



Midsomer Norton Schools Partnership

March 2018

Dear Parents/Carers

The EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

You may already be aware either from the press or from your bank or other financial services that there is new Data Protection Legislation being introduced in the UK on the 25th May 2018. This new legislation is called the General Data Protection Regulations and is known as GDPR. It is being introduced across Europe on the same day and will bring all countries in Europe in line so that they have the same legislation. This legislation was actually introduced into English statute in May 2016, and will apply to all organisations regardless of our status as a country with regard to Brexit.

This new legislation will enhance the existing Data Protection Legislation that governs the use of data in the UK, strengthens some aspects and gives new rights to individuals.

Under the new legislation, The Midsomer Norton Schools' Partnership is a Data Controller and is registered with the Information Commissioners Office (ICO). As the Data Controller, it is the Midsomer Norton Schools' Partnership that is legally responsible for all data that is held in each of the schools in the Multi Academy Trust (MAT).

I am writing to you today, firstly to introduce myself as the Data Protection Officer for the Trust. I am based at Norton Hill School and am currently responsible for ensuring that all the MAT schools are ready for the new legislation. The other reason for writing, is to give you an insight to the work being undertaken to ensure we are GDPR compliant by May 25th 2018.

The MAT already has centralised policies which govern the use of data, but we are now reviewing all policies in light of the new legislation. Some are requiring a full re-write, others just need updating. The legislation requires us to undertake an audit of the data we hold and how it was obtained. We will be reviewing what data is held and we will have to change the way we ask for information from you. This latter change will be clearly identified on any associated data collection sheets that are sent to you and any other forms you are required to complete as part of the routines with your child's school, for example permission slips for school visits.

As you can imagine, there are dozens of different forms used in the schools across the MAT for collecting data from parents and the intention is to standardise these so that there is a consistency about the way that data is collected. We need to ensure that all schools fully comply with the new legislation and data collection is a key area that we need to get right.

The new policies are being checked by the MAT's legal team and once ratified by the Trust Board, they will be published on the Midsomer Norton Schools' Partnership website along with all other policies that apply to schools in the MAT. Some policies may be sent home as we will require you to read and respond to the questions in them. For example the policy on the Use of Photographs of Pupils, has had to be totally re-written so that it is in line with the new legislation and we need parents to re-affirm the decision made when your children first started at a school.

One of the first documents to be put onto the website will be the Privacy Notice. We currently have a Privacy Notice based on the existing Data Protection Legislation. The new version will outline key new rights and responsibilities that we have as a Data Controller and will outline what data we will hold, how we will process it and who we can share it with and what rights you have as parents.

Key to the success of implementing such a change in schools across the MAT will be training of staff. As you can imagine, this will be a significant task and I ask that you bear with us while we bring staff up to speed, there may be questions you have that staff may not be able to respond to and may need to pass to me to get an answer. This will add a delay in getting back to you and I can only apologise at this point should this be the case.

The GDPR is essentially about safeguarding the data we hold on you and your children. This legislation will also bring about changes in the way we have to work with you. Many of you will phone the school to leave a message or ask to speak to a member of staff. Now, just like banks and financial institutions, we will need to clarify who is calling and ask questions based on information we hold about your child so that we can ascertain that you are who you say you are, for example we may ask you to confirm your child's date of birth or their middle name. This helps us not only meet the new GDPR legislation, but also helps safeguard your children.

I hope I have given you an insight to the journey we are undertaking within the MAT and given some idea about why we are having to make these changes. If you require further information about the GDPR Legislation, you can visit the Information Commissioners Website at: <https://ico.org.uk/>

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Lynch', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Mark Lynch
Data Protection Officer