Data Protection Privacy Statement – Free School Meals Opt-Out Scheme

In order to deliver services to the citizens and communities in Bedford Borough, it is necessary for the Council to collect, gather and process personal data about residents, staff and other individuals. Bedford Borough Council is committed to protecting your personal data when you use its services and/or correspond with it.

The Council has registered as a Data Controller with the Information Commissioner's Office. This registration can be viewed on the ICO website (opens in a new window) **Registration Number Z5916725.**

As a Data Controller, the Council sets out the purposes and methods for processing information and ensures safeguards over any personal and special category information it processes.

The sections below explain the arrangements we have in place to protect the information entrusted to the Council.

In relation to Free School Meals Opt-Out Scheme Bedford Borough Council will process your personal data for the following processing purposes:

To compare your personal data to that held of people receiving qualifying income related benefits to identify whether or not your children are entitled to income related free school meals.

Will my personal data be used for any other purpose?

Your personal information is only used for a specified purpose(s) but if we intend to use it for any other new purposes, we will normally ask you first. For instance, in some cases, the Council may wish to use your information for another purpose such as related to improving and developing services, or to prevent or detect fraud. In any event our processing will always have a demonstrable lawful basis. Where practicable and reasonable we will always seek to inform you of any significant proposed changes to how we process or intend to process your personal data, in order to ensure full transparency over how we handle your information.

We also carry out a data matching exercise each year to identify children who might be entitled to Free School Meals. Families should contact their children's schools for further information.

The personal data that will be collected:

Details about you (date of birth, national insurance number, national asylum seekers (NASS) number and gender)

Details about your child (name, date of birth, gender, school, and year group)

If you have declared a partner on your claim for benefits, we may also use details about them (date of birth, national insurance number and gender) to ensure we have matched the correct family on our systems.

The special category data that will be collected: None

It is processing this personal data by virtue of the following Lawful Basis:

Performance of a task carried out in the public interest - Article 6(1)(e)

The processing of your personal data will be restricted in time to: 18 months.

Your personal data will be held by/for the Council within the UK or the EU.

We have a range of measures to protect the personal data you provide. These include: cyber security; physical security of the Council's buildings and training on Data Protection for staff.

Bedford Borough Council is the Data Controller processing your information, who can be contacted as follows

Data Protection Officer
Bedford Borough Council
Borough Hall
Cauldwell Street
Bedford
MK42 9AP
Email: dpo@bedford.gov.uk
Telephone: 01234 267422

If you wish to enquire about your rights as a data subject, whether you wish to request a copy of your own information that Bedford Borough Council holds, request data portability; rectification or erasure of your data for any reason or objection to any processing, please contact the Council's GDPR Data Protection Officer: email: dpo@bedford.gov.uk

Alternatively, in the event that you remain dissatisfied with the way Bedford Borough Council has handled the processing of your information (i.e. after liaising with the Council to find a satisfactory solution), you have the right to contact the UK's Statutory Authority: The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) who can be contacted by using the details displayed at the bottom of the page entitled Personal information and your rights | Bedford Borough Council on our website under the "Challenging the response" heading.

Changes to this Notice:

We keep this Privacy Notice under regular review; this Notice was last updated in August 2025.