



DIOCESE OF SOUTHWELL
& NOTTINGHAM

MULTI ACADEMY TRUST

**Procedure for Receiving & Responding to
Subject Access Requests (SAR)**

Policy:	Data Protection
Approved by:	SNMAT Board of Directors
Date:	February 2026
Review cycle:	Annual

VERSION CONTROL			
VERSION	DATE	AUTHOR	CHANGES
2023	May	SKP	<p>Para 3.5 – “from parents/pupils” and “Responsibility for leading on a SAR from a member of the Workforce may be delegated to the SNMAT HR Officer” removed.</p> <p>Para 3.6 – “or HR Officer” removed</p> <p>Para 10.1.1 – “(who will be responsible for managing the response for parent/pupil SARs)” removed</p> <p>Previous Para 10.1.2 deleted</p> <p>New para 10.1.4 added</p> <p>Annex 5 Request for IT data search logged through IT helpdesk included in SAR Request log</p>
2025	Feb	SKP	<p>Para 9.2.1 addition of “(preferably using Adobe Acrobat for which the Trust has licences)”</p> <p>Para 10.1.4 addition of “remembering to include the scope of the search including relevant dates, data items (emails, documents etc)and specific search keywords such as the subject name etc”</p>
2026	Jan	SKP	<p>Para 5.3 addition of explanation of what the ICO would consider to be manifestly unfounded, unreasonable or excessive</p>

Procedure for Receiving and Responding to Subject Access Requests

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1. All **Data Subjects** have rights of access to their **personal data**. This document sets out the procedure to be followed in relation to any requests made for the disclosure of **personal data processed** by the Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham MAT.

2. Definition of data protection terms

- 2.1. All defined terms in this policy are indicated in bold text, and a list of definitions is included in Annex 1 to this policy.

3. Recognising a subject access request

- 3.1. As the Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham MAT **processes personal data** concerning **data subjects**, those **data subjects** have the right to access that **personal data** under Data Protection law. A request to access this personal data is known as a subject access request or SAR.
- 3.2. A **data subject** is generally only entitled to access their own **personal data**, and not to information relating to other people.
- 3.3. Any request by a **data subject** for access to their **personal data** is a SAR. This includes requests received in writing, by email, and verbally.
- 3.4. If any member of our **Workforce** receives a request for information they should inform the Academy Data Protection Co-ordinator and/or SNMAT Data Protection Officer (DPO) as soon as possible.
- 3.5. Responsibility for leading on SARs is delegated to the Academy Data Protection Co-ordinator.
- 3.6. In order that the Trust/Academy is properly able to understand the nature of any SAR and to verify the identity of the requester (if necessary), any requester making a request verbally should be asked to put their request in writing and direct this to the Academy Data Protection Co-ordinator.
- 3.7. A SAR will be considered and responded to in accordance with the Data Protection Law.
- 3.8. Any SAR must be notified to the DPO at the earliest opportunity.

4. Verifying the identity of a Requester

- 4.1. The Trust/Academy is entitled to request additional information from a requester in order to verify whether the requester is in fact who they say they are.

4.2. Where the Trust/Academy has reasonable doubts as to the identity of the individual making the request, evidence of identity may be established by production of two or more of the following:

- 4.2.1. Current passport
- 4.2.2. Current driving licence
- 4.2.3. Recent utility bills with current address
- 4.2.4. Birth/marriage certificate
- 4.2.5. P45/P60
- 4.2.6. Recent credit card or mortgage statement

4.3. If the Trust/Academy is not satisfied as to the identity of the requester then the request will not be complied with, so as to avoid the potential for an inadvertent disclosure of **personal data** resulting in a data breach.

5. Fee for Responding to Requests

5.1. The Trust will usually deal with a SAR free of charge.

5.2. Where a request is considered to be manifestly unfounded or excessive a fee may be requested. Alternatively, the Trust may refuse to respond to the request. If a request is considered to be manifestly unfounded or unreasonable the Trust will inform the requester why this is considered to be the case.

5.3. A Subject Access Request (SAR) may be considered manifestly unfounded, unreasonable, or excessive by the ICO when the requester's intent or the burden placed on the organisation goes beyond what is fair or proportionate. The ICO explains that a request is manifestly unfounded when the individual has no genuine intention to access their data or is using the SAR to harass, disrupt, or pressure the organization (for example, making threats or submitting the request as part of a hostile dispute strategy). A request is manifestly excessive when it is clearly unreasonable in relation to the resources required to comply, taking into account the nature of the data, the scope of the request, and the effort involved. Organisations must assess proportionality, considering whether the request is overly repetitive, unnecessarily broad, or imposes an unjustifiable administrative burden. Importantly, the organisation must be able to demonstrate why the request meets these thresholds before refusing or charging a fee.

5.4. A fee may also be requested in relation to repeat requests for copies of the same information. In these circumstances a reasonable fee will be charged taking into account the administrative costs of providing the information.

6. Time Period for Responding to a SAR

6.1. The Trust has one calendar month to respond to a SAR. This will run from the later of:

- a. the date of the request,
- b. the date when any additional identification (or other) information requested is received, or
- c. payment of any required fee.

- 6.2. In circumstances where the Trust/Academy is in any reasonable doubt as to the identity of the requester, this period will not commence unless and until sufficient information has been provided by the requester as to their identity, and in the case of a third party requester the written authorisation of the **data subject** has been received (see below in relation to sharing information with third parties).
- 6.3. The period for response may be extended by a further two calendar months in relation to complex requests. What constitutes a complex request will depend on the particular nature of the request. The DPO must always be consulted in determining whether a request is sufficiently complex as to extend the response period.
- 6.4. Where a request is considered to be sufficiently complex as to require an extension of the period for response, the Trust will notify the requester within one calendar month of receiving the request, together with reasons as to why this is considered necessary.
- 6.5. A request may be received during or less than one month prior to a school holiday. Where a request is made prior to a holiday period the Trust/Academy will seek to respond prior to that holiday commencing. However, where this is not possible then the Trust/Academy will inform the requester that this is the case.
- 6.6. Requests received during extended holiday periods may not be able to be responded to within the one month response period. The Trust/Academy will, in those circumstances, send out an initial acknowledgement of the request as set out in Annex 1. This will be followed by a further acknowledgment, as soon as possible following commencement of the next term, setting out details of when a full response will be provided (being not more than one month of commencement of that term).
- 6.7. The Trust/Academy will have in place an automated response during school holidays advising that as the Academy is closed between specified dates it will not be possible during that time to respond to a request. If it is at all possible for requests to be dealt with during holiday periods, such as an individual monitoring an email account, then such steps will be put in place.

7. Form of Response

- 7.1. A requester can request a response in a particular form. In particular, where a request is made by electronic means then, unless the requester has stated otherwise, the information should be provided in a commonly readable format.

8. Sharing Information with Third Parties

- 8.1. **Data subjects** can ask that you share their **personal data** with another person, such as an appointed representative. In such cases written authorisation should be requested, signed by the **data subject**, confirming which of their **personal data** they would like to be shared with the other person.
- 8.2. Equally if a request is made by a person seeking the **personal data** of a **data subject** which purports to be made on behalf of that **data subject**, then a response must not be provided unless and until written authorisation has been provided by the **data subject**. The Trust/Academy should not approach the **data subject** directly

but should inform the requester that it cannot respond without the written authorisation of the **data subject**.

- 8.3. If the Trust/Academy is in any doubt or has any concerns as to providing the **personal data** of the **data subject** to the third party, then it should provide the information requested directly to the **data subject**. It is then a matter for the **data subject** to decide whether or not to share this information with any third party.
- 8.4. **Personal data** belongs to the **data subject** and, in the case of the **personal data** of a child, regardless of their age, the rights in relation to that **personal data** are theirs and not those of their parents. Parents, in most cases, do not have automatic rights to the **personal data** of their child.
- 8.5. However, there are circumstances where a parent can request the **personal data** of their child without requiring the consent of the child. This will depend on the maturity of the child and whether the Trust/Academy is confident that the child can understand their rights. Generally, where a child is under 12 years of age, they are deemed not to be sufficiently mature as to understand their rights of access and a parent can request access to their **personal data** on their behalf.
- 8.6. In relation to a child 12 years of age or older then, provided that the Academy is confident that they understand their rights and there is no reason to believe that the child does not have the capacity to make a request on their own behalf, the Academy will require the written authorisation of the child before responding to the requester, or provide the **personal data** directly to the child in accordance with the process above.
- 8.7. In all cases the Academy should consider the particular circumstances of the case, and the above are guidelines only.

9. Withholding Information

- 9.1. There are circumstances where information can be withheld pursuant to a SAR. These are specific exemptions and requests should be considered on a case by case basis. An exemption checklist should be completed (Appendix 6)
- 9.2. Where the information sought contains the **personal data** of third party **data subjects** then the Academy will:
 - 9.2.1. Consider whether it is possible to redact information (preferably using Adobe Acrobat for which the Trust has licences) so that this does not identify those third parties, taking into account that it may be possible to identify third parties from remaining information;
 - 9.2.2. If this is not possible, consider whether the consent of those third parties can be obtained; and
 - 9.2.3. If consent has been refused, or it is not considered appropriate to seek that consent, then to consider whether it would be reasonable in the circumstances to disclose the information relating to those third parties. If it is not, then the information may be withheld.

- 9.3. So far as possible the Academy will inform the requester of the reasons why any information has been withheld.
- 9.4. Where providing a copy of the information requested would involve disproportionate effort the Trust/Academy will inform the requester, advising whether it would be possible for them to view the documents at the Academy or seeking further detail from the requester as to what they are seeking, for example key word searches that could be conducted, to identify the information that is sought.
- 9.5. In certain circumstances, information can be withheld from the requester, including a **data subject**, on the basis that it would cause serious harm to the **data subject** or another individual. If there are any concerns in this regard then the DPO should be consulted.

10. Process for dealing with a Subject Access Request

- 10.1. When a subject access request is received, the Trust/Academy will:
 - 10.1.1. notify the DPO, the Academy Data Protection Co-ordinator and relevant department heads;
 - 10.1.2. [subject to para 6.6 above,] acknowledge receipt of the request and provide an indication of the likely timescale for a response within 5 working days (see template at Annex 3);
 - 10.1.3. take all reasonable and proportionate steps to identify and disclose the data relating to the request;
 - 10.1.4. Request support for IT data search by logging a request through the IT helpdesk remembering to include the scope of the search including relevant dates, data items (emails, documents etc) and specific search keywords such as the subject name etc;
 - 10.1.5. never delete information relating to a subject access request, unless it would have been deleted in the ordinary course of events – it is an offence to amend or delete data following receipt of a SAR that would not have otherwise been so amended or deleted;
 - 10.1.6. consider whether to seek consent from any third parties which might be identifiable from the data being disclosed;
 - 10.1.7. seek legal advice, where necessary, to determine whether the Trust is required to comply with the request or supply the information sought;
 - 10.1.8. provide a written response, including an explanation of the types of data provided and whether and as far as possible for what reasons any data has been withheld (see template at Annex 4);
 - 10.1.9. ensure that information disclosed is clear and technical terms are clarified and explained and

10.1.10. ensure that a SAR log form (Annex 5) has been completed and is retained on file.

Appendix 1 - Definitions

Term	Definition
Data Subjects	for the purpose of this policy include all living individuals about whom we hold personal data. This includes pupils, our workforce, staff, and other individuals. A data subject need not be a UK national or resident. All data subjects have legal rights in relation to their personal information
Personal Data	means any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person (a data subject); an identifiable natural person is one who can be identified, directly or indirectly, in particular by reference to an identifier such as a name, an identification number, location data, an online identifier or to one or more factors specific to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural or social identity of that natural person
Data Controllers	are the people who or organisations which determine the purposes for which, and the manner in which, any personal data is processed. They are responsible for establishing practices and policies in line with Data Protection Law. We are the data controller of all personal data used in our business for our own commercial purposes
Processing	is any activity that involves use of the data. It includes obtaining, recording or holding the data, or carrying out any operation or set of operations on the data such as collection, recording, organisation, structuring, storage, adaptation or alteration, retrieval, consultation, use, disclosure by transmission, dissemination or otherwise making available, alignment or combination, restriction, erasure or destruction. Processing also includes transferring personal data to third parties
Workforce	Includes, any individual employed by [School/Trust/Academy] such as staff and those who volunteer in any capacity including Governors [and/or Trustees / Members/ parent helpers]

Appendix 2 – SAR Acknowledgement
(for use over holidays when the Academy is closed for over a month)

[On headed notepaper of data controller]

[ADDRESSEE]
[ADDRESS LINE 1]
[ADDRESS LINE 2]
[POSTCODE]

[DATE]

Dear [DATA SUBJECT],

Acknowledgement of your data subject access request dated [DATE OF REQUEST] and notification that the Academy is currently closed.

We write further to your request for details of personal data which we received on [DATE OF REQUEST]. As advised in [INSERT HERE HOW AND WHEN THE DATA SUBJECT WAS ADVISED OF THE DATES THE SCHOOL WOULD BE CLOSED] the Academy is [closing / closed] from xx July 20xx until xx September 20xx. Accordingly, the information you have requested is not accessible, and we will unfortunately not be able to comply with your request within one month. [OR We are unfortunately only able to provide you with the enclosed information as the remainder of the information is not accessible]

The Academy will be reopening on xx September 20xx when your request will be formally acknowledged, and you will be informed about the timeframe in which a full response to your request will be provided. We apologise for any inconvenience this may cause and will contact you again on xx September 20xx.

Yours sincerely,

[NAME OF SENDER]

For and on behalf of [Trust/Academy]

Appendix 3 – SAR Acknowledgment Template

[On headed notepaper of data controller]

[ADDRESSEE]
[ADDRESS LINE 1]
[ADDRESS LINE 2]
[POSTCODE]

[DATE]

Dear [NAME OF DATA SUBJECT],

Acknowledgment of your data subject access request

Reference: [DATA SUBJECT ACCESS REQUEST REFERENCE NUMBER]

I write to acknowledge receipt of your request for personal information, which we are responding to under article 15 of the General Data Protection Regulation.

[I also acknowledge receipt of your [IDENTIFICATION] as confirmation of your identity.]

Your request was received on [DATE] and, unless there are grounds for extending the statutory deadline of one calendar month, we expect to be able to give you a response by [DATE].

The reference for your request is [REFERENCE NUMBER], please quote this on all correspondence concerning this request.

Yours sincerely,

[NAME OF SENDER]

For and on behalf of [Trust/Academy]

Appendix 4 – SAR Response Template

[On headed notepaper of data controller]

[ADDRESSEE]
[ADDRESS LINE 1]
[ADDRESS LINE 2]
[POSTCODE]

[DATE]

Dear [DATA SUBJECT],

Response to your data subject access request dated [DATE OF REQUEST]

We write further to your request for details of personal data which we hold [and our acknowledgment of [DATE WHEN REQUEST FIRST ACKNOWLEDGED BY LETTER]].

We enclose all of the data to which you are entitled under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), in the following format:

[DETAILS OF FORMAT IN WHICH DATA IS PROVIDED, WITH REASONS FOR CHOOSING THE FORMAT: PAPER COPIES **OR** ELECTRONIC COPIES ON A CD OR MEMORY STICK **OR** A NEW DOCUMENT WHICH HAS BEEN CREATED AND SETS OUT THE INFORMATION THAT CONSTITUTES PERSONAL DATA. WHERE THE SAR WAS MADE BY ELECTRONIC MEANS THE RESPONSE SHOULD BE PROVIDED IN A COMMONLY USED ELECTRONIC FORM.]

We have contacted the following departments and individuals in order to locate personal data held which is within the scope of a data subject access request under article 15 of the GDPR:

[LIST OF DEPARTMENTS AND METHODOLOGY FOR IDENTIFYING PERSONAL DATA]

We can confirm the following in relation to the areas covered under article 15 of the GDPR and data existing on the date when your request was made:

The purposes for which the personal data is processed:

[LIST OF PURPOSES]

The recipients or classes of recipients of personal data to whom the data has been or will be disclosed and the location of any recipients outside the EEA:

[LIST OF RECIPIENTS (BY NAME OR GENERIC CLASS) TO WHOM DATA DISCLOSED. NOTE WHICH COUNTRIES NON-EEA RECIPIENTS PROCESS DATA IN AND STATE THE ARTICLE 46 SAFEGUARDS IN PLACE.]

The categories of personal data concerned:

[LIST CATEGORIES]

The envisaged period for which the personal data will be stored, or the criteria used to determine that period:

[LIST RETENTION PERIODS]

Any information available to the Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham MAT as to the source of the data:

[SOURCES OF DATA HELD]

[The following automated decision making is applied to the personal data:

[IDENTIFY AUTOMATED DECISION MAKING INCLUDING PROFILING AND PROVIDE MEANINGFUL INFORMATION ABOUT THE LOGIC INVOLVED AS WELL AS THE SIGNIFICANCE AND THE ENVISAGED CONSEQUENCES OF SUCH PROCESSING FOR THE DATA SUBJECT]

You have the following rights under the GDPR.

- The right to request rectification of inaccurate personal data;
- In limited circumstances, the right to:
 - request erasure of the personal information;
 - request restriction of processing of the personal information or
 - object to the processing of the personal information.

[You will note that some of the information has been redacted. The reason for this is that the redacted information relates to [a] third part[y/ies] who have not consented to the sharing of their information with you].

[Some information has not been provided as it is covered by the following exemptions:

LIST EXEMPTIONS APPLIED]

If you are unhappy with this response, and believe the Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham MAT has not complied with legislation, please ask for a review by [following our complaints process; details can be found on our website at [LINK] **OR** by contacting the Data Protection Officer on data.protection@snmat.org.uk .

If you still remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you can appeal to the Information Commissioner, who oversees compliance with data protection law. You should write to: Customer Contact, Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

Yours sincerely,

[NAME]

[For and on behalf of [Trust/Academy/School]

Appendix 5

SUBJECT ACCESS REQUEST LOG

Name of data subject for whom the SAR has been Received

Date SAR received

Data Subject Access Request Reference Number

Date by which the SAR must have been completed(1 month max)

Detail	Signed	Date
Data Protection Officer Notified that SAR has been received.		
Letter acknowledging request for SAR sent to subject within 5 working days		
Team identified to support with the preparation of the file:		
Request for IT data search logged through IT helpdesk		
Identity of the data subject has been verified		
Data to be included in data pack:		
Consent obtained from Third Pary/ies (if applicable)		
Legal advice sought (if applicable)		
Data Pack sent to Data Subject, by special delivery to be signed for post together with covering letter.		
Delivery of data pack confirmed.		

Appendix 6

DATA PROTECTION SAR EXEMPTION CHECKLIST

Exemptions

- We consider whether we can rely on an exemption on a case-by-case basis.
- Where appropriate, we carefully consider the extent to which the relevant UK GDPR requirements would be likely to prevent, seriously impair, or prejudice the achievement of our processing purposes.
- We justify and document our reasons for relying on an exemption.
- When an exemption does not apply (or no longer applies) to our processing of personal data, we comply with the UK GDPR's requirements as normal.

Specific Case Considered for Exemption

Case:	
Date:	

Legal Advice Taken in the Case YES/NO

Factors Taken Into Account in Making the Decisions Whether or Not to Disclose Data

1. Identity & Scope Verification

- Has the requester's identity been verified?
- Is the scope clear or is clarification needed?
- Does the request include third-party data?

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2. Third-Party Data Considerations

- Does the information include data about another identifiable individual?
- Has consent been obtained?
- Is disclosure reasonable without consent?
- Can redaction protect third-party identities?

3. Legal Professional Privilege

- Does any information fall under legal advice or litigation privilege?
- Would disclosure prejudice legal proceedings?

4. Management Information Exemption

- Is the information used solely for forecasting or planning?
- Would disclosure prejudice business operations?

5. Negotiations Exemption

- Would disclosure reveal negotiation strategy?
- Would it prejudice ongoing negotiations?

6. Crime & Taxation Exemptions

- Would disclosure prejudice crime prevention or detection?
- Would it impact tax assessment or collection?
- Has law enforcement advised against disclosure?

7. Regulatory Functions Exemption

- Would disclosure prejudice regulatory or supervisory functions?

8. Confidential References

- Is the information a confidential reference given or received?

9. Health, Social Work, or Education Data

- Could disclosure cause serious harm to physical or mental health?
- Has an appropriate professional been consulted?

10. Intellectual Property & Trade Secrets

- Would disclosure reveal commercially sensitive information?
- Can sensitive elements be redacted?

11. Manifestly Unfounded or Excessive Requests

- Is the request malicious or without genuine intent?
- Is it overly repetitive or disproportionate?
- Can the organisation justify this assessment?

12. Retention & Availability

- Is the data still held?
- Has it been deleted in line with retention schedules?

13. Redaction Feasibility

- Can exempt information be removed while still providing meaningful data?
- Is redaction proportionate and feasible?

