

# Information Sharing Agreement between the London Borough of Tower Hamlets and all schools within the borough

## Guidance Notes

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<b>Document Owner</b>	Abdul Quddus Education Systems Manager Children's Information Systems T: 0207 364 5402 E: <a href="mailto:abdul.quddus@towerhamlets.gov.uk">abdul.quddus@towerhamlets.gov.uk</a>

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## **1.0 Introduction**

The Information Sharing Agreement (ISA) between the London Borough of Tower Hamlets and all Schools within the borough has been drafted for the purposes of effective and efficient information sharing.

### **1.1 Purpose of these guidelines**

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance on the practical application of the Information Sharing Agreement between Schools and the London Borough of Tower Hamlets.

The Information Sharing Agreement seeks to facilitate the secure exchange of information between Schools and the Local Authority.

### **1.2 Relationship to other Information Sharing Protocols**

A number of other Information Sharing Agreements or Protocols may exist for specific information to be shared between schools and particular teams within the Local Authority.

Whilst there is common legal ground between these Information sharing Protocols (ISP) and agreements, the priorities and procedures vary and it is expected that schools will follow the appropriate ISPs for the data that is being shared.

If the purpose of any other ISPs is subsequently added to this Information sharing Agreement and data is collected via the Automated Schools Data Exchange, it is expected that schools will follow this information sharing agreement.

## **2.0 Background**

Schools are required to provide the Local Authority with pupil information for the purposes of coordinating admissions arrangements and safeguarding. This exchange of information is currently taking place on an ad-hoc basis with a regular collection of Year 6 to Year 7 and new reception places taking place at the beginning and end of the academic year.

The existing system of information being shared at intervals of 3 to 6 months has created inconsistencies with data held by schools and the LA. In turn this has resulted in decisions being made potentially using inaccurate data.

A more efficient approach to carrying out high volumes of data collection is to use the Automated Schools Data Exchange, whereby schools are not required to manually submit a CTF containing pupil data, rather the information will be extracted more frequently at scheduled times which have been agreed with schools.

This ISA is not proposing the collection of any new information. It will formalise the existing arrangement between schools and the Local Authority through the Automated Schools Data Exchange (ASDE).

### **3.0 Information Sharing in Practice**

The Automated Schools Data Exchange will ensure schools can effectively share information with the Local Authority. Once operational, and for the purposes listed in Appendix C of the Information Sharing Agreement, schools will no longer be required to submit manual data collections. However schools must continue with the existing system of providing information manually, whilst the ASDE is implemented.

Information shared for the purposes not listed in Appendix C of the ISA should continue to be exchanged under its existing arrangements in a secure manner, ensuring it adheres to the Data Protection principles.

### **3.1 Data Collection and Implementation**

The Automated Schools Data Exchange will be implemented in managed phases and therefore there will be a transition period where schools may need to continue to send files manually.

#### **3.1.1 Changes introduced in v2.0 of the information sharing agreement**

- Appendix C2 – List data items to be collected for the Attendance and Welfare Service
- Inclusion of ‘Leaver Date’, ‘Leaver Reason’, ‘Leaver Destination’, ‘Leaver address’.

#### **3.1.2 Schedule for Data Collection**

To ensure the Automated Schools Data Exchange has the desired impact, it is necessary to have frequent data collections. It is suggested that the core pupil data be collected once a week, this will confirm pupils on roll and school vacancy numbers.

The inclusion of guardian details with the core pupil details will help the LA to keep its records up to date for correspondence with parents and guardians.

No action is needed from schools to create or send the CTF file when data is being collected via the ASDE. However, the server that hosts the school MIS needs to remain 'ON' whilst the extraction and delivery takes place and school staff can continue to work as normal during this process.

Version 2.0 of the information sharing agreement includes Appendix C2 which outlines the collection of Attendance data.

Data Collected	Purpose	Schedule	School Action
Core Pupil	Admissions & Exclusions	Weekly (Monday)	None
Guardian Details	Admissions & Exclusions	Weekly (Monday)	None
Attendance	Attendance & Welfare	Weekly (Monday)	Ensure all attendance codes are validated within two weeks.

In future, successful agreements for data collection will be added to Appendix C of the Information Sharing Agreement.

### 3.2 Consent

As part of the admissions process, schools should already have an existing Privacy Notice (also known as a Fair Processing Notice) that allows information to be shared with the LA and other external organisations.

The Privacy Notice is usually part of the application form or presented to parents at the time of application to the school. You are not required to inform or solicit further parental consent as part of this information sharing agreement. The Local Authority is already collecting the information that will be shared via the ASDE. This ISA will formalise this process.

The Pupil Registration Regulations (2006) outline the statutory obligations of Schools and the LA to maintain admission registers by means of computer. The Automated Schools Data Exchange governed by the information sharing agreement will ensure the timely sharing of relevant data to ensure we meet statutory obligations.

If you have any queries or unsure of any issues regarding consent to share information, contact the Information Governance team at the LA.

### **3.3 Secondary or Further Exchanges of Information**

In certain circumstances, data may also be shared with teams within the Local Authority that would normally have requested this data from schools directly either for a statutory or non-statutory purpose.

The further sharing of information collected via the ASDE, within the borough, will only be sanctioned if it can be demonstrated that the need is in line with the purposes stated in this information sharing agreement.

Where information is requested for purposes outside the remit of this agreement, schools will be asked for consent to share this information. This only applies to data that is exclusively collected by schools which the LA does not already hold.

### **3.4 Sharing Information Securely**

The Automated Schools Data Exchange is a secure method of data transfer between the schools and the Local Authority. The software application being used benefits from RSA secured encryption, which makes the information useless if it is not delivered to its intended recipient.

Each data report (including School name, LEA code and DfE number) is transferred to a pre-defined location on the LA's network which is located behind the corporate firewall.

### **3.5 Data Quality**

The information owner is responsible for ensuring the information held on their systems is accurate and up to date.

Schools should undertake regular data quality exercises where feasible to ensure the data they hold is accurate and up to date.

Where the LA believes it holds the most recent and up to date information about a pupil, this information will be provided to the schools via management information reports at regular intervals.

## **4.0 Signing the Information Sharing Agreement**

Under the Information Sharing Agreement, each organisation must also meet the legal obligations that cover sharing personal information and certain types of depersonalised information.

An organisation, which processes data relating to identifiable living persons, is legally obliged under the Data Protection Act to make a notification with the office of the Information Commissioner, the government office responsible for the operation and enforcement of the Data Protection Act and the Freedom of Information Act.

Each organisation must ensure that they hold a current notification with the Information Commissioner to share appropriate information under this agreement.

Schools are their own data controllers and responsible for the data they collect and process. All schools should already be registered with the information commissioner as a data controller. The introduction of an Automated Schools Data Exchange will not require schools to contact or amend their details held with the information commissioner.

If you have not already done so, please check with the Information Commissioner's Office and ensure that your school is registered.

You can search the register at  
<http://www.ico.gov.uk/ESDWebPages/search.asp>

Organisations that have signed up to the Information Sharing Agreement must ensure that all members of staff are aware of the ISA, the issues around information sharing, and who within their organisation is authorised to deal with information sharing. It is particularly important that staff are discouraged from informal and unauthorised information sharing that may result in a breach under the Data Protection Act.

The Designated Officer or Data Controller for that organisation, as defined by the Data Protection Act, must sign the agreement.

#### **4.1 Designated Officers**

For the purposes of this agreement, the signature of the designated officer, as mentioned in the ISA is required.

The designated officer is normally the data controller of the school, which is a post usually held by the headteacher. The headteacher would therefore be the most appropriate person to sign the agreement unless the responsibility of the data controller or designated officer has been delegated to another member of staff.

A list of organisations that have signed the agreement for information sharing is available from the Information Governance Team and is updated every six months.

#### **5.0 Reviewing the Information Sharing Agreement and Guidance Notes**

The aim of a review is to ensure that the Information Sharing Agreement is achieving its purpose and the actual process of sharing information is operating smoothly.

The review will be carried out by the Information Governance Team in conjunction with the Education Services Information Systems team which is responsible for the Central Pupil Database and be performed on an annual basis, except where the agreement is in its first year where it should be reviewed after the first 6 months.