

This procedure shall be followed by employees responsible for handling complaints made under the UK General Data Protection Regulation 2016 (the UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018. It applies to the Deaf Education Trust, known as the Deaf Academy (referred to as the Academy) and supports the Academy's Data Protection Policy, which should be read alongside this.

Queries about this procedure should be addressed to the Academy's Data Protection Officer, (Firebird Data Protection Consultancy) Email: dpo@firebirdltd.co.uk

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1 Introduction

This procedure sets out how the Academy manages and resolves complaints relating to data protection matters. It ensures that all concerns are handled promptly, fairly, and transparently, in accordance with the UK data protection laws.

2 Scope

This procedure applies to all data subjects whose personal information the Academy processes as a Data Controller, including but not limited to pupils, students, employees, governors, Trustees, contractors, job applicants and those who make enquiries to the Academy.

This procedure does not cover general customer service or contractual disputes unless these directly relate to the handling of personal data.

3 Submitting a complaint

Data subjects can raise a complaint by completing the Data Protection Complaint Form on our website [Policies - the Deaf Academy](#), by emailing their concerns to dpo@thedeafacademy.ac.uk or by writing to us at The Deaf Academy, 1 Douglas Avenue, Exmouth, EX8 2AU.

Complaints may be made verbally or in writing. Where a verbal complaint is received (for example, during a call or in person), the staff member handling the matter shall document the details in writing and confirm them with the complainant for accuracy.

The Academy will make reasonable adjustments for individuals who need additional support to submit a complaint.

4 Logging and acknowledgement

A written acknowledgment shall be issued by the CFO/Data Protection Link Officer within 5 working days (and no later than 30 days after receipt of the complaint), confirming receipt of the complaint and outlining the next steps. The acknowledgment will include:

- The name and contact details of the person handling the complaint.
- An estimated timeframe for the investigation and response (the suggested timeframe is 30 days but this can be longer provided the response is without “undue delay”).

All complaints shall be recorded in the Data Protection Requests and Complaints Log.

Where a complaint is incomplete, unclear or the identity of the complainant has not been verified, the complaint handler may request further information before progressing with the investigation.

5 Investigating complaints

The investigation will be conducted by the CFO/Data Protection Link Officer, or a designated staff member, who was not directly involved in the issue being complained about, seeking advice from the Data Protection Officer.

The investigation will involve:

- Reviewing all relevant records, correspondence, and evidence.
- Consulting any staff members or Data Processors involved.
- Assessing whether the Academy has complied with data protection legislation and internal procedures

6 Responding to complaints

The Academy will provide a written response to the complaint without undue delay, and where possible, within 30 days of receiving the complaint (subject to all the necessary information being provided by the complainant).

The response will:

- Summarise the complaint and provide clear findings.
- Explain whether the complaint has been upheld, partially upheld, or not upheld.
- Set out any corrective actions taken or planned.
- Provide information about the complainant's right to escalate their concern to the Information Commissioner if they remain dissatisfied.

Where an investigation is complex and cannot reasonably be completed within 30 days, the complainant shall be informed as soon as possible and provided with an expected response date.

7 Outcomes and resolution

When responding to complaints, possible outcomes include (but are not limited to):

- An explanation or clarification of the Academy's data handling practices.
- Correction, deletion, or restriction of personal data.
- An apology to the complainant.
- Review or amendment of internal procedures or training.

The Academy aims to resolve all complaints and, where appropriate, to use the findings to improve its data handling practices.

8 Record keeping

All complaints and their outcomes shall be recorded on a Complaints Log and a file retained regarding the decision making.

Records should include:

- Details of the complaint.
- The date the complaint was received/accepted and acknowledged.
- Investigation notes and correspondence.
- The final response and any remedial actions.

Records shall be retained securely for three years in accordance with the Academy's Record Retention Policy.

9 Escalation to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint, they have the right to escalate the matter to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

Contact details:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, SK9 5AF

Website: www.ico.org.uk/concerns

Email: casework@ico.org.uk

Telephone: 0303 123 1113

Complainants also have the right to pursue their complaint through the courts.