

PADNELL INFANT SCHOOL
BOARD OF GOVERNORS



DATA PROTECTION COMPLAINTS -
GUIDANCE DOCUMENT FOR PARENTS

Name of Unit/Premises/Centre/School	Padnell Infant School
Date of Policy Review	July 2026
Date of Next Review	March 2028
Name of Headteacher	Mrs Mandy Grayson

Administration Record

Issue	Modification	Approved
1	For FGB Approval	July 2026

Introduction

Padnell Infant School recognises that it processes personal data about pupils, parents/carers, staff and others as part of its normal functions. We are committed to handling personal data lawfully, fairly and transparently.

This guidance explains how the school will manage Data Protection Complaints, in line with UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018, and new requirements under the Data (Use and Access) Act (DUAA).

A data protection complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction about how the school handles personal data.

1. What is a Data Protection Complaint?

Schools routinely handle complaints that commonly arise in relation to:

- Subject Access Requests (SARs)
- Data sharing decisions
- CCTV use and access
- Safeguarding records

- Accuracy of personal data
- Data retention periods
- Security incidents or data breaches

Where a concern relates to how personal data has been handled, it will be treated as a data protection complaint, even if raised informally.

The school will:

- Identify data protection complaints (including those within general complaints)
- Log them appropriately
- Acknowledge, investigate and respond
- Keep the complainant informed

2. Who can make a complaint

Any individual (data subject) may complain to the school if they believe their personal data has been mishandled or data protection law has been breached.

The school must facilitate complaints and not make it difficult for individuals to raise concerns.

3. How to make a complaint

A complaint can be made in person, by telephone or in writing (or ease of use, a template complaint form is included at the end of this procedure. If you require help in completing the form, please contact the school office. You can also ask third party organisations like the Citizens Advice to help you. Complaints may also be made by a third party acting on behalf of a complainant, as long as they have appropriate consent to do so.

In accordance with equality law, we will consider making reasonable adjustments if required, to enable complainants to access and complete this complaints procedure. For instance, providing information in alternative formats, assisting complainants in raising a formal complaint or holding meetings in accessible locations.

Anonymous complaints

We will not normally investigate anonymous complaints. However, the Headteacher or Chair of Governors, if appropriate, will determine whether the complaint warrants an investigation.

Withdrawal of a Complaint

If a complainant wants to withdraw their complaint, we will ask them to confirm this in writing.

Time Scales

1. Acknowledgement within 30 Days

The school will:

- Acknowledge receipt of a data protection complaint within 30 days

Where a full response is issued within that period, separate acknowledgement may not be required.

2. Act Without Undue Delay

Once received, the school will:

- Take appropriate steps to investigate
- Keep the complainant informed of progress
- Provide an outcome without undue delay

“Without undue delay” means without unnecessary or excessive delay, taking into account:

- Complexity of the complaint
- Scale and duration of the issue
- Any harm or impact on the individual

3. What “Appropriate Steps” Include

The school will:

- Make proportionate enquiries into the complaint
- Review relevant records and decisions
- Speak to staff involved where appropriate
- Provide updates during the investigation
- Communicate a clear outcome

4. Relationship with the School’s General Complaints Procedure

Data protection complaints:

- May sit alongside general complaints
- Must be recognised and handled separately where appropriate

- May still follow stages within the school's complaints procedure, but with additional requirements under data protection law

Staff must ensure complaints involving personal data are directed appropriately.

5. Policy and Process Review Requirements

To comply with legal requirements, the school will review and update these procedures every two years.

Policies and Notices

- Privacy notices (to explain how to complain)
- Data Protection Policy and SAR procedure
- Complaints policy

Training and Awareness

The school will ensure:

- Staff are trained to recognise data protection complaints
- Governors understand their role
- Complaints are escalated promptly regardless of how they are received

6. Escalation

If a complainant remains dissatisfied after the school's response, the complainant may raise concerns with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

The school will provide ICO contact details in its final response where appropriate.

7. Key Principles

Padnell Infant School will ensure that all data protection complaints are handled:

- Fairly and transparently
- Promptly and proportionately
- With clear communication
- In line with legal obligations

Appendix A

How the School Will Handle Data Protection Complaints (Step-by-Step)

Step 1 — Complaint Routes (Intake)

The school will:

1. Provide a clear method for submitting complaints
2. Ensure accessibility for:
 - Parents/carers
 - Pupils (age-appropriate support)
 - Staff and members of the public
3. Accept complaints through any channel

Step 2 — Triage

On receipt, the school will consider:

- Whether the concern relates to personal data handling
- Whether the complainant believes there has been a breach of data protection law

If unclear, clarification may be sought.

Step 3 — Logging

All data protection complaints will be formally recorded, including:

- Date received
- Nature of complaint
- Actions taken
- Communications
- Outcome

Step 4 — Acknowledgement

The school will:

- Acknowledge within **30 days** (earlier where possible)
- Set expectations for next steps

Step 5 — Investigation

The school will:

- Investigate without undue delay

- Gather evidence and review processes
- Keep the complainant updated

Step 6 — Outcome

The school will provide:

- A clear written outcome
- Explanation of findings
- Details of any actions taken
- Information on further escalation (e.g. ICO if applicable)

Step 7 — Learning and Improvement

Following each complaint, the school will:

- Review lessons learned
- Implement improvements where required
- Record actions taken

Data Protection Complaint Form

Please complete and return to Nikki Thundercliffe, Data Protection Officer who will acknowledge receipt and explain what action will be taken.

Your name:
Pupil's name (if relevant):
Your relationship to the pupil (if relevant):
Address: Postcode: Day time telephone number: Evening telephone number:
Please give details of your complaint, including whether you have spoken to anybody at the school about it.

What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.

Signature:

Date:

Official use

Date acknowledgement sent:

By who:

Complaint referred to:

Date: