



Avenue
CENTRE FOR EDUCATION

Data Quality Policy

2022 – 2025

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 Good quality, easy-to-access information makes it easier for people to do a great job, provide a great service and make great decisions.
- 1.2 Data supports our planning process, helping us identify what we need to do to deliver high quality services. It underpins our performance management framework, helping us assess when things are working well and where we need to take action to make improvements. We also use data to help us focus services around our customers, ensure that we are making best use of our resources and are adding value.
- 1.3 The school recognises that all of our decisions, whether service led, managerial or financial need to be based on information which is of the highest quality. The school is committed to maintaining high standards of data quality. Every care will be taken to ensure that the data and information used to support decision making is accurate, valid, reliable, timely, relevant, complete, accessible and processed lawfully in line with this corporate data quality policy.
- 1.4 It is also important to ensure that all of our data is of a high quality in order to comply with the Data Protection Act 2018 in particular principle 4, 'accurate and up-to-date'.

2 Purpose

- 2.1 The overall purpose of this policy is to maximise the effectiveness of the school by managing data, information and records as strategic corporate assets in support of our values, priorities and plans and ensure we are compliant with relevant legislation.
- 2.2 This policy is designed to ensure that the importance of data quality within the school is disseminated to all staff. It will describe the meaning of data quality, who is responsible for its maintenance and how it can continue to improve in the future.
- 2.3 Although this policy relates to service user and staff data/information, the principles included are applicable to any other data/information staff may encounter for example, recording of minutes

3 Scope

- 3.1 All school systems and processes that produce performance information and data are in the scope of this policy, in order to ensure that accurate and dependable information is available for all school functions.
- 3.2 Data, information and records are corporate resources owned by the school. All data, information, documents and records must be managed in accordance with this policy and other associated policies.
- 3.3 This policy applies to all data, information and records held by the school, regardless of format. This includes documents and records in electronic or digital form as well as physical form (hardcopy).

- 3.4 This policy applies to all officers and through commissioning and agreements, partners, volunteers, contractors and consultants.
- 3.5 Data quality will also support the school to comply with its obligations under the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000.
- 3.6 Specific issues relating to information technology and the security and control of IT systems are covered in the school's information security policy and are therefore excluded here.

4 Definitions

Data	is a collection of facts from which information is constructed via processing or interpretation
Information	is the result of processing, gathering, manipulating and organising data in a way that adds to the knowledge of the receiver
Data Quality	is a measure of the degree of usefulness of data for a specific purpose

5 Data quality commitments

5.1 Chiltern school has made the following commitments:

To be more productive - We will use our information to drive efficiency, productivity and improve service delivery, safely finding and using the information we need to perform our work more easily and quickly	
Ownership	Information is owned by the school as a whole - we know what we have and who is responsible for it
Secure access	Information is securely accessible to everyone that needs it – we can securely access information anytime via any device
Quick and easy	Information is quick and easy to use – information is easy to capture, navigate and share. Citizens can access data about themselves.
Publically available	Public funded data should be open by default: unless it is personal or confidential.
To maintain one version of the truth – The information we use to serve our customers is trusted by all	
One view	We will create one view of citizens by linking systems and creating a golden record to create a holistic view of our data
Lifecycle	Information has a defined lifecycle and is disposed of safely when it is no longer needed
Assured	Information is assured – the quality of our information is high
Governed	Information is governed – information is managed to corporate policy standards and is compliant
To find better ways of working – We will exploit all the information we have available to identify more innovative ways of working	
Common language	Information has a common language – we are all using the same business terms when we talk about information
Enterprise perspective	Information has an enterprise perspective – we are avoiding silos and ensuring all of our data is joined up
Value	Information is treated as a valuable corporate asset – we see data as one of the most valuable assets the school owns
Risk	Information will be secured according to risk. We value customer information and protect it, so potential breaches are extremely rare.

6 Data quality principles

6.1 The school has adopted eight key principles of good data quality, widely accepted as good working practice:

Accuracy	Data should provide a true account of what it is intended to represent to enable informed decisions to be made. The level of accuracy should be balanced with the need to provide timely data.
Validity	Data should appropriately reflect what it is intended to measure or report, have an agreed definition and format which conforms to recognised national and local standards
Reliability	Data should be consistently calculated, recorded, analysed and reported over time in a way that provides a meaningful reflection of the situation.
Timeliness	Data should be recorded and available as soon after the event as possible for it to be valuable for managing service delivery and decision making, providing the opportunity to take corrective action where needed.
Relevance	Data should be defined/selected, collected, recorded and analysed with the intended use and audience in mind so that it is fit for purpose and adds value to the decision making process
Completeness	Data should be complete and comprehensive to ensure it provides a full picture of the current situation
Accessible	Data must be retrievable in order to be used and in order to assess its quality
Processed lawfully	In accordance with any existing data sharing agreement or data processing agreement as well as current legislation such as the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000

7 Roles and responsibilities

- 7.1 Chiltern school staff and members have a responsibility to consider the quality of information (and underlying data) when making decisions based upon it.
- 7.2 All staff involved in producing data/information (whether defining, collating, recording, extracting, analysing or reporting) have a responsibility for data quality.
- 7.3 The recruitment, performance appraisal and ongoing staff development processes should clearly reflect and reinforce the importance of data quality
- 7.4 These responsibilities sit alongside rather than replace the general responsibilities staff have relating to information management and information sharing and security.
- 7.5 Whilst all staff have a collective responsibility for quality, there are also some specific responsibilities that individuals and teams should be aware of:

Management Committee	Will set the strategic direction for the school around data quality, data processes and IT
Senior Leadership	The senior leadership team will be responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented at all levels within the school.
Information Asset Owners (IAO)	Are responsible for promoting and supporting the organisational culture as determined by the SIRO. They are also responsible for managing the information assets within their remit from the perspective of access, risk and lifecycle. IAO's are responsible for data quality within each system and for maintaining system specific security policies and standard operating procedures for their systems
Departmental Management Teams	Responsibilities include promoting a culture that values information and its effective management; and allocating appropriate resources to support information management, and support the work of the Information asset owners
Team managers	Are accountable for implementing this policy ensuring that its effectiveness is periodically assessed.

All school	All officers, partners, volunteers, contractors, consultants and agency staff are responsible for applying data quality principles, standards, and practices in the performance of their duties.
ICT	Are responsible for ensuring that information and data management facilities are appropriate; effective and secure in accordance with legislative and statutory requirements. This will include the undertaking, and documentation, of appropriate risk assessments in respect of system and database security. ICT services are also responsible for ensuring that information security policies are maintained and adhered to in conjunction with the data and information manager.

8 Data Management standards

- 8.1 In order to support effective data quality management the school will:
- 8.2 Ensure that information is stored digitally by default. Information is created, stored and handled in electronic format, internally and externally as our first choice.
- 8.3 Where possible, establish a single source of truth for all our information assets, key staff and customer information will be held in one place. Overlaps in data storage and reporting systems should be avoided to minimise duplication of effort and reduce opportunities for errors and inconsistencies.
- 8.4 Ensure information is fit for purpose and is not collected unless we have a business reason for doing so. Systems are designed to provide useful management information to all, as well as storing basic data and transactional information.
- 8.5 Provide parents, students and staff with access to information about themselves. Personal, sensitive and commercial information is kept secure and confidential but accessible to the individuals
- 8.6 Standardise Information by providing both the data and an explanation of what it is about. We author information in a way that it can be presented and understood in different forms. There must be authoritative versions and widely adopted standards for describing and storing paper and electronic information. This will make it easier to find the information we are looking for in our electronic filing systems because we have policies to describe our information effectively and have good tools for retrieving it. We will force the capture of pertinent associated metadata, including personal and sensitive metadata and common identifiers, to enable data to be brought together across systems effectively.
- 8.7 Ensure that people use a common language when discussing information across the business. It is essential that we all use the same information definitions and terminology to facilitate working discussions, help us resolve conflict and to improve knowledge sharing.

- 8.8 Create data standards within systems to improve data quality. These will be incorporated into systems using electronic validation programmes for example drop down menus generated from nationally or locally agreed standards and definitions such as nationally agreed ethnicity codes. These must be controlled, maintained and updated in accordance with any changes that may occur, and must not be switched off or overridden by operational staff.
- 8.9 Make sure information is secured according to risk and the impact on an individual, group or organisation. It is classified for handling, how it should be stored and who can have access to it. 'Privacy by design' culture will be driven through the Privacy Impact Assessment process for all new systems and processes that use personal data. We will maintain an environment that reduces the risk of a cyber-attack breach.
- 8.10 Maintain an information governance strategy to support good practice across a number of different policies and procedures affecting data management. Key policies will be kept updated.
- 8.11 Capture knowledge routinely and use it to help the school share and learn from its employees' collective experience. We will include data as a key issue when we review our business processes. We will ensure that business continuity plans are in place to protect critical business data from the effects of major failures of IT systems or other disasters.
- 8.12 Automate management information and improve access, through dashboards and common reporting tools to inform policy and service planning.
- 8.13 Share service information where appropriate. Customer and service information will be shared with staff, partners and others appropriately to deliver services. We will have rules and governance to manage data effectively. Information management principles and practices will be embedded in the organisation through training, culture and effective system design.
- 8.14 Own and manage information. Each set of information (including data sets, documents, records and knowledge) will have a defined "Information Asset Owner" who is responsible for the management of the information. Information is stored, managed in one place and accessed many times rather than physically duplicating in different locations or systems.
- 8.15 Carryout regular audits appropriate to the systems and processes being used and include lead officer 'sign off' to assure the quality of data.
- 8.16 Fully train our staff in the production or use of data to ensure data is produced and used in a way that adds value to the school. Data quality will be discussed and reviewed in supervision sessions.

9 Data validation

- 9.1 Validation encompasses the processes that are required to ensure that the information being recorded is of good quality. These processes deal with data that

is being added continuously and also can be used on historical data to improve its quality.

- 9.2 It is imperative that regular validation processes and data checks/audits are undertaken on data being recorded to assess its completeness, accuracy, relevance, accessibility and timeliness. Such processes may include, checking for duplicate or missing data, validating waiting lists, ensuring that national definitions and coding standards are adopted, and that unique identifiers such as UPRN are being used and validated.
- 9.3 Validation should be accomplished using some or all of the following methods:
- Bulk exception reporting; which involves a large single process of data analysis to identify all areas within a dataset where quality issues exist and to enable the correction of this data. Bulk exception reporting can sometimes be used as an initial data quality tool as this will quickly highlight any areas of concern. However, further investigation may be required to identify more specific issues.
 - Regular spot checks/audits; which involves analysis of a random selection of records against source material, if available. Spot checks should be done on an ongoing regular basis to ensure the continuation of data quality. Other audits take place on an annual basis, and where an external or internal audit of a system is planned, it will include data quality.
 - Data cross checking; which can also be performed on data and information held by different services and/or on separate systems.
 - Where problems are identified, corrective action and any recommendations for change will be identified. This stage may be complex, especially where more than one information system is involved. The 'master' source of the data must be identified and the impact on recipient systems evaluated. Where at all possible data must be corrected at source and this is the responsibility of the service managers to ensure that this happens. Should areas where issues of incorrect data are not being put right be identified; the matter will be referred to the relevant Director.
 - Benchmarking & comparison of data and processes to collect data should be carried out not only to compare performance, but also to look at outliers of data and ensure common processes are used. Benchmarking may be as part of a routine comparison of performance information (eg National Indicators); as a one off exercise where there are concerns about specific data, or as part of a routine schedule of data quality audits
 - Templates allow users to enter results and data into the record in a consistent and coherent manner. They ensure that users enter all of the required information about a service user accurately and prompt the user

in a logical format to enter the key information ensuring that accurate data capture occurs.

10 Measuring progress

- 10.1 The policy and the school's overall approach to data quality will be monitored by the senior leadership team.
- 10.2 The monitoring and review process will involve:
- Routine checks.
 - Periodic audits.
 - Follow up of any data quality queries
 - Disseminating the lessons learnt from all of the above throughout the school and its partners

11 Risk management

- 11.1 Data quality has been identified as a strategic risk in the schools strategic risk register.
- 11.2 Areas that can be classified as "high risk" conditions include:
- A high volume of data transactions
 - Technically complex performance information definition/guidance
 - Problems identified in previous years
 - Inexperienced staff involved in data processing/performance information production
 - A system being used to produce new performance information
 - Known gaps in the control environment

12 Training & Awareness

- 12.1 The school regularly reviews employee roles to ensure that training and awareness messages are appropriate to the nature, sensitivity and level of risk of the data processing undertaken. Induction processes ensure new employees receive appropriate training before data is processed, these provisions are documented in our training needs analysis document.
- 12.2 As a minimum the IAO will ensure that the necessary system training or education needs are identified, resourced and built into the delivery planning process and will deliver any training necessary to enable staff to input and maintain data quality across IT systems safely and securely