

# DATA PROTECTION & FREEDOM OF INFORMATION POLICY

## **A route to a positive future :**

Committed to providing a quality education to pupils with complex needs, including autism and sensory impairment in West Berkshire and Greater Reading



**Brookfields**  
Specialist SEN School

Reviewed : Spring 2018  
Due for Review : Spring 2019  
Policy Holder : A Brown (adapted  
from West Berkshire)  
Date : April 2017

## **Brookfields School Equalities Statement**

**All pupils at the school are offered a broad, balanced, stimulating and relevant curriculum regardless of their background, culture or ability. Each pupil is valued for who they are and what they bring to the school. We appreciate and celebrate the richness of diversity within the school community as well as the wider community. Through the work we do across the school on developing Values, we actively promote the importance of tolerance, co-operation, courage, determination, friendship and respect. Through this approach, pupils develop independence, confidence and integrity which prepares them for their future lives.**

## Data Protection and Freedom of Information – Policy of Brookfields School

### Aims & Objectives:

The aim of this policy is to provide a model set of guidelines to enable staff, parents and pupils to understand:

- The law regarding personal data
- How personal data should be processed, stored, archived and deleted/destroyed
- How staff, parents and pupils can access personal data
- How staff and associated research partners can use personal data (appendix 2)

In addition, there is brief guidance at the end of the policy on Freedom of Information which covers other information held by schools.

The objective of the policy is to ensure that the school acts within the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998 when retaining and storing personal data, and when making it available to individuals, and that the process of responding to enquiries for other information is also legal under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (in force from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2005).

(This policy can be adapted to suit schools within West Berkshire.)

### Data Protection – the law:

Under the Data Protection Act 1998, and associated legislation, access to their own personal information is a statutory right for pupils (if they are of an age to understand the information they request) and parents (as defined in the Education Act 1996 – see footnote) may also request access to their child's personal data.

School staff have a right of access to personal data on themselves.

Anyone has the right to question and correct inaccurate information, but in general this must be matters of fact, not opinions.

Personal data must be kept securely and protected by passwords if it is electronic, and access to it must only be by those authorised to see it – confidentiality must be respected. The law also provides that personal data should not be kept longer than is required.

Third party data (information about someone other than the requesting individual) is in general only provided with their permission.

Complaints about the handling of personal data within the school should be made to the member of staff named below.

The named person with overall responsibility for personal data within this school is:

Brandon Mills – Headteacher, Brookfields School - [Headteacher@brookfields.w-berks.sch.uk](mailto:Headteacher@brookfields.w-berks.sch.uk)

### Fair processing of personal data: data which may be shared

Schools, local education authorities, Adviza and the Department for Education (DfE) all hold information on pupils in order to run the education system, and in doing so have to follow the Data Protection Act 1998. This means, among other things, that the data held about pupils must only be used for specific purposes allowed by law. The school has a Fair Processing or Privacy Notice which explains how personal data is used and with whom it will be shared. This Notice is attached as Appendix 1.

The **Local Authority** uses information about pupils to carry out specific functions for which it is responsible, such as the assessment of any special educational needs the pupil may have. It also uses the information to derive statistics to inform decisions on (for example) the funding of schools, and to assess the performance of schools and set targets for them. The statistics are used in such a way that individual pupils cannot be identified from them.

Information on how to access personal data held by other organisations is given below.

Pupils, as data subjects, have certain rights under the Data Protection Act, including a general right of access to personal data held on them, with parents exercising this right on their behalf if they are too young to do so themselves. If your child wishes to access their personal data, or you wish to do so on their behalf, then please contact the relevant organisation in writing:

- the school as above;
- the LA's Data Protection Officer at Information Management Officer, Strategic Support, Council Offices, Market Street, Newbury RG14 5LD email [sellis@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:sellis@westberks.gov.uk)

## **Access to other school information – The Freedom of Information Act**

### **Requests for information**

- The Freedom of Information Act came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2005. Under this Act, all schools which receive a written or emailed request for information which they hold or publish, are required to respond within 20 working days.
- The schools Publication Scheme is held by the Headteacher.
- The school will provide information on where to access the information required eg. the website link, or details of a charge if the publication/ information is charged, or send any free information. If the item is charged the school does not need to provide it until the payment is received.
- A refusal of any information requested will state the relevant exemption which has been applied or that the school does not hold the information, and will explain what public interest test has been made if this applies.
- If the information is published by another organisation (for example, Ofsted reports, DfE leaflets) the school will direct the enquirer to the organisation which supplied the information or publication unless it is legal and possible to provide the information direct (for example, a copy of the summary of an Ofsted report, spare copies of a DfE leaflet ).
- In most cases it will not be legal to photocopy a publication in its entirety and supply this to an enquirer unless the school owns the copyright – this is particularly important where the original publication was a charged item. The enquirer will be required to obtain the publication from the publishing organisation or through a commercial source.
- The school will keep the original request and note against this who dealt with the request and when the information was provided.
- Any complaint about the provision of information will be handled by the Head Teacher or another senior member of staff. All complaints should be in writing and documented. The Publication Scheme will include information on who to contact for both enquiries and complaints.
- All enquirers should be advised that they may complain to the information Commissioner if they are unhappy with the way their request has been handled.

### **Reviewing:**

This Policy will be reviewed, and updated if necessary every two years. The Freedom of Information publication scheme should be reviewed regularly, with staff checking if they add a new piece of recorded information to the school's portfolio that this is covered within the scheme.

# Appendix 1

## Privacy Notices: Information about pupils in schools, alternative provision, pupil referral units and children in early years settings

### Data Protection Act 1998: How we use your information

We process personal information relating to our pupils and may receive information about them from their previous school or college, local authority, the Department for Education (DfE) and the Learning Records Service. We hold this personal data to:

- support our pupils' learning
- monitor and report on their progress
- provide appropriate pastoral care; and
- assess the quality of our services

Information about our pupils that we hold will include their contact details, national curriculum assessment results, attendance information, any exclusion information, where they go after they leave us, personal characteristics such as their ethnic group, any special educational needs they may have and any relevant medical information. *For pupils enrolling for post 14 qualifications, the Learning Records Service will give us the unique learner number (ULN) and may also give us details about your learning or qualifications.*

*In addition once our pupils reach the age of 13, the law requires us to pass on certain information about them to **West Berkshire Local Authority** who have responsibilities in relation to the education or training of 13-19 year olds. We provide them with these pupils' names and addresses, dates of birth, name(s)/address(es) of their parent(s)/guardian(s) and any other information relevant to their role. We may also share certain personal data relating to children aged 16 and over with post-16 education and training providers in order to secure appropriate services for them.*

*A parent/guardian can ask that no information apart from their child's name, address and date of birth be passed to **West Berkshire Local Authority** by informing **Brookfields School's Headteacher**. This right is transferred to the child once he/she reaches the age of 16. For more information about services for young people, please go to our local authority website <http://www.westberks.gov.uk/>.*

We will not give information about you to anyone without your consent unless the law and our policies allow us to.

We are required, by law, to pass certain information about our pupils to our local authority (LA) and the Department for Education (DfE).

If you need more information about how our local authority and/or DfE collect and use your information, please visit:

- our local authority at <http://www.westberks.gov.uk/> ; or
- the DfE website at <https://www.gov.uk/data-protection-how-we-collect-and-share-research-data>

If you want to receive a copy of the information about you that we hold, please contact:

- **Headteacher, Brookfields School, Sage Road, Tilehurst, Reading RG31 6SW**

## Appendix 2

### Personal data used for research purposes

This appendix applies to all school staff and associated research partners; research partners proposing to work with pupils or staff within the school, during or after school hours.

It sets out the framework for ethical guidelines for research conducted within the school involving pupils or staff, and involves the sharing of information related to research projects.

The Governing board is committed to ensuring consistency of treatment and fairness in the operation of approving research work within the school.

### ETHICAL CODE

This Code is informed by the principles established in the Revised Ethical Guidelines for Education Research (2004) issued by the British Educational Research Association (BERA)<sup>1</sup>.

All researchers participating in research projects at Brookfields School will be required to sign a declaration of their agreement to abide fully by this ethical code. An example agreement is included in Appendix 3.

The researchers<sup>2</sup> recognise the rights of all professional colleagues, parents/carers and students who participate in the research to have their confidentiality protected at all times.

Written voluntary informed consent will be sought before any data will be gathered (ie through observations, interviews, questionnaires and document scrutiny) with any respondent as part of the research process. In the case of the school pupils, this consent will be sought through Brookfields School and obtained in writing before any data collection begins; parents and carers have the right to refuse participation and will not be pressured or coerced into taking part in the research.

Participants in the research have a right to withdraw from the process at any time up to a specified point and will be informed of both this right and the specified point date before they begin participating in the research.

The researchers will work in accordance with Articles 3 and 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and will ensure that the best interest of children is served at all times. Children will be facilitated to give informed consent and this will be in addition to the consent given by parents or carers.

All adults involved in the research process who have direct contact with children will be subject to Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) checks prior to the start of the research project.

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<sup>1</sup> BERA (2004) Revised Ethical Guidelines for Educational Researchers, Southwell: British Educational Research Association

<sup>2</sup> The Researchers refer to those individuals named as part of an application process for research at Brookfields School and may include academic staff from universities involved in research projects along with university administrators

In circumstances where children or adults use non-traditional orthography or alternative modes of communication, the researchers will take full account of this in seeking informed consent and will endeavour to provide support and full access to information.

The researchers are under an obligation to describe accurately, truthfully and fairly any information obtained during the course of the research. In circumstances where children or adults use non-traditional orthography, or alternative modes of communication, the researchers are also under an obligation to protect the anonymity of these individuals, and must represent any findings from these interactions accordingly.

There is an obligation to incorporate accurately data collected during the course of this research into the text of any report or other publication related to the research, and to ensure that individual opinions and perceptions are not misrepresented.

The researchers will protect the sources of information gathered from interviews, focus groups, document scrutiny, observations and other data collection methods.

The researchers will communicate to the research sponsors the extent to which their data collection and analysis techniques and the inferences drawn from these are reliable, valid and generalisable.

Data collected as part of the research process will be securely maintained and will be accessible only to the researchers engaged in this project. Electronic data will be secured through password systems and will be shared only amongst the research team. The secure storage of data for each project will be agreed between the researchers and Brookfields school, as part of the Ethical Approval Form (Appendix 3), in case any research projects have specific security requirements.

The researchers will report the procedures, results and analysis of the research accurately, and in sufficient detail to allow all interested parties to understand and interpret them.

The researchers will make themselves available to discuss the procedures, conduct, or findings of the research with any party involved in the research process.

Any research reports pertaining to research at Brookfields School will be made available in both paper and electronic format to the school.

Data collected during the course of the research project which names individuals or institutions will be available only to the researchers and will be made secure both during and after the term of the project.

The researchers are obliged to communicate the findings of their research to other members of the educational research community through research seminars, conference presentation and proceedings and publication taking account of all issues of confidentiality and protection of research participants.

The researchers assert their right to participate in any publication of the research findings in academic journals or other media, which may ensue from the research. Any such publication will be informed of this Code of Ethics and they must agree to adhere to it before any agreement on publication is made.

Signed: .....  
Policy Holder

Date: .....

Signed: .....  
Headteacher/Governor

Date: .....

Footnote: s576 of the Education Act 1996 defines a parent and includes all natural parents, someone who is not a parent of a pupil but who has parental responsibility for him, and a person who has care of the pupil

## **Guidance:**

### **Data Protection:**

#### **Processing, storing, archiving and deleting personal data: guidance**

A record retention schedule is available from the Information and Records Management Society (details given below)

- Personal data and school records about pupils are confidential to the child. The information can be shared appropriately within the professional working of the school to enable the school to make the best educational provision for the child. The law permits such information to be shared with other educational establishments when pupils change schools.
- School records for a child should be kept for 7 years after the child leaves the school, or until the child reaches 25 years of age (whichever is greater) and examination records the same.
- Data on staff is sensitive information and confidential to the individual, and is shared, where appropriate, at the discretion of the Head Teacher and with the knowledge, and if possible the agreement of the staff member concerned.
- Employment records form part of a staff member's permanent record. Because there are specific legislative issues connected with these (salary and pension details etc.) these records should be retained as set out by the LA or in the retention schedule of the school.
- Interview records, CV's and application forms for unsuccessful applicants are kept for 6 months.
- All formal complaints made to the Head Teacher or School Governors, in accordance with the school's Complaints Procedure, will be kept for at least seven years in confidential files, with any documents on the outcome of such complaints. Individuals concerned in such complaints may have access to such files subject to data protection and to legal professional privilege in the event of a court case.
- There may be other circumstances in which information can or has to be disclosed for example in court proceedings.. If you are in any doubt, please contact the LA's Information Management Officer.

#### **Accessing personal data: guidance**

- A child can request access to his/her own data. The request is not charged and does not have to be in writing. The staff will judge whether the request is in the child's best interests, and that the child will understand the information provided. They may also wish to consider whether the request has been made under coercion.
- A parent can request access to or a copy of their child's school records and other information held about their child. The request must be made in writing. There is no charge for such requests on behalf of the child, but there may be a charge for photocopying records – this is detailed in guidance available from the Information Commissioner. Staff should check, if a request for information is made by a parent, that no other legal obstruction (for example, a court order limiting an individual's exercise of parental responsibility) is in force.
- Parents should note that rights under the Data Protection Act to do with information about their child rest with the child as soon as they are old enough to understand these rights. This will vary from one child to another, but, as a broad guide, it is reckoned that most children will have a sufficient understanding by the age of 12. Parents are encouraged to discuss and explain any request for information with their child where they have sufficient understanding and/or if they are aged 12 or over
- Separately from the Data Protection Act, The Education (Pupil Information)(England) Regulations 2005 (as amended) provide a pupil's parent (regardless of the age of the pupil) with the right to view, or to have a copy of, their child's educational record at the school. Parents who wish to exercise this right must apply to the school in writing.

- For educational records (unlike other personal data; see below) access must be provided within 15 school days, and if copies are requested, these must be supplied within 15 school days of payment.
- A member of West Berkshire Council staff can request access to their own records at no charge, but the request must be made in writing. The member of staff has the right to see their own records, and to ask for copies of the records. There is no charge for copies of records.
- The law requires that all requests for personal information are dealt with within 40 days of receipt except requests for educational records (see above). All requests will be acknowledged in writing on receipt, and access to records will be arranged as soon as possible. If awaiting third party consents, the school will arrange access to those documents already available, and notify the individual that other documents may be made available later.
- In all cases, should third party information (information about another individual) be included in the information the staff will try to obtain permission to show this information to the applicant, with the exception of information provided by another member of school staff (or local authority staff) which is exempt from a requirement for third party consents. If third party permission is not obtained the person with overall responsibility should consider whether the information can still be released.
- Personal data should always be of direct relevance to the person requesting the information. A document discussing more general concerns may not be defined as personal data.
- From 1<sup>st</sup> January 2005, when the Freedom of Information Act came into force, a request for personal information can include unstructured as well as structured records – for example, letters, emails etc. not kept within an individual's personal files, or filed by their name, but still directly relevant to them. If these would form part of a wider record it is advisable to file these within structured records as a matter of course and to avoid excessive administrative work. These can be requested if sufficient information is provided to identify them.
- Anyone who requests to see their personal data has the right to question the accuracy of matters of fact within the data, and to ask to have inaccurate information deleted or changed. They may also question opinions, and their comments will be recorded, but opinions do not need to be deleted or changed as a part of this process.
- The school will document all requests for personal information with details of who dealt with the request, what information was provided and when, and any outcomes (letter requesting changes etc.) This will enable staff to deal with a complaint if one is made in relation to the request.
- There are exemptions to providing personal information, for example where the school consider doing so would cause serious harm to someone. If you are in any doubt, please contact the LA's Information Management Officer.

## **Freedom of Information**

### **Access to other school information – guidance on Freedom of Information Publication Schemes**

- Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, all schools (primary, secondary and nursery) should have a 'publication scheme' – essentially a formal list of the types of non-personal information which the school produces or holds, and which is readily accessible to staff, pupils and parents or other enquirers.
- The publication scheme should be available as a hard copy. The model scheme supplied by the Information Commissioner's Office should have been adopted from August 2013.
- Schools can link this document via their website to a list of publications with details of contacts and costs, and any appropriate downloads.
- There should be a named person with overall responsibility for published information within each school. In most cases this would be the Head Teacher. Their details should be available on the website with the Publication Scheme.

## Requests for information

- Requests should be acknowledged within three school days and answered in 20 working days or 20 school days (this applies where requests come in shortly before school holidays).
- Any refusal of information must include details of the exemption used and a public interest test if this applies. Speak to the LA's Information Management Officer email [sellis@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:sellis@westberks.gov.uk) for guidance on this.
- All requesters should be advised they can request a review of the handling of their request if they are dissatisfied with the response – this should be carried out by another staff member or a Governor. The LA's Information Management Officer can provide guidance on the statutory FoI review process if required.
- After a review, requesters may contact the Information Commissioner if they remain dissatisfied and should be directed to his office. Again, ask for advice on this process from the LA's Information Management Officer.

## Useful Guidance:

### Information Commissioner

The Information Commissioner is the Regulator for Data Protection and Freedom of Information and provides tailored guidance for schools on his website.

<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/education/>

Refer to the website for the most up to date guidance on a range of Data Protection and Freedom of Information issues. Model publication schemes can be found here:

<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-freedom-of-information/publication-scheme/definition-documents/>

### Department for Education

The Department for Education provides guidance on statutory responsibilities and non-statutory guidance. Advice on Data Protection and Freedom of Information can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/departmental-advice-schools#data-protection>

Statutory guidance is here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statutory-guidance-schools#administration-and-finance>

Non-statutory advice is here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/departmental-advice-schools>

### Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

The DBS (previously the Criminal Records Bureau), provides advice on checks for employees and those who work with children, and guidance can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/disclosure-barring-service-check/overview>

### Information and Records Management Society – Schools records management toolkit

<http://www.irms.org.uk/resources/information-guides/199-rm-toolkit-for-school>

A downloadable schedule for all records management in schools

## Legislation:

**Data Protection Act 1998:** All personal data which is held must be processed and retained in accordance with the eight principles of the Act and with the rights of the individual. Personal data must not be kept longer than is necessary (this may be affected by the requirements of other Acts in relation to financial data or personal data disclosed to Government departments). Retention of personal data must take account of the Act, and personal data must be disposed of as

confidential waste. Covers both personal data relating to employees and to members of the public.

**Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2005 (as amended):** Retention of Pupil records, and rights to access these.

**Freedom of Information Act 2000:** The Freedom of Information Act covers the rights of requesters to request and receive information held in a recordable format by the public authority (for schools this is the school, not the Governing board). There are a number of exemptions under which a refusal can be made, but all public authorities must offer requesters the opportunity to have a review of any refusal, and must direct them to the Information Commissioner if they remain dissatisfied.

Revised March 2015

Susan Ellis

[sellis@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:sellis@westberks.gov.uk)

## Appendix 3 - Ethical Approval Form

for staff and student research involving the participation of other people

Type of project:	STAFF / POSTGRADUATE / UNDERGRADUATE <i>(delete as appropriate)</i>
Title of project:	[Click and type here]
Name of researcher(s):	[Click and type here]
Name of supervisors(s):	[Click and type here] <i>(for student research)</i>
Date:	[Click and type here]

	<i>Mark with ✓ in box</i>	YES	NO	N/A
1a	Will you describe the main experimental procedures to participants in advance, so that they are informed about what to expect?			
1b	If 'YES', please provide explanation to your answer above, how you will ensure it is done:			
2a	Will you tell your participants that their participation is voluntary?			
2b	If 'YES', please provide explanation to your answer above, how you will ensure it is done:			
3a	Will you obtain written consent for participation?			
3b	If 'YES', please provide explanation to your answer above, how you will ensure it is done:			
4a	If the research is observational, will you ask participants for their consent to being observed?			
4b	If 'YES', please provide explanation to your answer above, how you will ensure it is done:			
5a	Will you tell participants that they may withdraw from the research for any reason and the specified date to which they can withdraw?			
5b	If 'YES', please provide explanation to your answer above, how you will ensure it is done:			
6a	With questionnaires, will you give participants the option of omitting questions they do not want to answer?			
6b	If 'YES', please provide explanation to your answer above, how you will ensure it is done:			
7a	Will you tell participants that their data will be treated with full confidentiality and that, if published, it will not be identifiable as theirs?			
7b	If 'YES', please provide explanation to your answer above, how you will ensure it is done:			
8a	Will you debrief participants at the end of their participation (i.e. give them a brief explanation of the study)?			
8b	If 'YES', please provide explanation to your answer above, how you will ensure it is done:			
9a	With interviews, will you tell your participants that you wish to record the interview, and that they may decline to have their interview recorded?			
9b	If 'YES', please provide explanation to your answer above, how you will ensure it is done:			

10a	With research that requires audio or video recordings, will you tell your participants that their permission will be sought to play any excerpts in the course of presentations given?			
10b	If 'YES', please provide explanation to your answer above, how you will ensure it is done:			
11a	Will you ensure that data and findings from the research are stored securely, on password protected devices or in locked filing cabinets etc.?			
11b	If 'YES', please provide explanation to your answer above, how you will ensure it is done:			

If you have marked **No** to any of Q1-11, but have **marked Box A** below, please give an explanation on a separate sheet. (Note: N/A = not applicable).

	Mark with ✓ in box	YES	NO	N/A
12	Will your project involve deliberately misleading participants in any way?			
13	Is there any realistic risk of any participants experiencing either physical or psychological distress or discomfort? If <b>Yes</b> , give details on a separate sheet and state what you will tell them to do if they should experience any problems (e.g. who they can contact for help).			

If you have marked **Yes** to Q12 or 13 you should normally **mark Box B** overleaf; if not, please give a full explanation on a separate sheet.

	Mark with ✓ in box	YES	NO	N/A	
14	Does your project involve work with animals? If yes, please <b>mark Box B</b> overleaf.				
15	Do participants fall into any of the following special groups? If so, please refer to BERA guidelines, and <b>mark Box B</b> overleaf. <b>You should ensure that you have DBS clearance.</b>	School children (under 18 years of age)			
		People with learning or communication difficulties			
		Patients			
		People in custody			
		People engaged in illegal activities (e.g. drug-taking)			

**There is an obligation on the lead researcher to bring to the attention of the Headteacher any issues with ethical implications not clearly covered by the above checklist.**

PLEASE MARK **EITHER** BOX A OR BOX B BELOW AND **PROVIDE THE DETAILS REQUIRED** IN SUPPORT OF YOUR APPLICATION. THEN PRINT AND SIGN THE FORM.

Mark with ✓

**A.** I consider that this project has **no significant** ethical implications to be brought before the Headteacher.

**Give a brief description of participants and procedure (methods, tests used etc.), and any potential ethics concerns that could arise as a result**

*Please refer to any potential ethical concerns in **your** project; do not discuss general ethics issues. Consider here also possible physical, psychological, economic or reputational harm that could result. (max. 150 words).*

[Click and type here]

**OR**

Mark with ✓

**B.** I consider that this project **may** have ethical implications that should be brought before the Headteacher, and/or it will be carried out with children, vulnerable young people or vulnerable adults.

**Please provide all the further information listed below in a separate attachment.**

1. Title of project
2. Purpose of project and its academic rationale
3. Brief description of methods and measurements
4. Participants: recruitment methods, number, age, sex, exclusion/inclusion criteria
5. How you will obtain informed consent and provide debriefing
6. A clear and concise statement of the ethical considerations raised by the project and how you intend to deal with them
7. Estimated start date and duration of project

Please tick the box to indicate (✓):

I have read and am familiar with *either* the BERA Ethical Guidelines (<http://www.bera.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/BERA-Ethical-Guidelines-2011.pdf>)

and (if appropriate) I have discussed them with the other researchers involved in the project.

I have read and am familiar with *Articles 3 and 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and will conduct my research accordingly*

**Signed:** ..... **Print name:** ..... **Date:** .....  
(Lead Researcher or Supervisor, if applicable)

**Signed:** ..... **Print name:** ..... **Date:** .....  
(Headteacher)

*Please turn to next page.*

**Summary**

Your application should consist of:

1. Your signed Ethics Approval Form (no more than the equivalent of three sides of A4) with attachments if appropriate
2. Consent form (1 side)
3. Participant information sheet (no more than 2 sides).

An electronic copy of the submission, formatted into one file, should be sent to the Headteacher:  
[headteacher@brookfields.w-berks.sch.uk](mailto:headteacher@brookfields.w-berks.sch.uk)

## Notes on completing the form

**PLEASE DELETE THESE NOTES PAGES ONCE YOU HAVE COMPLETED YOUR FORM.  
DO NOT INCLUDE THEM WITH YOUR APPLICATION.**

NOTE: THIS FORM SHOULD BE COMPLETED ELECTRONICALLY, AND MUST NOT GO OVER TWO SIDES.

Research involving the participation of other people is hence defined broadly to include research that:

- i. Directly involves people in the research activities, through their physical participation. Physical participation may signify invasive and/or non-invasive research (e.g. interviews, questionnaires, surveys, observational research) and may mean the active or passive involvement of a person;
- ii. Indirectly involves people in the research activities, through their provision of or access to personal data and/or tissue;
- iii. Involves people on behalf of others (e.g. parents/legal guardians of children and the psychologically and/or physically impaired, and supervisors of people under controlled environments [e.g. pupils]).

Some people participating in research may be more particularly vulnerable to harm than others. Particularly vulnerable groups include:

- i. Infants and children under the age of eighteen;
- ii. People with physiological and/or psychological impairments and/or learning difficulties;
- iii. People dependent on the protection or under the control or influence of others (e.g. children, pupils, people in care, young offenders, prisoners, employees/fellow staff, students);
- iv. Relatives of sick people (e.g. parents of sick children);
- v. People who may have only a basic or elementary knowledge of the English language.

Sensitive personal data consist of information as to:

- i. The racial or ethnic origin of the participant,
- ii. His or her political opinions,
- iii. His or her religious beliefs or other beliefs of a similar nature,
- iv. Whether he or she is a member of a trade union (within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992),
- v. His or her physical or mental health or condition,
- vi. His or her sexual life,
- vii. The commission or alleged commission by him or her of any offence, or
- viii. Any proceedings for any offence committed or alleged to have been committed by him or her, the disposal of such proceedings or the sentence of any court in such proceedings.

After participating in the research, participants must be debriefed in a positive manner regardless of how successfully you think they have completed the task.

APPLICANTS **MUST** READ THE ETHICAL GUIDELINES FOR EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH PUBLISHED BY THE BRITISH EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATION **BEFORE** SIGNING THE FORM.

This document can be found at: <http://www.bera.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/BERA-Ethical-Guidelines-2011.pdf>

## **Guidance on producing Participant Information Sheets**

Participant Information Sheets should be designed to assist participants to make informed choices. Potential recruits need to be given sufficient information to allow them to decide whether or not they want to take part, and should they take part, it should be made clear that they are free to withdraw at any time. Researchers should take the steps necessary to ensure that all participants in the research understand the process in which they are to be engaged, including why their participation is necessary, how it will be used and how and to whom it will be reported.

Below is a recommended structure and information to include in a participant information sheet. Your information sheet should be no more than two sides of A4 and should include all of the following headings:

### **Research project title**

Is the title self-explanatory? If not, a simplified title should be included.

### **Invitation paragraph**

This should explain that the participant is being asked to take part in a research project. The following is a suitable example:

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask me/us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

### **What is the purpose of the project?**

The background and aim of the project should be given here. Also mention the project's duration.

### **Why have I been chosen?**

You should explain how the participant was chosen and how many other participants will be studied.

### **Do I have to take part?**

You should explain that taking part in the research is entirely voluntary and that refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which the participant is otherwise entitled, and the participant may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits, to which the participant is otherwise entitled. You could use the following paragraph:

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. Refusal to take part will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep (and be asked to sign a consent form). If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time, without penalty or loss of benefits, and without giving a reason.

### **What will happen to me if I take part?**

You should say how long the participant will be involved in the research, how long the research will last (if this is different), how often they will need to participate and for how long each time. You should set out simply the research methods you intend to use.

### **What do I have to do?**

State if there are any lifestyle restrictions as a result of participating.

**What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?**

Any reasonably foreseeable discomforts, disadvantages and risks need to be stated. Any unexpected discomforts, disadvantages and risks to participants, which arise during the research, should be brought immediately to their attention.

**What are the possible benefits of taking part?**

Any benefits to the participants that can reasonably be expected should be stated. However, where there is no intended benefit to the participant from taking part in the project this should be stated clearly. It is important not to exaggerate the possible benefits to the particular participant during the course of the project. This could be seen as coercive. Depending on the particular proposed project the following sentence might be useful:

While there are no immediate benefits for those people participating in the project, it is hoped that this work will ...

**What happens if the study has to be terminated?**

If this is the case the reason(s) should be explained to the participant.

**Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?**

You will need to obtain the participant's permission to allow restricted access to information collected about them in the course of the project. You should explain that all information collected about them will be kept strictly confidential. You are responsible for ensuring that when collecting or using data, you are not contravening the legal or regulatory requirements in any part of the UK. A suggested form of words is:

All information which is collected about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. Any information about you that is disseminated will have your name and address removed so that you cannot be identified by it.

**What happens immediately after data collection?**

You should tell your participants that they will be debriefed immediately after data collection, providing them with any further information that they might need in order to complete their understanding of the research.

**What will happen to the results of the research project?**

You should be able to tell the participants what will happen to the results of the research. Where can they obtain a copy of the results? You might add that they will not be identified in any report. Depending on the nature of your proposed project, you may need to include a statement indicating that the data collected during the course of the project might be used for additional or subsequent research.

**Who has reviewed the project?**

You should tell your participants that the project has been reviewed by the Headteacher.

**Contact for further information**

You should give the participant your contact information (name, address and telephone number) and that of your supervisor (if applicable).

**Remember to thank the participants taking part in the project!**

**The Participant Information Sheet should state that the participant will be given a copy of the Participant Information Sheet and, if appropriate, a signed Participant Consent Form to keep.**

## Guidance on producing Participant Consent Forms

Recommended format for a Participant Consent Form:

<b>Title of Project:</b>		
<b>Name of Researcher:</b>		
<b>Participant Identification Number for this project:</b>		
		<b>Please initial box</b>
1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet/letter (delete as applicable) dated [Insert date] for the project in which I have been asked to take part and have had the opportunity to ask questions.		<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason.		<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I understand that my responses will be anonymised before analysis. I give permission for members of the research team to have access to my anonymised responses. I understand that all personal data about me will be kept confidential.		<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I understand that the investigator(s) must adhere to the BERA Ethical Guidelines.		<input type="checkbox"/>
5. I agree to take part in the above research project.		<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	_____	_____
<b>Name of participant</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Signature</b>
_____	_____	_____
<b>Name of person taking consent</b> <i>(if different from lead researcher)</i>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Signature</b>
_____	_____	_____
<b>Researcher</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Signature</b>

### Copies

One copy for the participant, and one copy for the supervisor or researcher.