

Research on support provided by schools to pupils in Years 7-to-11 who return to school following absence: privacy notice for school staff

The purpose of this document is to explain what personal information (data) will be collected from school staff as part of this research project, why we are collecting it, and who is responsible for keeping it safe.

The project will run from September 2024 to March 2025. It will involve case study visits to 10 mainstream secondary schools identified as doing particularly innovative or effective work in supporting pupils to return to school following absence. Each case study will comprise interviews with senior leaders, senior attendance champions/pastoral leads and focus groups with young people.

Further information about the project can be found on our information sheets, which are available from our [website](#).

1 Why are we collecting this data?

The [National Foundation for Educational Research](#) (NFER) is collecting personal data as part of a research project into strategies mainstream secondary schools use to support pupils' return to school following absence.

The project will examine how pupils feel during school absences, the different strategies schools use to support their return, and any additional support that schools or pupils believe could help make the return to school more comfortable and effective. For the purposes of data protection legislation, NFER is the data controller, meaning NFER is responsible for deciding how any personal data is used.

2 What is the legal basis for processing activities?

The legal basis for processing personal data is covered by GDPR Article 6 (1) (f), which states that:

‘processing is necessary for the purposes of the legitimate interests pursued by the controller or by a third party except where such interests are overridden by the interests or fundamental rights and freedoms of the data subject which require protection of the personal data’.

We have carried out a legitimate interest assessment, which demonstrates that the project fulfils one of NFER’s core business purposes (undertaking research, evaluation and information activities). The research has broader societal benefits, and project will provide new insights into how schools support pupils’ return to school after absence, with the aim of preventing short-term absences from escalating into long-term issues. It cannot be done without processing personal data, but processing does not override the data subject’s interests.

3 How will personal data be obtained?

NFER will collect personal data from senior school/trust leaders and senior attendance champions/pastoral leads via one-to-one and small group interviews. The interviews will be conducted in person as part of visits to 10 case-study schools.

We will use publicly available school and trust email addresses from Get Information About Schools, together with web searches and recommendations from third parties, to contact schools and invite them to participate in the research. We will ask the school representative to identify the relevant staff and pupils for us to speak to. We anticipate that schools/trusts will either set up the staff and pupil interviews on our behalf or pass on the relevant staff contact details (e.g., name, email address and telephone number) for NFER researchers to contact the relevant staff directly. Schools can also express an interest in taking part in the study by completing an expression of interest form on our website.

4 What personal data is being collected by this project?

The interviews will collect the following information from school/trust senior leaders and pastoral/attendance leaders:

- name, email address, telephone number, role and school and trust names
- views on support provided to help pupils return to school following an absence, and whether any additional forms of support might be helpful.

5 Who will personal data be shared with?

Interviews will staff be undertaken in person. It may be necessary to follow-up with some staff remotely, in which case interviews will be undertaken via telephone or by using the video conferencing software provided by Microsoft Teams. The privacy notice for Microsoft Teams can be found here: <https://docs.microsoft.com/en-us/microsoftteams/teams-privacy>.

The interviews/focus groups will be recorded so the research team can ensure the notes they produce are accurate. The recording will not be listened to/watched by anyone outside of the research team and research participants’ permission to record will be asked at the start of the interview.

.....

No individuals or schools will be named in the final report.

6 Is personal data being transferred outside of the United Kingdom (UK)?

No personal data is being stored or transferred outside of the UK by NFER for this project.

7 How long will personal data be retained?

NFER will retain personal data until the report is published in March/April 2025. Personal data, such as contact details and interview recordings will be deleted within six months of the publication of the final research report.

8 What rights do I have over my personal data?

Participants can withdraw their data from being processed at any time during the project. Should you withdraw from the research, any personal data you have provided up to that point will still be used unless you indicate otherwise.

Under certain circumstances, you have the right:

- to request access to information that we hold about you (subject access request)
- to have your personal data rectified, if it is inaccurate or incomplete
- to request the deletion or removal of personal data where there is no compelling reason for its continued processing
- to restrict our processing of your personal data (for example, permitting its storage but no further processing)
- to object to our processing
- not to be subject to decisions based purely on automated processing where it produces a legal or similarly significant effect on you

If at any time you wish to exercise any of these rights and/or withdraw your data from the project, please contact the Project Leader Matt Walker (m.walker@nfer.ac.uk).

If you wish to make a subject access request, restrict or object to processing, please contact our Compliance Officer (compliance@nfer.ac.uk).

9 Who can I contact about this project?

NFER is responsible for the day-to-day management of this evaluation. Contact the Project Leader Matt Walker (m.walker@nfer.ac.uk) with any queries.

If you have a concern about the way this project processes personal data, we request that you raise your concern with us in the first instance (see the details above). If you are still dissatisfied, you can contact the Information Commissioner’s Office, the body responsible for enforcing data protection legislation in the UK, at <https://ico.org.uk/concerns/>.

10 Last updated

We keep this privacy notice under review to make sure it is up to date and accurate. Any changes will be noted.

