

Data Retention

1 Introduction

- 1.1** The Heart of Mercia Multi-Academy Trust (HoM) and member academies aim to ensure that all personal data collected about staff, students, parents, directors, visitors, and other individuals is collected, processed, stored, and retained in accordance with the UK [General Data Protection Regulation \(GDPR\)](#) and the [Data Protection Act 2018 \(DPA 2018\)](#).

2 Aims & Objectives

This Data Retention Policy applies to all of HoM's personal data processing functions, including those performed on students, employees, suppliers, and partners, volunteers' and partners' personal data, and any other personal data the organisation processes from any source.

All member academies and staff of HoM are expected to familiarise themselves with and comply with this policy. Staff, and certain external parties, will receive appropriate training where required.

3 Procedures

3.1 Purpose, scope, and users

In accordance with the UK [General Data Protection Regulation \(GDPR\)](#) and the [Data Protection Act 2018 \(DPA 2018\)](#) data controllers should not retain personal data for any longer than necessary. In addition, under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 public bodies are required to maintain a data retention schedule.

All records of HoM, as the data controller, are subject to the retention requirements in this policy. Member academies and staff, as data processors, are also subject to the retention requirements in this policy. Examples of documents collecting personal data within HoM include, but is not limited to:

- Emails
- Hard [paper] copy documents
- Electronic documentation
- MIS systems
- Video and Audio recordings
- Photographic or video data
- Data generated by physical access control systems
- Biometric data
- CCTV systems

The creation and maintenance of records is essential to HoM for:

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- Managing the relationship between academies, students, and staff
- Providing support and other services and facilities to students and staff
- Controlling academic progress and measuring achievement
- Providing support to students after they leave our institutions
- Complying with statutory duties

In addition to complying with legislative requirements there are additional benefits to HoM of effective records management, these are:

- Protecting our critical records and improving organisational resilience
- Ensuring information can be found and retrieved quickly and efficiently
- Complying with legal and regulatory requirements
- Reducing the risk of data breach or litigation
- Minimising storage requirements therefore reducing costs

This Data Retention Policy sets out the limits that apply to the various types of personal data held by HoM, to establish the criteria by which those limits are set, and to outline how personal data should be disposed of.

3.2 Responsibilities

Each member academy will adhere to this Data Retention Policy and the HoM Data Retention Schedule.

Within the management and governance of HoM the following roles are responsible for retention, storage, and collection of data:

- The Clerk to the Trust is responsible for retention of all statutory and regulatory records.
- The Finance Director is responsible for retention of financial and related records.
- The Executive Principal is responsible for ensuring that retained records are included in business continuity and disaster recovery plans.
- The Data Protection Representative in each member academy, along with the Data Protection Officer, is responsible for monitoring storage, retention, and disposal of data in accordance with this policy.

All other members of staff are expected to manage their current recordkeeping systems in accordance with this policy and the HoM Data Retention schedule. When establishing new record keeping systems, staff must ensure that the varying retention periods are appropriately considered and applied.

All staff of HoM and its member academies should liaise with the Data Protection Leads in their member academy when disposing of data to ensure that accurate records are kept, and disposal is carried out in an appropriate manner.

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New colleges and/or schools joining HoM Multi academy trust may continue to use their existing Data Retention Policy and schedule for a maximum of 12 months after their official joining date. The HoM DPO will review academy data retention policies during this period to ensure compliance with all statutory duties.

3.3 Reference Toolkits

- UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- National Archives
- JISC – guidelines for data retention
- Freedom of information Act 2000
- IRMS – Academies Toolkit
- Department for Education - Data Protection Toolkit

4 Data Retention

4.1 Retention General Principle

For any category of documents not specifically defined elsewhere in this policy or the HoM retention schedule and unless otherwise mandated differently by applicable law, the required retention period for such documents will be deemed to be 3 years from last use.

The only exception for this principle is teaching and learning materials which contain no personal data. These teaching materials will have no retention period applied, unless mandated differently.

4.2 Data Retention Schedules

The Data Protection Officer, in conjunction with Data Protection Leads and other managers of the HoM, will define the time period for which HoM documents and electronic records should be retained. Full details are made available to staff through this policy and the HoM Data Retention Schedule.

As an exemption, retention periods within the Data Retention Schedule can be prolonged in cases such as legal investigations, staff conduct investigations, court proceedings, safeguarding or medical investigations.

4.3 Protection of Data During Retention

HoM and member academies will take reasonable measures to ensure retained data is stored in a way that safeguards against loss as a result of environmental factors and technological changes.

4.4 Destruction of Data

HoM member academies and all staff should review the data they hold on a regular basis. Whether the data is held electronically, stored on the network, or filed in paper format. The purpose of the review will be to decide whether to destroy or delete any data once the purpose for which the documents were created is no longer relevant and in accordance with the HoM Data Retention Schedule. Staff should then coordinate with the Data Protection Lead in their member academy on the safe destruction of the data and how to record any destruction of data.

Where possible IT departments in each member academy will provide support and guidance to staff reviewing the retention of electronic documents.

Once a decision is made to dispose of personal data according to the retention schedule, the data should be deleted, shredded, or otherwise destroyed to a degree equivalent to their value to others, the risk to HoM and the level of confidentiality. The method of disposal will be dependent upon the nature of the document, and this is summarized in the HoM Data Retention Schedule.

The Data Protection Leads in each member academy shall document and approve the destruction process. Data Protection Leads in member academies will record and store Data Destruction Records in the HoM GDPR Team Files for the Data Protection Officer to monitor, as illustrated in Appendix 1.

The applicable statutory requirements for the destruction of information shall be fully observed at all times.

4.5 Breach, Enforcement and Compliance

The Data Protection Officer, in conjunction with the Data Protection Leads in each member academy has the responsibility to ensure all member academies and staff comply with this policy. It is also the responsibility of the Data Protection Officer to assist with enquiries from the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) in matters regarding data protection and data retention.

Any suspicious breach of this Policy must be reported immediately to the Data Protection Officer via email (dpo@heartofmerciamultiacademytrust.org.uk). All instances of suspected breaches of this policy will be investigated and appropriate action taken.

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5 Document Disposal

5.1 Routine Disposal Schedule

Records may be routinely destroyed when personal data is not a factor, or unless that are required to be retained as part of a larger record set, archive, or subject to an ongoing subject access request, legal, safeguarding, staff conduct investigations, medical or regulatory inquiry. Examples of these records are:

- Announcements and notices of day-to-day meetings and other events including acceptances and apologies
- In-house publications which are obsolete or superseded
- Manual hand-written notes when relevant electronic documents are created
- Message slips
- Duplicate documents such as CC and FYI copies, unaltered drafts, snapshot printouts or extracts from databases and files. Staff are advised to check with relevant managers before disposal.

6 Archive

HoM and member academies maintain an archive. The lawful basis for processing and retaining data is archiving in the public interest. Archives include, but are not limited to:

- Photographs and video of past events
- Press releases
- Prospectus
- Exam Results

The Archive is maintained as a resource to help inspire and equip current staff and students to understand and appreciate issues of identity, belonging and shared heritage; to prompt memories among many generations of past students and staff; and to serve as a research resource for all interested in the history of HoM and its member academies and the communities they serve.

7 Linked policies

- HoM Data Protection Policy
- HoM Information Security Policy.
- Acceptable User Policy at each member academy.
- CCTV Policy at each member academy.
- HoM Freedom of Information Policy.
- HoM Access to Information Policy (including the publication scheme).

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- HoM Staff Code of Conduct.
- HoM Whistleblowing Policy.
- Staff Wellbeing Policy at each member academy.

8 Equality Impact

The Trust's responsibilities towards promoting equality, diversity and inclusion have been considered when drafting this policy.

Date of review	Date agreed	MAT Board	LGBs Board	Review date	Comments
Sept 2025	November 2025	December 2025	Spring 2025	September 2026	

Appendix 1: Destruction of documents containing personal data

