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Department
for Education

Transparency data

Privacy notice: school attendance data collection

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Applies to England

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How we use your information

The Department for Education (DfE) collects information from the daily attendance registration records that schools are required to keep.

DfE does not collect new information but processes information already collected by

schools.

DfE previously collected this information once a year or term. We now collect it daily to better understand attendance within schools.

The information collection supports DfE, schools, local authorities and academy trusts to:

- look at why children are absent and how they can be supported
- ensure children are protected from harm

From the 2026 to 2027 academic year, independent schools can voluntarily share attendance data with DfE. This includes:

- daily attendance registers from 2 sessions each day
- attendance and absence codes

Further information is available in individual independent schools' privacy notices.

From the autumn term 2026, we will start to collect data on attendance at free breakfast clubs for schools taking part in the [free breakfast clubs programme](#). This applies to pupils in reception to year 6 only. We are collecting this information to understand:

- which pupils are taking up the free breakfast club offer
- the impact of attending a breakfast club on school attendance

How we collect personal information

We collect pupil-level attendance data daily using the services of a private contractor called [Wonde](#).

The information on your child's or your attendance is taken from your child's or your school's management information system (MIS). It is transferred securely to DfE for schools that have agreed to share their daily data with us.

Wonde only collects the daily attendance information that DfE requires. It will not use this information for any other purpose.

Data we collect

DfE uses information in the following categories:

Demographic

- surname, forename and middle name
- date of birth
- sex
- ethnicity
- first language
- unique pupil number (and former, where necessary)

Related information

- attendance code
- free breakfast club attendance code
- admission date or leaving date (where available)
- postcode

Vulnerable child indicators

- looked-after child
- previously looked-after child
- special educational needs type and rank
- education, health and care plan
- free school meals

We also use information on the following optional vulnerable child indicators:

- child in need
- child protection plan

This information is collected for:

- pupils in reception

- all compulsory school-age pupils
- pupils in years 12 and 13 (if this is recorded in your school's MIS)

Why we use this information

Under UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), DfE relies on the lawful basis of [public task](#) to process this information.

This means we must meet at least one relevant 'condition' to be able to use the information. We use your child's or your attendance information as part of our work as a government department under the following conditions:

- Article 6(1)(e): we need to perform a public task – DfE is responsible for overseeing the delivery of education, to make it as easy as possible for children to access education and to safeguard children
- Article 9(2)(g): it is necessary for reason of substantial public interest – this includes reducing absence, how we can support children to stay in school and factors affecting attendance

Who we share your information with

When we receive your child's or your data (from Wonde), we share this in a safe and secure way with:

- the school your child or you attend
- the local authority and academy trust responsible for the school (if applicable)

We do this to help them identify any potential issues with your child's or your attendance and, if needed, to enable timely support to help children stay in school.

We only share information where it is lawful, safe and secure to do so. We may share it with other government departments and researchers to help in the work they do. When we do this, we ensure that your identity is protected.

How long we keep your information

We keep your child's or your information as part of our school attendance data collection until state retirement age plus 3 years.

The law allows us to retain this information provided we review it every year to ensure we still need to keep it.

When the information is no longer needed, we securely destroy it.

In some circumstances, we may retain information for research or statistical purposes. Appropriate safeguards are in place to protect this information.

[Share your daily school attendance data](#) includes further details about what information we use and why.

Your data protection rights

Under the [Data Protection Act 2018](#), you are entitled to request:

- the right to access – you can ask if we hold information about your child or you and ask for a copy by making a subject access request
- the right to rectification – you can request to correct any information you believe is wrong
- the right to erasure – you can request for your child's or your information to be erased, under certain circumstances
- the right to restrict processing – you can request that we restrict the processing of your child's or your personal data, under certain conditions
- the right to object to processing – you can object to DfE's processing, under certain circumstances

The [Information Commissioner's Office](#) website has further information on your data protection rights.

More details about how DfE handles personal information is available in our [personal information charter](#).

If you would like to request your child's or your personal information, visit [Requesting](#)

[your personal information from DfE](#).

Contact us

If you have any questions about how your child's or your personal information will be used, use the [contact DfE](#) form, referencing 'School attendance data collection'.

To contact the Data Protection Officer (DPO), use the [contact DfE](#) form and mark it for the attention of the DPO.

We will review this privacy notice at the end of July 2027.

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