

27 April 2018

Dear Principal

General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

You will be aware of extensive publicity recently around the new General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) which comes into effect on 25 May 2018. Under the current data protection legislation, each school is a data controller. This has not changed. Each school continues to be a Data Controller and as such is responsible for ensuring that all practices relating to the handling of personal data in the school meet the requirements set out in the new regulation. Responsibility for this rests with the Board of Governors.

I wrote to you in September 2017 advising that the Education Authority (EA) would be providing support to schools as they prepare for GDPR. We published the EA Think Data webinar which was developed in partnership with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). This video is designed to provide an overview of the changes. I would encourage you, your governors and staff to watch it by visiting the EA website at www.eani.org.uk/eaThinkData

Get Ready for GDPR – What Schools Need to Do

The ICO has said, ***“What must be recognised is that GDPR is an evolution in data protection, not a total revolution. GDPR is building on foundations already in place for the last 20 years.”***

You should be assured that if you have been engaged in good practice in relation to data protection, then you have a good foundation in place which can be built upon to ensure that your school is meeting the requirements of the new regulation.

The ICO has published extensive information on their website which provides detailed guidance on what steps should be taken to ensure compliance with GDPR. www.ico.org.uk

In addition, EA has been developing an online resource hub to provide a range of templates and guidance documents for schools to help prepare for GDPR. Further information will be available on our website shortly.

The new regulation requires each school to complete an Information Asset Register (IAR). This sets out what information a school holds, why, for how long and how it is stored, used, accessed and shared. This is a key requirement under GDPR and it is essential that schools have a completed IAR in place by 25 May 2018. An IAR template and guidance can be downloaded from the resource hub at www.eani.org.uk/eaThinkData.

Direct Support from EA – Data Protection Officer (DPO)

Schools continue to be Data Controllers. Boards of Governors must ensure that schools are compliant with data protection legislation. This has not changed under GDPR. However, there is now an additional

requirement for all schools to have a named Data Protection Officer (DPO). This person must have specific experience and expert knowledge of data protection law and its practical application.

We have been carefully considering this from a legal perspective and have recently agreed a way forward with the Department of Education and CCMS. We are very mindful of the workload and financial pressures that schools are already dealing with and are seeking to support schools as much as possible.

In that context, subject to consultation with the Information Commissioner's Office, EA is prepared to assume the specific role of Data Protection Officer (DPO) for all schools in Northern Ireland. This is a significant undertaking which will require the appointment of a number of School DPOs to work closely with Principals and Boards of Governors to ensure compliance with GDPR.

Under this arrangement, the Principal will be the key point of contact for all school data protection issues and will have operational responsibility for day to day management of all data protection matters with DPO support from EA. Further information on how this will work in practice will be provided shortly and will be included in a formal agreement between EA and the school.

In addition, we have established a working group representing all of the school sectors and the Department of Education that we hope will meet regularly to discuss GDPR matters.

Please email thinkdata@eani.org.uk if you would like EA to assume the DPO role for your school.

Training & Awareness

We are working to establish a comprehensive programme of GDPR training, support and awareness raising for schools. This includes:

- Online training for each principal and one other member of school staff;
- A series of workshops for school principals;
- A new governor training module as part of the Governor Support Service training programme;
- A GDPR presentation that can be delivered to all school staff; and
- A series of regular communications for schools containing useful information and guidance.

You will receive an email shortly informing you of how to register for the GDPR online training. You should ensure that you register and complete the online training as soon as possible.

This is just a brief update in relation to preparations for GDPR. My colleagues will be in touch shortly with further detail.

In the meantime, support and advice is also available from EA's Corporate Information Team through our dedicated EA Think Data helplines. You can call 028 8241 1300 or email thinkdata@eani.org.uk

Yours sincerely



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