



a CARING school

Olney Middle School

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Headteacher: Mr Glenn Young

Dear Parents and Carers,

In the light of the new GDPR regulations, I am writing to you about both the new privacy rules and the way they impact on the ways in which we communicate in school.

The new GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) is replacing the current Data Protection Act (DPA) and is set to strengthen and unify all data held within an organisation. For schools, GDPR brings a new responsibility to inform parents and stakeholders about how they are using pupils' data and who it is being used by.

What does GDPR mean for schools?

A great deal of the processing of personal data undertaken by schools will fall under a specific legal basis, 'in the public interest'. As it is in the public interest to operate schools successfully, it will mean that specific consent will not be needed in the majority of cases in schools.

GDPR will ensure data is protected and will give individuals more control over their data, however this means schools will have greater accountability for the data:

Under GDPR, consent must be explicitly given to anything that isn't within the normal business of the school, especially if it involves a third party managing the data. Parents must express consent for their child's data to be used outside of the normal business of the school.

- Schools must appoint a Data Protection Officer and be able to prove that they are GDPR compliant.
- Schools must ensure that their third party suppliers who may process any of their data are GDPR compliant and must have legally binding contracts with any company that processes any personal data. These contracts must cover what data is being processed, who it is being processed by, who has access to it and how it is protected.
- It will be compulsory that all data breaches which are likely to have a detrimental effect on the data subject are reported to the ICO within 72 hours

What does this mean for Olney Middle School?

OMS is part of the Multi- Academy Trust 'Inspiring Futures Through Learning'. IFTL have published their privacy notice, which highlights in summary that we collect and use general pupil information under GDPR article 6 under the following legal bases;

- We have a legal obligation to do so
- The information is necessary in the performance of our public task
- The processing is necessary to protect the vital interest of the child
- For some categories, we will ask for parental consent
- For some categories, outside of our core obligations of providing education, we process data on the basis that we have a legitimate interest to do so



Inspiring Futures
Through Learning

Whilst the majority of pupil information you provide to us is mandatory, some of it is provided to us on a voluntary basis. In order to comply with the General Data Protection Regulation, we will inform you whether you are required to provide certain pupil information to us or if you have a choice in this.

All information can be found at <https://www.iftl.co.uk/privacynotice/pupildata/>

If you would like to discuss anything in this privacy notice, please contact the Data Protection Officer, Jason Smith at dpo@iftl.co.uk

Staff Communication

In recent years communications between home and school have shifted quite dramatically from pen and paper to email; with email becoming the preferred and predominant mode of communication.

Email provides us with a quick, cheap and easy means of communication. As a result, it is used for such a wide range of communications, it has also become increasingly difficult to distinguish between formal and informal communications.

The ease of communication via email has many advantages but these are proving to have ever diminishing returns, as the expectation for almost instantaneous reply, in a well-informed, considered and timely manner appears to be on the increase, with complaints following when this has not been the case.

As a school our first priority is to deliver high quality teaching and learning. The ability and ease of email communication directly with your child's teacher is a privilege. Many schools would not make this facility available to parents, as frequent requests for updates and information can distract teachers from their primary focus, teaching.

On any one day a teacher will have a plethora of demands on their time including up to five lessons teaching (and class time, lunch duties and activities, and after school practices and clubs). Teachers cannot and are not expected to monitor and manage their inbox during lessons, or at other times in the day when they should be planning and preparing for lessons, assessing pupil work or carrying out school duties.

The school (and you) expect teachers to be fully prepared, focused and engaged with pupils and supporting their learning. Whilst administration staff, support staff and senior leaders may be able to access emails more routinely, their primary function is to support teachers and pupils.

The school works hard to provide parents with timely and informative information concerning their child's progress throughout the year. Currently these are: two progress and effort reports, one full report and two parent teacher meeting each year. In addition to this staff may also telephone, write or email a parent to inform them of a serious incident or serious ongoing concerns about a child's behaviour or attitude to learning. Should the need for further information be required, please discuss the needs with your teacher and to the appropriate outcomes will be achieved.

The following outlines the school with regard to email communication between home and school.

All communication must respect the dignity of the recipient.

1. Within 48 hours - receipt of an email will be acknowledged (during term time but not over a weekend).
2. Within 5 working days - provide a response to the email by telephone or in writing (including an email). This may include informing the sender that more time is required to provide a full response. If this is the case staff should indicate a timeframe in which a response should be expected.



3. If a member of staff is not able to deal with the email directly then they will pass it on to the most appropriate person and inform the sender that they have done so.
4. Staff will not be expected to monitor or respond to emails out of their normal working hours (including weekends and published school holidays). Whilst parents may compose emails at all sorts of hours to suit their own needs I would ask that emails are not normally sent outside of a member of staff's normal working hours. Mobile phones and other electronic devices that enable staff to access their school emails when away from school can make it difficult to 'ignore' a message from a parent, leading to unnecessary worry and anxiety on the part of the staff.
5. Whilst this is rare, if a member of staff receives an email which is of an aggressive tone, sets unreasonable demands or could otherwise be interpreted as harassing, they will refer this to a Senior Leader in the school, who will decide the next steps.

Other things to consider

Please remember that when communicating with staff, I would be grateful if you would bear in mind that all staff are putting their heart and soul, and many, many hours into trying to help our pupils achieve well. We welcome parental communication with staff as this establishes a relationship and enables us to work together. Parental communication is essential, we do not always get it right and we need your feedback to help us to continue to improve.

On occasions staff face criticism over an activity which they may be doing entirely out of goodwill, be it running a trip, a team, a concert or a play and an ill crafted email from an upset parent, even when the point is justified, can result in hurt being caused and a reluctance from staff to continue to go the extra mile, that we so much appreciate of them. Likewise, even when a communication is about a core school responsibility, our communications need to be respectful. Couching a point as being 'direct', 'blunt' or 'honest' does not make it any less destructive to a relationship that should be based on trust and mutual respect. This applies to all communication and as staff we need to be just as careful in how we show we value our pupils and parents. We do not always get it right but we constantly aim to do so and to improve when this is not the case.

Many of you will be facing the same challenges in your own workplace from an increasing expectation of anytime, anywhere communications. Some readers may be of the view that this is simply the way the world works now. However, the school has a duty of care to staff, as it does to pupils. This includes a responsibility to ensure that the workload put on staff is manageable and does not unreasonably intrude in to their private life. Please may I ask that you bear this in mind when emailing and consider the time and day of an email. Indeed, as part of a trust you will notice the line at the bottom of the email stating;

Inspiring Futures through Learning (IFtL) respects the work life balance of its employees. If this email has been sent outside of normal working hours, there is no expectation for you to provide an immediate response.

Finally

The letters and emails of thanks and appreciation that we do receive at OMS are very much appreciated. We have an incredibly dedicated team of staff and we want to retain them and make them feel valued. It is therefore essential that we respect them and help them to maintain a sustainable workload.

Thank you for your support and understanding.

Kind regards

Glenn Young

