

Photography and Digital Media Policy

Author/Owner	Legal and Deputy CEO
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Trust/Academy personalisation required (in highlighted fields)	



Summary of Changes from Previous Version

Version	Date	Author	Summary of Updates
V2	September 2023	Legal, HR, Deputy CEO	Updated to include template for children over 12 years of age
V3	September 2024	Legal, HR, Deputy CEO	No changes policy put onto new format
V5	July 2025	Legal	Changes made to reflect Data (Use & Access) Act 2025
V6	June 2026	Legal	Updated to become Photography and Digital Media Policy



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1. Statement of Intent

Exceed Learning Partnership ("the Trust") is committed to good practice with regards to the use of photography and digital media. This Photography and Digital Media Policy is aimed at ensuring the application of good practice at the Trust.

The Trust and all their Academies uses imagery and digital media for a variety of purposes, including prospectuses, display boards, educational purposes, conferences and the Trust/Academy and Exceed Learning Partnership Trust website. It is understood that parents/carers may also wish to take digital media or photos of their children participating in Academy events for personal use

Whilst the Trust and all their academies recognises the benefits of photography and digital media to the Academy community, it is also understood that these can have significant risks for those involved. Under the legal obligations of the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), the Trust/Academy has specific responsibilities in terms of how photos and digital media are taken, stored and retained.

The Trust has implemented this policy on the safe use of cameras and digital media by staff and parents/carers to reflect the protective ethos of the Trust with regard to pupils' safety.

In order to ensure that, as far as possible, the use of photography and video is used safely at all times, the requirements of this policy should be followed. This policy is applicable to all forms of visual media, including film, print, video, DVD, social media, live streaming and websites.

2. Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to legislation, including, but not limited to, the following:

- The UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Data (Use and Access) Act 2025
- The Freedom of Information Act 2000
- The Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004
- The Academy Standards and Framework Act 1998
- The Children Act 1989
- The Children Act 2004
- The Equality Act 2010

This policy has been created with regard to the following guidance:

- Information Commissioner's Office (2017) 'Overview of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)'
- Information Commissioner's Office (2017) 'Preparing for the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 12 steps to take now'
- [NSPCC](#) Learning guidance on Photographing and Filming Children 26 June 2025

This policy also has due regard to the Academy's policies, including, but not limited to, the following:

- SEND Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Freedom of Information and General Data Protection Policy



3. Definitions

For the purpose of this policy:

“Personal use” of photography and digital media is defined as the use of cameras to take images and recordings of children by relatives, friends or known individuals, e.g. a parent taking a group photo of their child and their friends at an Trust/Academy event. These photos and digital media are only for personal use by the individual taking the photo, and are not intended to be passed on to unknown sources. The principles of the UK GDPR do not apply to images and digital media taken for personal use.

“Official Academy use” is defined as photography and digital media which are used for Academy purposes, e.g. for building passes. These images are likely to be stored electronically alongside other personal data. The principles of the UK GDPR apply to images and digital media taken for official Academy use.

“Media use” is defined as photography and digital media which are intended for a wide audience, e.g. photographs of children taken for a local newspaper. The principles of the UK GDPR apply to images and digital media taken for media use.

Staff may also take photos and digital media of pupils for **“educational purposes”**. These are only intended for official internal Academy use and may be used for a variety of reasons, such as Trust/Academy displays, special events, assessment and workbooks. The principles of the UK GDPR apply to images and digital media taken for educational purposes.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

The Academy Principal is responsible for:

- Submitting consent forms to parents/carers when pupils join the Academy with regards to photographs and digital media being taken whilst at Academy.
- Issuing an annual reminder to parents/carers to notify the Academy if they require their consent to be updated through submission of the withdrawal form. If no changes in consent are provided then pre-existing consent will remain valid.
- Ensuring that all photos and digital media are stored and disposed of correctly, in line with the UK GDPR.
- Deciding whether parents/carers are permitted to take photographs and digital media during Academy events.
- Communicating this policy to all the relevant staff members and the wider Academy community, such as parents/carers.
- Making sure appropriate signage is clear on when photographs can or cannot be taken at Trust/Academy related public events and performances.

The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) is responsible for:

- Liaising with social workers to gain consent for photography and digital media of LAC pupils.
- Liaising with the Trust Data Protection Officer (DPO) and the academies Data Protection Lead, to ensure there are no data protection breaches.



- Informing the Principal of any known changes to a pupil's security, e.g. child protection concerns, which would mean that participating in photography and video recordings would put them at significant risk.

Parents/carers are responsible for:

- Reviewing the Consent Form on an annual basis.
- Informing the Trust/Academy in writing where there are any changes to their consent as per processes within this policy.
- Acting in accordance with this policy.

The Trust DPO and the Academies Data Protection Lead are responsible for:

- Informing and advising the Trust/Academy and its employees about their obligations to comply with the UK GDPR in relation to photographs and digital media at Academy.
- Monitoring the Academy's compliance with the UK GDPR in regards to processing photographs and digital media.
- Advising on data protection impact assessments in relation to photographs and digital media at the Trust/Academy.
- Conducting internal audits, in regards to the Trust/Academy's procedures for obtaining, processing and using photographs and digital media.
- Providing the required training to staff members, in relation to how the UK GDPR impacts photographs and digital media at the Trust/Academy.

5. Parental Consent

- 5.1 The Trust/Academy understands that consent must be a positive indication. It cannot be inferred from silence, inactivity or pre-ticked boxes.
- 5.2 Consent will only be accepted where it is freely given, specific, informed and an unambiguous indication of the individual's wishes.
- 5.3 Where consent is given, a record will be kept documenting how and when consent was given and last updated.
- 5.4 The Trust/Academy ensures that consent mechanisms meet the standards of the UK GDPR. Where the standard of consent cannot be met, an alternative legal basis for processing the data will be found, or the processing will cease.
- 5.5 The data protection laws give children rights over their own data where they are considered to have the required capacity to understand their data rights. Most children will reach this level of understanding from the age of 12 subject to the individual child's capacity to understand the implications of their data being processed and so it may be necessary for the Academy to obtain this consent from the child directly. If this is not suitable, the Academy will consider preferences set out below.
- 5.6 All parents/carers will be asked to complete a Consent Form as part of the admissions process through the Trust Communications Platform Arbor or an Online Form in which the details will then be recorded on Arbor. (*please see Appendix*) This will determine whether or not parents/carers allow



their child to participate in photographs and digital media. Consent remains valid for the duration of the pupil's time at the Academy, with annual reminders sent to parents/carers to update their preferences or withdraw consent if desired.

For Secondary pupils, we will also take into account the wishes of the young person. From around age 12, young people are usually able to understand decisions about their own image. If a pupil tells us they do not want to be photographed or filmed, we will respect this wherever possible and make sure they are not included.

- 5.7 The Consent Form will be valid, unless the pupil's circumstances change in any way, e.g. if their parents/carers separate, or consent is withdrawn. Additional consent forms will be required if the pupil's circumstances change.
- 5.8 If there is a disagreement over consent, or if a parent does not respond to a consent request, it will be treated as if consent has not been given, and photographs and digital media will not be taken or published of the pupil whose parents/carers have not consented.
- 5.9 All parents/carers are entitled to withdraw or change their consent at any time.
- 5.10 Parents/carers will be required to confirm on the Consent Form, in writing, that they will notify the Academy if their child's circumstances change in any way, or if they wish to withdraw their consent.
- 5.11 For any LAC pupils, or pupils who are adopted, the DSL will liaise with the pupil's social worker, carers or adoptive parents to establish where consent should be sought. Consideration will be given as to whether identification of an LAC pupil, or pupils who are adopted, would risk their security in any way.
- 5.12 Consideration will also be given to any pupils for whom child protection concerns have been raised. Should the DSL believe that taking photographs and digital media of any pupils would put their security at further risk, greater care will be taken towards protecting their identity.
- 5.13 Where consent is not given, this will be recorded on the pupil's profile on the Arbor Platform and a list of names will be communicated to staff and kept up to date by the Academy's Data Protection Lead and Business Manager.

For secondary where consent is not given this will be recorded on the pupil's profile on the Arbor Platform, to which all employees have access.

- 5.14 If any parent withdraws or changes their consent, or the DSL reports any changes to a pupil's security risk, or there are any other changes to consent, the list will also be updated and re-circulated.

6. General Procedures

- 6.1 Where photographs and digital media of pupils may be taken in an activity, this will be carefully considered in the planning of that activity.
- 6.2 The Academy's Data Protection Lead, Business Manager will be consulted in the planning of any events where photographs and digital media will be taken.

In addition to this, a member of the Academy Senior Leadership Team SLT will be consulted in the



planning of any events where photographs and videos will be taken.

- 6.3 Where photographs and digital media involve LAC pupils, adopted pupils, or pupils for whom there are security concerns, the DSL will be consulted to determine the steps involved.
- 6.4 When organising photography and digital media of pupils, the event organiser, in consultation with the Principal, or other relevant SLT member, will consider the following:
- Can general shots of classrooms or group activities, rather than individual shots of pupils, be used to fulfil the same purpose?
 - Could the camera angle be amended in any way to avoid pupils being identified?
 - Will pupils be suitably dressed to be photographed and videoed? Staff will be extra vigilant during sporting events, dance events or PE
 - Will pupils of different ethnic backgrounds and abilities be included within the photographs or digital media to support diversity?
 - Would it be appropriate to edit the photos or digital media in any way? E.g. to remove logos which may identify pupils?
 - Are the photographs and digital media of the pupils completely necessary, or could alternative methods be used for the same purpose? E.g. could an article be illustrated by pupils' work rather than images or digital media of the pupils themselves?
- 6.5 The list of all pupils of whom photographs and digital media must not be taken will be checked prior to the activity. Only pupils for whom consent has been given will be able to participate.
- 6.6 Only Trust owned and approved equipment will be used to take photographs and digital media of pupils.
- 6.7 Staff will ensure that all pupils are suitably dressed before taking any photographs or digital media.
- 6.8 Where possible, staff will avoid identifying pupils. If names are required, only first names will be used.
- 6.9 The Academy will not use images or footage of any pupil who is subject to a court order without seeking additional consent from parent/carer.
- 6.10 The Academy will not use photographs of children or staff members who have left the Academy, without appropriate consent.
- 6.11 Photos and digital media that may cause any distress, upset or embarrassment will not be used.
- 6.12 Any concern relating to inappropriate or intrusive photography or publication of content is to be reported to the Principal, the DSL and the DPO.
- 6.13 The Trust will not use pupil images for AI generation or deepfake processing.

7. Additional Safeguarding Procedures

- 7.1 The Trust/Academy understands that certain circumstances may put a pupil's security at greater risk and, thus, may mean extra precautions are required to protect their identity.



- 7.2 The DSL will, in known cases of a pupil who is an LAC or who has been adopted, liaise with the pupil's social worker, carers or adoptive parents to assess the needs and risks associated with the pupil.
- 7.3 Any measures required will be determined between the DSL, social worker, carers, adoptive parents, and the Trust/Academy Data Protection Lead with a view to minimise any impact on the pupil's day-to-day life. The measures implemented will be one of the following:
- Photos and digital media can be taken as per usual Trust/Academy procedures
 - Photos and digital media can be taken within academies for educational purposes and official academy use, e.g. on registers, but cannot be published online or in external media
 - No photos or digital media can be taken at any time, for any purposes
- 7.4 Any outcomes will be communicated to all staff members and updated on Arbor. In addition to being updated on Arbor within the primary academies the list outlining which pupils are not to be involved in any digital media or photographs will be updated accordingly. This list will be maintained by Data Protection Lead.

8. Use of a Professional Photographer

If the Academy decides to use a professional photographer for official Academy photos and Academy events, under the Principal's authority the Trust/Academy will:

- Provide a clear brief for the photographer about what is considered appropriate, in terms of both content and behaviour.
- Issue the photographer with identification, which must be worn at all times.
- Let pupils and parents/carers know that a photographer will be in attendance at an event and ensure they have previously provided consent to both the taking and publication of digital media or photographs.
- Not allow unsupervised access to pupils or one-to-one photo sessions at events.
- Communicate to the photographer that the material may only be used for the Academy's own purposes and that permission has not been given to use the photographs for any other purpose.
- Ensure that the photographer will comply with the requirements set out in UK GDPR and a Data Protection Impact Assessment is in place.
- Ensure that if another individual, such as a parent or governor, is nominated to be the photographer, they are clear that the images or digital media are not used for any other anything other than the purpose indicated by the Trust/Academy.

9. Permissible Photography and Digital media during Academy and Trust Events

If the Principal permits parents/carers to take photographs or digital media during an Academy and Trust event, parents/carers will be notified of relevant protocols. These may include the following which may be adjusted, subject to the nature of the event:



- Remain seated while taking photographs or digital media during concerts, performances and other events.
- Minimise the use of flash photography during performances.
- In the case of all Trust/Academy events, make the focus of any photographs or digital media their own children.
- Avoid disturbing others in the audience or distracting pupils when taking photographs or creating digital media.
- Ensure that any images and recordings taken at Trust/Academy events are exclusively for personal use and are not uploaded to the internet, posted on social networking sites or openly shared in other ways.
- Refrain from taking further photographs and/or digital media if and when requested to do so by staff.
- No photographs or digital media to be taken
- The Academy Principal or Trust CEO/Deputy CEO reserves the right to ban photography at specific events where a high-risk child (LAC/Witness Protection) is performing and cannot be easily excluded from group shots. Appropriate signage will be displayed to reflect this.

10. Storage and Retention

- 10.1 Images obtained by the Trust/Academy will not be kept for longer than necessary. Images used for marketing such as prospectuses will be reviewed every 3 years. Images on social media will remain as a historical record unless a withdrawal of consent is received.
- 10.2 Hard copies of images will be shredded or pulped, and electronic memories of photos or digital media will be deleted or destroyed, once the data should no longer be retained.
- 10.3 The Trust ICT Department will oversee a review of all stored images and digital media on an annual basis to ensure that all unwanted material has been deleted.
- 10.4 Parents/carers must inform the Trust/Academy in writing where they wish to withdraw or change their consent. If they do so, any related imagery and digital media involving their children will be removed from the Academy drive immediately.
- 10.5 When a parent withdraws consent, it will not affect the use of any images or digital media for which consent had already been obtained. Withdrawal of consent will only affect further processing. The Trust will remove digital images upon withdrawal, it cannot recall printed brochures already in circulation.
- 10.6 Where a pupil's security risk has changed, the DSL will inform the Principal immediately. If required, any related imagery and digital media involving the pupil will be removed from the Academy drive immediately. Hard copies will be removed by returning to their parents/carers or by shredding, as appropriate.
- 10.7 Official Academy photos are held on the Trust/Academy Management Information System alongside other personal information, and are retained for the length of the pupil's attendance at the Trust/Academy, or longer, if necessary, e.g. due to a police investigation.
- 10.8 Some educational records relating to former pupils of the Trust/Academy may be kept for an extended period for legal reasons, but also to enable the provision of references or academic transcripts.



11. Monitoring

The Trust/Academy will monitor the effectiveness of this and all of its policies and procedures and conduct a full review and update as appropriate. Normally this will be on an annual cycle but, where necessary, interim reviews will be undertaken the monitoring and review will include looking at how policies and procedures are working in practice to reduce the risks posed to the Trust/Academy.

Why do we need your consent?

The Academy requests the consent of parents/carers at the point of enrolment to use images and digital media of their child for a variety of different purposes. Parents/carers will be reminded on an annual basis that they have the right to update their preferences or remove consent at any time.

Without consent, the school will not use images and videos of a child. Similarly, if there are only certain conditions under which parents/carers would like images or videos of their child to be used, the school will abide by the conditions you outlined when permission is given.

Why do we use images and digital media of your child?

The Trust/Academy uses images and digital media of pupils as part of Academy displays to celebrate Trust/Academy life and pupils' achievements; to promote the Trust/Academy on social media and on the Trust/Academy's website; and for other publicity purposes in printed publications, such as newspapers.

Where the Trust/Academy uses images of individual pupils, the name of the pupil **will not** be disclosed. Where an individual pupil is named in a written publication, a photograph of the pupil **will not** be used to accompany the text.

If, for example, a pupil has won an award and their parent would like their name to be published alongside their image, **separate consent** will be obtained prior to this in writing.

The Trust/Academy may take images or digital media of individual pupils and groups of pupils to use on social media, the Academy website, in Academy prospectuses and other printed publications, such as a newsletter.

Who else uses images and digital media of your child?

It is common that the Academy is visited by local media and press, who take images or digital media of Academy events, such as sports days. Pupils will appear in these images and digital media, and these may be published in local or national newspapers, or on approved websites.

Where any organisations other than those above intend to use images or digital media of your child, **Additional consent** will be sought before any image or video is used.

12. What are the Conditions of Use?

1. This form is valid indefinitely from the date of signing until you explicitly update or withdraw your consent.
2. Historic photographs and digital media will remain on archived Academy/Trust websites and social media feeds.
3. We will **never** use the full personal details (first name and surname) of any child alongside their image in printed or online publications.



4. If a pupil is named in an article text, we will not use an individual photograph of that child to accompany it.
5. We may use group or class photographs with general labels (e.g., "Year 4 Science Lesson, Year 9 Geography Lesson").
6. We will only use images of pupils who are suitably and appropriately dressed

Refreshing your consent

This consent is valid for the time the Pupil/Young person attends the Academy. Where you would like to amend the provisions for which consent has been provided, you must submit this request by completing the form completed detailed in the appendix to dataprotectionenquiries@elp.org.uk

Withdrawing/Changing your consent

Parents/carers have the right to withdraw/change their consent at any time. Withdrawing your consent will not affect any images or digital media that have been shared prior to withdrawal. If you would like to withdraw/change your consent, you must submit your request in writing using the form detailed in the appendix to dataprotectionenquiries@elp.org.uk – This electronic form is available on the Trust and Academy Website.

Policy Reviewed: June 2026

Signed Chief Executive:

B.A. Nixon

Signed: Chair of Directors:

Pat Hogan

Policy to



Consent Form Photography and Digital Media for Parent/Carers to complete

Please note this form is electronically provided to parents/carers through the Arbor Communications App

Name of child: _____

Class and/or Year Group: _____

Age: _____

Parents/Carers

Part 1: Please complete part 1a or part 1b.

Part 1a: Policy Acknowledgement for Pupils who are under 12 years of age

☐ I **confirm** that I have read (or had explained to me) the Photography and Digital Media Policy and I have read the Conditions of Use within the Policy.

Part 1b: Policy Acknowledgement for Pupils who are 12 years or older or going to be 12 years this academic year

☐ I **confirm** that myself and my child have read and discussed (or had explained to us) the Photography and Digital Media Policy and have read the Conditions of Use within the Policy.

Part 2: Consent Options (Consent or Decline)

I give consent to my child's photograph or video footage being used for the following purposes (please tick all that apply):

- ☐ **Internal Use:** Within the Academy and Trust (including displays, learning journals, workbooks, records of achievement, internal platforms and other educational resources, including group work where my child may appear in another pupil's work).
- ☐ **Academy and Trust Publications:** Printed and digital publications, including newsletters, prospectuses, promotional materials, booklets, and news articles.
- ☐ **Academy and Trust Online Channels:** The Academy and Trust websites and official social media channels (e.g. to celebrate school events, trips, sports, performances, achievements, and other activities).
- ☐ **School Photography:** Individual and class photographs taken by a vetted professional photographer commissioned by the Academy or Trust.
- ☐ **Approved External Partners:** Approved third-party organisations or publications in accordance with Trust policies (e.g. local press, sports organisations, or educational partners).



By opting into consent I also confirm that:

- I understand the potential risks associated with the distribution of images online and that websites/social media can be viewed globally.
- I understand how these images will be stored and for how long, as outlined in the **Trust Privacy Notice**.
- I understand that if I withdraw consent in the future, it may not be possible to remove or recall images that have already been published or printed.
- I understand that at large Academy/Trust events, attendees may take wide-angle, general photos, and I agree to manage my own social media privacy settings responsibly if sharing images of my own child.
- I understand that the Trust operates a policy of **non-coercion**; if my child explicitly objects to being photographed/videoed at any time, their wishes will be respected regardless of this form.

Important Information Regarding Internal ID: Please note that the Academy will automatically take a digital photograph of each pupil for internal identification and safeguarding purposes. This image is securely stored on **Arbor (our Management Information System)** and is used for registration, catering, and safety. This does not rely on optional marketing consent.

Important notice for Parents of Pupils who are 12 years or over

Under UK data protection laws (UK GDPR), children aged 12 and over have the legal right to choose how people use their photos and videos. This form is a legally binding record of your choices and works alongside our parental communication app. Please ensure you have discussed these options with your child before you fill it in or reply via the app. Please only select "Consent" for the choices that you both agree with. If your child does not want their photo or video to be used, then please 'Decline' consent. We will always respect their choice, even if the parents' choice is consent. Your child can withdraw consent at any time by following the steps on our Trust website.

Parent/Carer Signature: _____

Date: _____

Please print name: _____



Withdrawal/Change of Consent Form – Parent/Carer to Complete

Please use this form if you would like to change or withdraw consent preferences previously given for your child.

Pupil Details

- **Name of Child:** _____
- **Academy Name:** _____
- **Year and/or Class:** _____
- **Age:** _____

Updated Consent Options

Please **tick only the boxes you still agree to**. Leaving a box blank means you do **not** consent to that use, and any existing consent for that option will be withdrawn.

- ☐ **Internal Use:** Within the Academy and Trust (including displays, learning journals, workbooks, records of achievement, internal platforms and other educational resources, including group work where my child may appear in another pupil's work).
- ☐ **Academy and Trust Publications:** Printed and digital publications, including newsletters, prospectuses, promotional materials, booklets, and news articles.
- ☐ **Academy and Trust Online Channels:** The Academy and Trust websites and official social media channels (e.g. to celebrate school events, trips, sports, performances, achievements, and other activities).
- ☐ **School Photography:** Individual and class photographs taken by a vetted professional photographer commissioned by the Academy or Trust.
- ☐ **Approved External Partners:** Approved third-party organisations or publications in accordance with Trust policies (e.g. local press, sports organisations, or educational partners).

Declarations & Understanding

- By signing below, I understand that the school will update our records as soon as possible upon receiving this form.
- I understand that withdrawing consent **does not apply retrospectively**. It may not be possible to recall or remove images that have already been printed in hard-copy publications or published in historical, archived online posts.
- I understand that the Academy will continue to take and securely store an internal digital photograph of my child on **Arbor** for essential safeguarding, registration, and catering purposes, as this does not rely on optional marketing consent.

Effective Date for Changes: _____

Parent/Carer Signature: _____

Print Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Young Person's Signature: _____

(Only required alongside the parent signature if the pupil is **12 years or older**) - Please return or email this completed form to: dataprotectionenquiries@elp.org.uk



Student Withdrawal / Change of Consent Form – Completed by Pupils 12 years or older

(For Pupils Aged 12 and Over)

Please use this form if you want to change or withdraw your consent preferences previously given.

Your Details

- Name: _____
- Academy Name: _____
- Year Group: _____
- Age: _____

Your Updated Consent Options

Please **tick only the boxes you still agree to**. Leaving a box blank means you **do not** want your photo or video used for that purpose anymore, and your previous consent will be withdrawn.

- ☐ **Internal Use:** Within the Academy and Trust (including displays, learning journals, workbooks, records of achievement, internal platforms and other educational resources, including group work where my child may appear in another pupil's work).
- ☐ **Academy and Trust Publications:** Printed and digital publications, including newsletters, prospectuses, promotional materials, booklets, and news articles.
- ☐ **Academy and Trust Online Channels:** The Academy and Trust websites and official social media channels (e.g. to celebrate school events, trips, sports, performances, achievements, and other activities).
- ☐ **School Photography:** Individual and class photographs taken by a vetted professional photographer commissioned by the Academy or Trust.
- ☐ **Approved External Partners:** Approved third-party organisations or publications in accordance with Trust policies (e.g. local press, sports organisations, or educational partners).

Student Declaration

- By signing below, I understand that the school will update my media settings as soon as they receive this form.
- I understand that changing my mind **does not work backwards**. The school might not be able to delete or recall photos that have already been printed in books or published in old, archived online posts.
- I understand that the school will still take my digital photograph for my internal student ID. This is securely stored on **Arbor** and is required for registration, school lunches, and safeguarding.

Today's Date: _____

Student Signature: _____

Print Name: _____

Please hand this completed form in to your school office or email it to: dataprotectionenquiries@elp.org.uk