



Dorset
Studio School
LAND & ENVIRONMENT

SUBJECT ACCESS REQUEST (SAR) POLICY 2025-2026

Items	Page number
Purpose & Key Principles of SAR	1
What is a SAR?	1
How to make a SAR request	2
Response to SAR requests	3
Redactions to SAR requests	3
Exemptions to SAR requests	4
Fees for SAR requests	5
Refusal to process a SAR request	5
Dissatisfaction with a SAR response	6
Further information	7
Appendix 1: SAR Request template	8

Approved by:	
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Purpose and Key Principles of this policy

This policy outlines how Dorset Studio School manages Subject Access Requests (SARs) in accordance with data protection legislation. It ensures that individuals can exercise their right to access personal data held by the school.

Informal requests are often quicker for straightforward queries. The school is committed to transparency and will always advise you on the best route to access the information you need.

1. What is a Subject Access Request?

A Subject Access Request is a **formal request** made by an individual, usually a parent or carer, (or their representative) to access personal data that the school holds about them.

When You Might Not Need a SAR

(i) Routine Requests:

If you are a parent or carer seeking access to school reports, attendance records, or other routine information, contact the relevant teacher or school office first. Many requests can be handled quickly and informally.

(ii) General Information:

If you are seeking general information about the school (such as policies, procedures, or statistics), this may be available on the school website or through a Freedom of Information (FOI) request, not a SAR.

(iii) Clarification or Correction:

If you wish to correct or update information held about you or your child, contact the school's Data Protection Officer or administration team directly.

When a SAR is Appropriate:

- If you want to see **all personal data**, the school holds information about you or your child.
- If you require copies of emails, reports, or records that contain your (or your child's) personal information.
- If you have been unable to obtain the information you need through informal channels.

How to Decide if a SAR is required

- **Ask the school first:**

If you are unsure, contact the school's Data Protection Officer or administration team for advice. They can help you determine whether a SAR is necessary or if your request can be handled informally.

It is important to understand the distinction between a Subject Access Request (SAR) and a Freedom of Information (FOI) request:

(i) Subject Access Request (SAR):

- **Purpose:** Allows individuals to access personal data that the school holds about them.
- **Who can apply:** The individual (data subject) or their authorised representative.
- **What information can be requested:** Only personal data relating to the individual making the request.
- **Legal basis:** Governed by the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.
- **Examples:** A parent/carer requesting their child's school records, a staff member requesting information held about them.

(ii) Freedom of Information (FOI) Request:

- **Purpose:** Allows anyone to request access to recorded information held by the school that is not personal data.
- **Who can apply:** Any member of the public, regardless of their relationship to this school.
- **What information can be requested:** Any recorded information held by the school, such as policies, procedures, statistics, or minutes of meetings, but **not** personal data about individuals.
- **Legal basis:** Governed by the Freedom of Information Act 2000.
- **Examples:** A journalist requesting statistics on school performance, a member of the public requesting copies of school policies.

2. Making a Subject Access Request

Formal Written Request is required for a Subject Access Request

This should be submitted by email for the attention of the school's **Data Protection Officer (DPO)**, Mrs. Tracey Richards at informationrequests@dorsetstudioschool.co.uk

To help us process your request efficiently, please include:

- o Your **full name** and **contact details**
- o **A clear description of the information you are requesting**
- o Relationship to the school (e.g., student, parent, staff)

See Appendix 1 - Template for making a SAR request

4. Responding to Requests

- The school will acknowledge receipt of the SAR within **5 school days**.
- The school will respond to the request within **one calendar month** of receipt of a valid request.
- If the request is *complex* or *numerous*, the school may extend the response period by up to **two further months**. You will be informed if this is the case.

In addition to acknowledging the request, the school may ask for:

- Proof of ID (if needed).
- Further clarification about the requested information.
- Clarification of where the information shall be sent.
- Consent (if requesting third party data).

The school is entitled to request additional information from a requester in order to verify whether the requester is in fact who they say they are. Where reasonable doubts exist, evidence of identity may be established by the production of a passport, driving licence, a recent utility bill with current address or a bank or credit card statement with current address.

In such cases, the period of responding will begin when the additional information has been received. If this information is not forthcoming, the school will be unable to comply with the request.

5. Redaction for Subject Access Requests

When responding to a SAR, the school will ensure that only the personal data of the data subject or the requester is disclosed. Information relating to other individuals, or information that falls under an exemption, must be redacted before disclosure.

In order to facilitate the redaction process, clarification of the information required is essential. If the request is a broad one, the requester will be asked to specify the type of information or the timeframe they are interested in.

The Data Protection Officer will review and/or seek additional guidance from other senior leaders in order to consider whether the information collated is truly about the student or requester, or it merely mentions their name.

When information provides details about other students, the Data Protection Officer will remove them.

Any information that falls under a legal exemption (e.g., safeguarding, legal privilege, serious harm, management planning) will always be redacted.

When providing the response, the Data Protection Officer will include a brief note to explain that it has been necessary to redact some information.

5. Exemptions

While the school aims to be transparent and provide access to personal data wherever possible, there are certain circumstances where information may be withheld in response to a SAR. These exemptions are set out in the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018, and include:

(i) Information about Other Individuals

If the requested data contains personal information about another individual, the school will redact or withhold that information unless the other individual has consented to the disclosure, or it is reasonable to provide the information without their consent.

(ii) Serious Harm

Information may be withheld if providing it would be likely to cause serious harm to the physical or mental health of the requester or another individual.

(iii) Safeguarding and Child Protection

Data may be withheld if disclosure would prejudice the prevention or detection of crime, the apprehension or prosecution of offenders.

Information may also be withheld if disclosure would compromise safeguarding or child protection concerns.

(iv) Legal Professional Privilege

Any information that is subject to legal professional privilege (for example, confidential communications between the school and its legal advisers) may be withheld.

(v) Exam Marks and Scripts

There are specific rules regarding access to exam marks and scripts. Access may be delayed until after results are announced, and scripts themselves may not be provided.

(vi) Management Forecasts and Negotiations

Information may be withheld if it relates to leadership and management planning (such as staff restructuring) and disclosure would prejudice the conduct of the school's business,

(vii) Ongoing Investigations or Proceedings

Data may be withheld if it would prejudice ongoing disciplinary, grievance, or criminal investigations.

(viii) Educational Data

In most circumstances, education data may be withheld if complying with the request would be likely to cause serious harm to the physical or mental health of any associated individual.

6. Fees for Subject Access Requests

In most cases, the school **will not charge a fee** for responding to a Subject Access Request. However, a reasonable fee may be charged if the request is manifestly unfounded or excessive (For example, if the request is repetitive)

The fee will be charged on the basis of the administrative cost of providing the information. The school will inform the requester of the fee before processing the request.

7. Refusal to process a Subject Access Request

If a request is manifestly unfounded or excessive, the school may also refuse to respond. In such cases, the requester will be informed of the reason for refusal and their right to complain to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

A request may be manifestly unfounded if the requester has no intention of exercising their right to access by using the process for some kind of benefit.

Further scenarios of manifestly unfounded Subject Access Requests include (but may not be limited to):

- If the request is believed to be malicious intent and is being used to harass the school with no real purpose other than to cause significant disruption. This may be evident in the request itself or in some other form of communication,
- If the request makes unsubstantiated accusations against an individual or a group of staff which is evidently prompted by malice, then the school has reasonable grounds to refuse the request.
- If the request is part of a campaign, for example, weekly with the intent of causing disruption to the smooth and effective running of the school

8. Dissatisfaction with the Response

If you are not satisfied with the way your Subject Access Request (SAR) has been handled, or with the outcome, you have the right to raise your concerns.

Step 1: Contact the School

- In the first instance, please contact the school's Data Protection Officer (DPO), Mrs. Richards or the Principal, Mr. Malone to discuss your concerns. The school will review your case and aim to resolve any issues promptly and fairly. These staff can be contacted by telephone on **01305-443600** or e-mail at info@dorsetstudioschool.co.uk
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Step 2: Escalate to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)

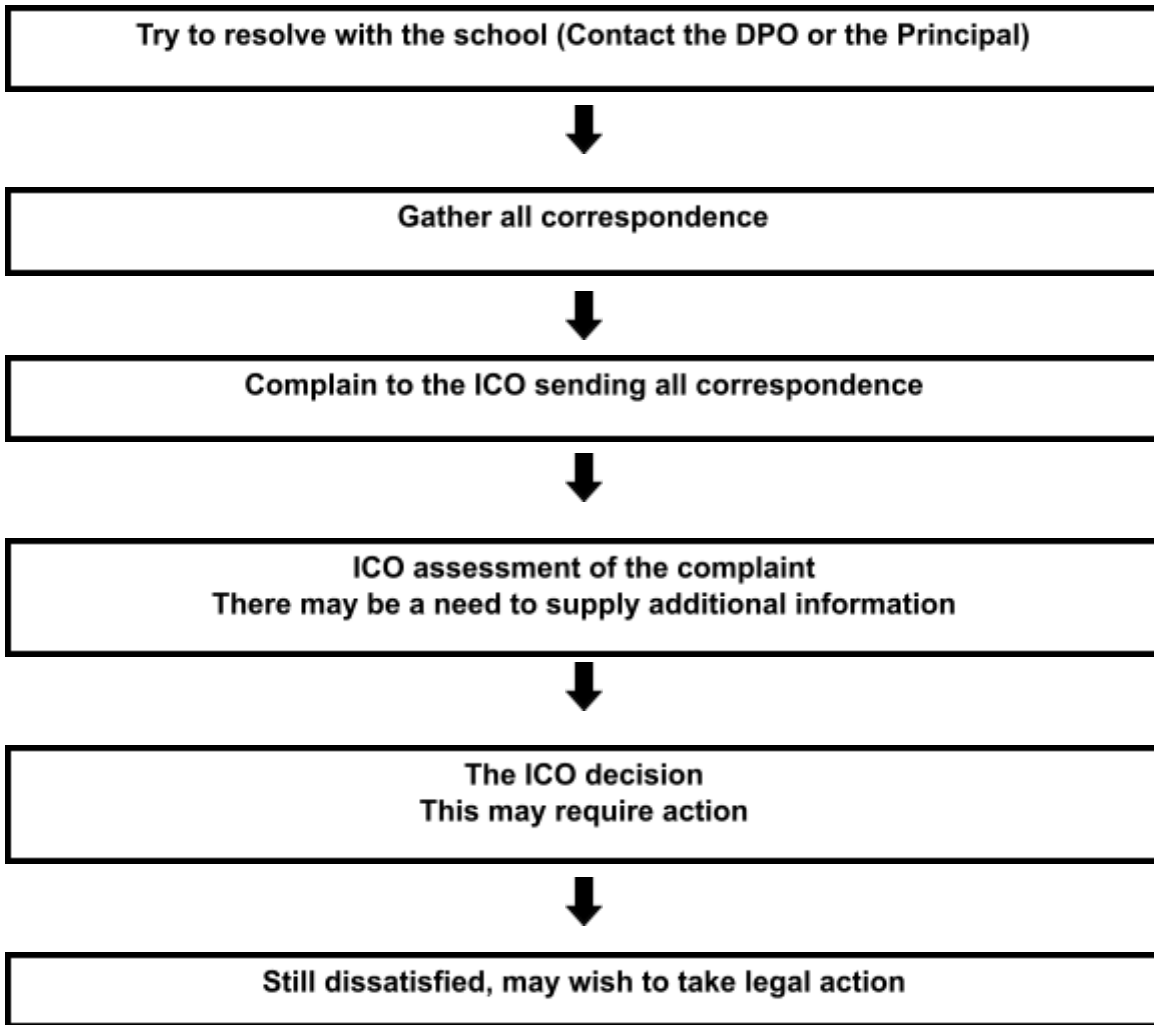
- If you remain dissatisfied **after** contacting the school, you have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).
- The ICO is the UK's independent authority set up to uphold information rights and protect personal data.

You can contact the ICO:

- **Online:** <https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/>
- **By phone:** 0303 123 1113
- **By post:**

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

The ICO recommends that you first try to resolve your complaint with the school before contacting them. The ICO can investigate your complaint and may require the school to take further action if necessary. The ICO process can be shown in the following flowchart.



6. Further Information

For more details about your rights or how the school processes personal data, please contact the school's Data Protection Officer or refer to our Data Protection Policy.

Appendix 1: Subject Access Request (SAR) Form

Dorset Studio School Subject Access Request Form

1. Details of the person requesting information:

- Full Name:
- Address:
- Telephone Number
- Email Address

2. Details of the data subject (if different from above):

- Full Name:
- Relationship to the school:
- Address:
- Date of Birth:

3. Description of the information requested:

(Please describe the information you are seeking. Include any relevant dates, departments, or details to help us locate the data.)

Appendix 1 (Continued): Subject Access Request (SAR) Form

3. Proof of Identity (if required)

- Please send an appropriate attachment.
- Alternatively, please bring appropriate documentation into school for copying.

4. Declaration:

I certify that the information given on this form is true. I understand that it is necessary for the school to confirm my identity and that it may be necessary to obtain more information to locate the data requested.

Signature:

Date:

Please return your **completed form** to:

informationrequests@dorsetstudioschool.co.uk

Incomplete forms or a lack of clarity about the information you seek will delay the processing of this request