

Data Protection Privacy Statement – Free School Meals Opt-Out Pilot 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 Pilot Scheme Bedford Borough Council will process your personal data for the following processing purposes:

Free School Meals are a statutory benefit available to school-aged children from families who receive certain qualifying benefits. Younger children may also be eligible for Free School Meals if they attend a local authority nursery school or nursery class and attend full days. The Bedford Borough Council administers the Free School Meal scheme for eligible children in Bedford on behalf of the Government. We also provide food vouchers (from the Household Support Fund) to ensure families of children who are eligible for free school meals during term time can purchase food during the holidays to replace the meals their child would have received during the school day.

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.

We use your personal data to:

- Check whether your child is eligible for Free School Meals
- Notify your child's school of their entitlement to Free School Meals
- Provide food vouchers to support families during the school holiday
- Deal with any complaints or concerns
- Detect fraud and protect public funds

The personal data that will be collected:

We need to collect your personal data to provide these services, which may include:

- Your contact details (name, address, telephone number and email address)
- 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.

If you apply for a Free School Meal online, you provide this information to us directly. Someone else (for example school staff, a social worker, your GP, or Citizens Advice Bureau) can also apply on your behalf.

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:

There will be a need to retain information for 12 months as we will undertake the checks on a 6 month basis or twice a year.

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:

Information Governance
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 for 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 or send to the above address.

Alternatively if you are unhappy in the way Bedford Borough Council has handled the processing of your information in any way, you have the right to contact the UK's Supervisory Authority: The Information Commissioner's Office who can be contacted:

By webform: <https://ico.org.uk/global/contact-us/email/>
By email: casework@ico.org.uk or,
By telephone: 0303 123 1113

Changes to this Notice

We keep this Privacy Notice under regular review and we will place any updates on its Internet site. This Notice was last updated in June 2024.