

Privacy Notices

What the Department for Education does with pupils' and children's data

The **Department for Education (DfE)** uses information about pupils for research and statistical purposes in order to inform, influence and improve education policy and to monitor the performance of the education service as a whole.

Pupil information may be matched with other data sources that DfE holds in order to model and monitor their educational progression and to provide comprehensive information back to local authorities (LAs) and learning institutions to support their day-to-day business. DfE may also use contact details from these sources to obtain samples for statistical surveys which may be carried out by research agencies working under contract to DfE. Participation in such surveys is usually voluntary. DfE 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 matching will require that 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.

DfE 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. DfE's powers to pass data to researchers are derived from The Education (Individual Pupil Information) (Prescribed Persons) (England) Regulations. These regulations restrict the researchers who may receive data to 'persons conducting research into the educational achievements of pupils and who require individual pupil information for that purpose'.

Pupil information will no longer be used for ContactPoint. ContactPoint is the national database which holds the name and contact details for all children in England (up to their 18th birthday), their parents or carers, and the practitioners working with them. In line with a longstanding policy intention, and a commitment in the Coalition Agreement, the Government has confirmed that ContactPoint will be switched off at noon on 6 August 2010. From that date no users will be able to access the system. The database will be destroyed using Government-approved security standards and processes. Further information is available on the **DfE website**.

DfE is the Data Controller for the purposes of the Data Protection Act. Further information is available about **the third party organisations to which DfE also passes pupil data**, as the law allows.

Pupils, as data subjects, have certain rights under the Data Protection Act, including a general right of access to personal data held on them. Their parents exercise this right on their behalf if they are too young (under 12) to do so themselves. If you wish to access the personal data which DfE holds about your child, then please contact the Department:

Public Communications Unit
Department for Education
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London
SW1P 3BT

Website: www.education.gov.uk
Email: info@education.gsi.gov.uk
Telephone: 0870 000 2288

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Who does the Department for Education pass pupil data to?

The Department for Education (DfE) also passes pupil data to the following third party organisations, as the law allows. A brief description of the purposes the information is used for is set out below, along with web links if you want to know more about what they do and how to contact them.

The **Department of Health (DH)** uses anonymised information about pupils' height and weight collected in primary and middle schools as part of the National Child Measurement Programme to inform, influence and improve health policy. The Department of Health also provides aggregate PCT-level data to the Care Quality Commission for performance assessment of the health service. **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 their assessment of the effectiveness of education initiatives and policy. Ofsted also uses information about the views of children and young people to inform children's services inspections in local authority (LA) areas. Inspection reports do not identify individual pupils. DfE will also provide Ofsted with pupil 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 plans.

The Chief Executive of Skills Funding uses information about pupils aged 14 and over (or enrolling for post-14 qualifications) for statistical purposes in order to evaluate and develop education policy and monitor the performance of the education service as a whole. Further information on how this data is used may be found **Skills Funding Agency website**.

The Chief Executive of Skills Funding also administers the Learning Records Service (previously known as the Managing Information Across Partners Programme) which uses a minimum set of personal data to:

- issue and maintain a Unique Learner Number (ULN) for pupils of 14 years and over and for those registering for post-14 qualifications
- create and offer a Personal Learning Record (PLR)
- enable advice and guidance to be offered to the learner (for example, helping to choose the right course)
- facilitate the processing of qualification awards by approved awarding organisations.

Approved organisations (including other schools) will be allowed to access the limited set of personal data. More information on the Personal Learning Record, Unique Learner Number, Learner Plan and Qualification Credit Framework is available on the **Learning Records Service website**. This sharing of data reduces the need for learners having to supply the same information repeatedly to different organisations and significantly reduces the risk of inaccurate information being held about them.

Details of how an individual may opt-out of sharing achievement data in their Personal Learning Record with these organisations are also available from the Learning Records Service. The **Qualifications and Curriculum Development Authority (QCDA)** uses information about pupils to administer the National Curriculum assessments portfolio throughout Key Stages 1 to 3. This includes both assessments required by statute and those that are optional. The results of these are passed on to DfE to compile statistics on trends and patterns in levels of achievement. The QCDA uses the information to evaluate the effectiveness of the National Curriculum and the associated assessment arrangements, and to ensure that these are continually improved.