



Data Protection Complaints Procedure

Adopted Autumn 2026 | Review Autumn 2027

Policy status and scope

Procedure owner	Data Protection Lead
Approved by	Full Governing Board
Adopted	Autumn 2026
Review date	Autumn 2027, or earlier following a significant legislative, regulatory or school change

This procedure explains how a person can complain about Great Leighs Primary School's use of personal information and how the school will respond. It supports the school's duties under the UK General Data Protection Regulation, Data Protection Act 2018 and Data (Use and Access) Act 2025. It should be read with the Data Protection Policy, privacy notices, Records Management arrangements and the school's general Complaints Policy.

Key distinction A data protection complaint concerns how personal information has been used. A request to access, correct, erase or otherwise exercise a data right may have a separate statutory deadline and will be handled under the relevant information-rights process.

1. Who may complain and about what

A pupil, parent or carer, employee, former employee, volunteer, applicant, visitor or other person may complain if they believe the school has used their personal information in a way that does not comply with data protection law. A properly authorised representative may complain on someone else's behalf.

- inaccurate, incomplete or outdated personal information;
- collection, access, use, sharing, security or retention of personal information;
- a personal data breach or failure to communicate appropriately about one;
- handling of a subject access request or another information-rights request;
- profiling, automated decision-making or use of artificial intelligence involving personal information;
- the clarity or accuracy of a privacy notice; or
- any other alleged interference with data protection rights.

2. How to make a complaint

The school accepts data protection complaints in any form. Using the contact details below helps the school route the concern promptly, but a complaint will not be rejected because it was sent through another channel.

- Email: admin@greatleighs.essex.sch.uk
- Post: Data Protection Lead, Great Leighs Primary School, Aragon Road, Great Leighs, Chelmsford, CM3 1RP
- Telephone: 01245 361254
- In person: through the school office

It is helpful to provide a name and contact method, a clear description of the concern, relevant dates, the outcome sought and copies of any supporting correspondence or evidence. The school will help a person to set out their complaint and will use clear, age-appropriate language when communicating with a child.

3. Identity and authority checks

The school may ask for information to confirm identity where this is reasonably necessary to protect personal information. It will not request more information than is needed or routinely require a passport or driving licence where identity is already clear. A representative must provide proportionate evidence that they are authorised to act. When a parent or carer complains on behalf of a child, the school considers the child's age, understanding, wishes, rights and any safeguarding context.

4. Acknowledgement and timescales

- The school will acknowledge receipt within 30 days. The 30-day period begins the day after the complaint is received; if the final day is a weekend or public holiday, acknowledgement may be given on the next working day.
- Investigation begins without undue delay and does not wait until the end of the acknowledgement period.
- The school will provide the outcome without undue delay. It aims to resolve straightforward complaints within one calendar month where practicable.
- Where a complaint is complex, extensive or dependent on another body, the school will explain the reason for delay, keep the complainant informed and provide a realistic target date.
- If the complaint includes a subject access request or another information-rights request, the applicable statutory deadline is tracked separately.

5. Investigation process

1. Record and triage the complaint, including any immediate risk, ongoing harm or safeguarding concern.
2. Clarify the issues and desired outcome where necessary, without creating an unnecessary barrier to complaining.
3. Identify the relevant systems, records, staff, processors, joint controllers, policies and legal duties.
4. Preserve relevant evidence and make proportionate enquiries. The investigator should be sufficiently independent of the matter complained about.
5. Consider whether urgent containment, correction, restriction, notification, breach assessment or other remedial action is required before the investigation is complete.
6. Reach findings on each issue, record the evidence and reasoning, and identify corrective or preventive action.
7. Provide a clear outcome and explain how the complainant may ask for an internal review or complain to the Information Commissioner's Office.

6. Outcomes and remedies

The outcome will state whether the complaint is upheld, partially upheld or not upheld, with an explanation that is clear but does not disclose another person's confidential information. Remedies may include correcting information, limiting or stopping processing, improving security, amending a privacy notice or retention rule, completing an information-rights response, notifying affected people or the ICO where required, staff guidance or training, processor action, apology or another proportionate improvement.

7. Internal review and the ICO

A person who remains dissatisfied may ask the Headteacher—or another senior person who was not responsible for the original outcome—to review the handling and conclusions. A request should explain what remains unresolved. The school will conduct the review without undue delay and keep the person informed.

A complainant may also raise the matter with the Information Commissioner's Office at ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint. The school will not disadvantage a person for making a complaint. Where appropriate, the school will cooperate with the ICO and implement required action.

8. Safeguarding, equality and whistleblowing

If information in a complaint suggests that a child or adult may be at risk, the safeguarding or whistleblowing procedure takes priority alongside the data protection response. The school provides reasonable adjustments and accessible communication. Confidentiality is maintained on a need-to-know basis, subject to lawful information sharing and regulatory duties.

9. Records, learning and monitoring

The school keeps a secure record of the complaint, acknowledgement, evidence, enquiries, communications, decisions, outcomes and actions in accordance with its retention schedule. Leaders monitor themes, timeliness, recurrence, breaches, information-rights issues and completion of remedial actions. Anonymised learning may be reported to governors and used to improve policies, privacy information, systems, contracts and staff training.

10. Key legislation and guidance

- UK General Data Protection Regulation;
- Data Protection Act 2018;
- Data (Use and Access) Act 2025;
- Information Commissioner's Office, How to deal with data protection complaints; and
- Great Leighs policies and privacy notices listed in the scope section.