

4 Security and data-related policies

Staff should refer to the following policies that are related to this data protection policy: -

Security Policy which sets out the Trust's guidelines and processes on keeping personal data secure against loss and misuse.

Data Protection Policy which sets out the Trust's obligations under UKGDPR about how they process personal data.

These policies are also designed to protect personal data and can be found at Access People.

5 Data Breach Procedure

5.1 What is a personal data breach?

A personal data breach is a breach of security leading to the accidental or unlawful destruction, loss, alteration, unauthorised disclosure of, or access to, personal data or special category data transmitted, stored, or otherwise processed.

Examples of a data breach could include the following (but are not exhaustive): -

- Loss or theft of data or equipment on which data is stored, for example loss of a laptop or a paper file (this includes accidental loss).
- Inappropriate access controls allowing unauthorised use.
- Equipment failure.
- Human error (for example sending an email or SMS to the wrong recipient).
- Unforeseen circumstances such as a fire or flood.
- Hacking, phishing, and other "blagging" attacks where information is obtained by deceiving whoever holds it.

5.2 When does it need to be reported?

The Trust must notify the Operations Officer of a data breach where it is likely to result in a risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals, The Operations Officer will notify the ICO. This means that the breach needs to be more than just losing personal data and if unaddressed the breach is likely to have a significant detrimental effect on individuals.

Examples of where the breach may have a significant effect includes: -

- potential or actual discrimination.

- potential or actual financial loss.
- potential or actual loss of confidentiality.
- risk to physical safety or reputation.
- exposure to identity theft (for example through the release of non-public identifiers such as passport details).
- the exposure of the private aspect of a person's life becoming known by others.

If the breach is likely to result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals, then the individuals must also be notified directly.

5.3 Reporting a data breach

If you know or suspect a personal data breach has occurred or may occur which meets the criteria above, you should: -

- Complete a data breach report form (which can be obtained from Teams.
- Email the completed form to Director of Business and Operations.

Where appropriate, you should liaise with your line manager about completion of the data report form. Breach reporting is encouraged throughout the Trust and staff are expected to seek advice if they are unsure as to whether the breach should be reported and/or could result in a risk to the rights and freedom of individuals. They can seek advice from their line manager, Operations Manager or the Director of Business and Operations.

Once reported, you should not take any further action in relation to the breach. You must not notify any affected individuals or regulators or investigate further. The Director of Business and Operations will acknowledge receipt of the data breach report form and take appropriate steps to deal with the report in collaboration with the DPO.

6 Managing and recording the breach

On being notified of a suspected personal data breach, Director of Business and Operations will notify the DPO. Collectively they will take immediate steps to establish whether a personal data breach has in fact occurred. If so, they will take steps to: -

- Where possible, contain the data breach.
- As far as possible, recover, rectify, or delete the data that has been lost, damaged, or disclosed.

- Assess and record the breach in the Trust's data breach register.
- Notify the ICO.
- Notify data subjects affected by the breach.
- Notify other appropriate parties to the breach.
- Take steps to prevent future breaches.

6.1 Notifying the ICO

Director of Business and Operations will notify the ICO when a personal data breach has occurred which is likely to result in a risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.

This will be done without undue delay and, where possible, within 72 hours of becoming aware of the breach. If the Trust are unsure of whether to report a breach, the assumption will be to report it.

Where the notification is not made within 72 hours of becoming aware of the breach, written reasons will be recorded as to why there was a delay in referring the matter to the ICO.

6.2 Notifying data subjects

Where the data breach is likely to result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of data subjects, Operations Manager will notify the affected individuals without undue delay including the name and contact details of the DPO and ICO, the likely consequences of the data breach and the measures the Trust have (or intended) to take to address the breach.

When determining whether it is necessary to notify individuals directly of the breach, Operations Manager will co-operate with and seek guidance from the DPO, the ICO and any other relevant authorities (such as the police).

If it would involve disproportionate effort to notify the data subjects directly (for example, by not having contact details of the affected individual) then the Trust will consider alternative means to make those affected aware (for example by making a statement on the Trust website).

6.3 Notifying other authorities

The Trust will need to consider whether other parties need to be notified of the breach. For example: -

- Insurers.
- Parents.

- Third parties (for example when they are also affected by the breach).
- Local authority.
- The police (for example if the breach involved theft of equipment or data).

This list is non-exhaustive.

7 Assessing the breach

Once initial reporting procedures have been carried out, the Trust will carry out all necessary investigations into the breach.

The Trust will identify how the breach occurred and take immediate steps to stop or minimise further loss, destruction, or unauthorised disclosure of personal data. We will identify ways to recover correct or delete data (for example notifying our insurers or the police if the breach involves stolen hardware or data).

Having dealt with containing the breach, the Trust will consider the risks associated with the breach. These factors will help determine whether further steps need to be taken (for example notifying the ICO and/or data subjects as set out above). These factors include: -

- What type of data is involved and how sensitive it is.
- The volume of data affected.
- Who is affected by the breach (i.e., the categories and number of people involved).
- The likely consequences of the breach on affected data subjects following containment and whether further issues are likely to materialise.
- Are there any protections in place to secure the data (for example, encryption, password protection, pseudonymisation).
- What has happened to the data.
- What could the data tell a third party about the data subject.
- What are the likely consequences of the personal data breach on the Trust; and
- Any other wider consequences which may be applicable.

8 Preventing future breaches

Once the data breach has been dealt with, the Trust will consider its security processes with the aim of preventing further breaches. To do this, we will: -

- Establish what security measures were in place when the breach occurred.
- Assess whether technical or organisational measures can be implemented to prevent the breach happening again.
- Consider whether there is adequate staff awareness of security issues and look to fill any gaps through training or tailored advice.
- Consider whether it's necessary to conduct a privacy or data protection impact assessment.
- Consider whether further audits or data protection steps need to be taken.
- To update the data breach register.
- To debrief governors/management following the investigation.

9 Reporting data protection concerns

Prevention is always better than dealing with data protection as an after-thought. Data security concerns may arise at any time, and we would encourage you to report any concerns (even if they don't meet the criteria of a data breach) that you may have to Operations Manager, Director of Business and Operations or the DPO. This can help capture risks as they emerge, protect the Trust from data breaches and keep our processes up to date and effective.

10 Monitoring

We will monitor the effectiveness of this and all our policies and procedures and conduct a full review and update as appropriate.

Our monitoring and review will include looking at how our policies and procedures are working in practice to reduce the risks posed to the Trust.