



Royal Conservatoire  
of Scotland

# DATA PROTECTION POLICY

Version 2.2, June 2026

| <b>Version No.</b> | <b>Version Date</b> | <b>Prepared By</b> | <b>Approved By</b> | <b>Summary</b>      |
|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1.1                | 08/08/2012          | CC                 | CC                 | Creation            |
| 1.2                | 01/08/2015          | CC                 | CC                 | Review and Update   |
| 1.3                | 01/04/2018          | CC                 | CC                 | GDPR Update         |
| 1.4                | 22/01/2020          | MC                 | CC                 | Update Format       |
| 1.5                | 16/11/2020          | MC                 | CC                 | Update Text         |
| 1.6                | 05/07/2021          | MC                 | CC                 | UK GDPR Update      |
| 2.0                | 27/10/2023          | CC                 | CC                 | Review & Update     |
| 2.1                | 17/02/2025          | MC                 | CC                 | Review & Update     |
| 2.2                | 12/6/2026           | CC                 | CC                 | Complaints handling |

# Data Protection Policy

## 1. Introduction

In order for The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (RCS) to deliver its core learning and teaching functions, operate effectively as an HEI and performing arts venue and meet legislative, contractual and statutory obligations, it needs to process personal data relating to present, past and prospective stakeholders in order to comply with the requirements of the UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and all relevant data protection legislation. As our recording and processing of data continues to increase, it is more important than ever that every member of RCS staff understands the laws that exist in relation to data protection, and their responsibilities in ensuring that data is secured and protected in line with the law. This policy should be read in conjunction with the RCS Information Security Policy.

## 2. Definition of Personal Data

The GDPR applies to “personal data,” meaning any information relating to an identifiable person who can be directly or indirectly identified by that data. For example, this could include name, address, e-mail address, date of birth, national insurance number etc. To reflect technological changes, GDPR also defines personal data to include elements such as location data or other online identifiers such as IP address.

“Special Category” (SC) data is personal data which the GDPR identifies as more sensitive, and so requires further protection. This SC data can include identifiers such as race; ethnic origin; politics; religion; trade union membership; genetics; biometrics (where used for ID purposes); health; sex life; or sexual orientation.

## 3. Scope

This policy applies to all staff and students in all cases where the RCS or its students are the data controller or a data processor of personal data. Additionally, the scope extends to:

- Employees, consultants, contractors and temporary staff
- Suppliers and partners of the RCS
- Other third parties associated with the RCS

The policy applies to all personal data held by the RCS, regardless of location, which includes personal data held by all departments and staff, irrespective of format and irrespective of whether the data is held on RCS systems or devices, or on personal devices.

Personal data "held" by the RCS includes personal data created or received as well as personal data held by third parties on behalf of the RCS.

#### **4. Policy Statement**

This policy helps provide a demonstrable commitment to, and support of, compliance with all relevant data protection legislation by the RCS. Compliance with all relevant data protection legislation supports the RCS's core functions, which are reliant upon accurate, available and usable personal data and the trust of RCS stakeholders. Staff awareness and training also enables efficient working practices and significantly reduces the likelihood of a personal data breach and its wider effects including causing harm or distress to data subjects, reputational damage, potential fines and any further undertakings from the Information Commissioner. All members of staff who carry out processing activities such as the creation, receipt or maintenance of personal data have responsibilities under GDPR. Specifically, members of RCS staff shall ensure that personal data is:

- Processed lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner
- Collected for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes and not further processed in a manner that is incompatible with those purposes
- Adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary in relation to the purposes for which they are processed
- Accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date: every reasonable step shall be taken to ensure that personal data that are inaccurate, having regard to the purposes for which they are processed, are erased or rectified without delay
- Kept in a form which permits identification of data subjects for no longer than is necessary for the purposes for which the personal data is processed
- Processed in a manner that ensures appropriate security of the personal data, including protection against unauthorised or unlawful processing and against accidental loss, destruction or damage, using appropriate technical or organisational measures

#### **5. The Data Controller**

The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, as a data controller, shall be responsible for, and be able to demonstrate, compliance with the principles of data protection legislation. The RCS will appoint a Data Protection Officer (DPO) to assist the RCS to monitor internal compliance, inform and advise on our data protection obligations, and act as a contact point for data subjects and the supervisory authority. The RCS Data Protection Team and DPO can be contacted at [dataprotection@rcs.ac.uk](mailto:dataprotection@rcs.ac.uk)

## 6. Collecting and Sharing of Personal Data

Ensuring that personal data is collected and shared appropriately is vital to the successful operation and the reputation of the RCS, and for maintaining the trust of our employees, students and other stakeholders. In order to achieve this, RCS shall:

- Undertake a data protection impact assessment for any new initiatives that involve the collecting and sharing of personal data where sharing is likely to result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of people (particularly where new technology is involved)
- Identify a lawful basis in data protection legislation for collecting and sharing personal data
- Ensure that the collecting and sharing of personal data is necessary to achieve the identified objective(s).
- Collect, process and share the minimum amount of personal data required to achieve the objective(s)
- Use anonymised or pseudonymised data where the identification of data subjects is not required for the purpose of processing
- Provide data subjects with privacy notices and clear guidance on how to exercise their rights. The RCS Privacy Notices can be found at [rcs.ac.uk/policy/privacy](https://www.rcs.ac.uk/policy/privacy)
- Record all decisions to share personal data with external partners
- Ensure that a data sharing arrangement is in place where personal data is shared with external partners on a systematic basis or there is a large scale transfer of personal data
- Ensure that data is not transferred to a country outside the European Economic Area, unless that country has an adequate level of protection for personal data

## 7. Conditions for Processing Personal Data

Personal data can only be lawfully processed if the processing is deemed necessary under one of the following circumstances (Lawful Basis)

- In the performance of a **contract**, e.g., staff contract or student enrolment contract
- In compliance with a **legal obligation**
- In the performance of a **public task**
- In the **legitimate interests** of the data controller, unless prejudicial to the interests of the individual
- To protect of the data subject's **vital interests**
- With the **consent** of the individual

All processing of personal data in the RCS will fall under one of these lawful bases and that lawful basis must be recorded for processing to be carried out lawfully. Additionally, RCS may process special category information, which will necessitate additional safeguards. Before processing special category information, RCS will have recorded decisions about why it is necessary and assigned a lawful basis for processing.

It should be noted that children aged 12 and over, have the right to be informed and manage their own data. The same lawful bases as listed above also apply to children. (For children under 12, parental consent to process is required). When processing data for children and relying on consent, reasonable efforts must be taken to ensure that anyone who provides their own consent is 12 years old or older, or that the person providing consent holds parental responsibility for the child.

## **8. Obligations and Responsibilities of Staff**

### **All staff are obliged to:**

- Ensure that any information they provide to RCS in connection with their employment is accurate and up-to-date, and inform the HR Department of any changes to their information, e.g., address, contact details for next of kin, etc.
- Provide information in response to data protection reviews and data breach investigations as directed by the Data Protection Team (DPT)
- In the event of a subject access request, provide all relevant information to the DPT
- Complete all mandatory training on Data Protection and Information/Cyber Security

### **All staff are responsible for ensuring that:**

- Any personal data which they hold is kept securely and for only as long as is necessary (in accordance with the [RCS Records Retention Schedule](#))
- Personal data is not disclosed either orally or in writing, accidentally or otherwise to any third party, without authorisation
- All notes/annotations/feedback/comments are professional. Staff should not record unsubstantiated opinions, derogatory remarks, or anything else that cannot be justified as personal data will be shared with the data subject if requested under a Subject Access Request
- Only work with personal data onsite, but if work must be made available offsite, staff should work with data using OneDrive and/or a VPN (Virtual Private Network) to access any documents or files. Documents or files containing personal data must not be downloaded to any personal devices

### **All staff should ensure that personal data is:**

- When kept in hardcopy, kept in a locked filing cabinet, drawer, cupboard or room
- Not visible to anyone not authorised to see it, either on desks or on computer screens
- Sent in a sealed envelope, if transmitted through the post, whether internally or externally
- Stored on private network folders and if appropriate, password-protected
- Not sent or shared via e-mail without password protection or encryption, if it contains special category personal data (use OneDrive links where possible)
- Not put on laptops, flash drives, phones, tablets or other portable media

- Not communicated via any private communication channels. RCS business should only be conducted via authorised communication channels (i.e. RCS email, MS365 Teams etc.)

**The Data Protection Team (DPT) will be responsible for:**

- Day-to-day data protection matters, including enquiries and for developing guidance and training for staff on data protection issues
- Processing all Subject Access Requests (SARs) and other data rights requests submitted to the RCS
- Undertaking and coordinating data breach investigations
- Recording all processing and compliance activities across the RCS
- Supporting all departments to fulfill their DP obligations
- The administration of all complaints from, and investigations requested by, the Information Commissioner.

**Heads of Departments/Directors/GDPR Responsible Persons are responsible for:**

- Ensuring compliance with this Policy across their department
- Ensuring that staff within their area are appropriately trained for their job specific role in handling personal data
- Ensuring that staff within their area complete the RCS data protection and cyber security training
- Engaging in all data protection department reviews and compliance activities as directed by the DPT

## **9. Obligations and Responsibilities of Students**

Students must ensure that all personal data provided to RCS are accurate and up to date. They must ensure that changes to their personal data, for example, address, name, or contact details, are notified to the Academic Administration and Support department. Students who handle personal data as part of the studies, should be aware of their responsibilities as outlined in this policy, keeping any personal data that they handle, secure and confidential at all times.

## **10. Subject Rights and Subject Access Requests (SARS)**

The GDPR provides the following rights for individuals:

- The right to be informed
- The right of access
- The right to rectification
- The right to erasure
- The right to restrict processing
- The right to data portability
- The right to object

- Rights in relation to automated decision making and profiling

More information about these rights is available on the [ICO website](#).

Everyone has the right of access to personal data that is being kept about them. Any person who wishes to exercise this right in connection to personal data held by the RCS should make this request via [dataprotection@rcs.ac.uk](mailto:dataprotection@rcs.ac.uk) with details of the information requested, and proof of identification. RCS will reply within one calendar month. Any staff receiving such requests should contact the DPT immediately.

## **11. Security and Retention of Data**

All records, whether electronic or manual, must be held securely and not disclosed to any unauthorised third party either accidentally, negligently or intentionally. Appropriate measures should be taken to minimise the possibility of accidental loss, destruction or damage to personal data.

Access to data must be limited to legitimate users only. Access to electronic records will be controlled through password protection and varying levels of access, which will be reviewed regularly. Manual records will be stored securely and access to them will be controlled by a designated individual. Both paper and electronic records should be kept in accordance with the [RCS Records Retention Schedule](#). Records will only be kept for as long as necessary and once information is no longer needed it should be disposed of securely. Manual records should be shredded and disposed of as "confidential waste" and arrangements are in place to permanently erase the hard drives of redundant electronic equipment.

## **12. Breach Reporting**

A personal data breach is defined as: "a breach of security leading to the accidental or unlawful destruction, loss, alteration, unauthorised disclosure of, or access to, personal data".

The RCS is responsible for ensuring appropriate and proportionate security for the personal data that we hold. RCS makes every effort to avoid personal data breaches, however, it is possible that data breaches will occur. Examples of personal data breaches include:

- Access to data by an unauthorised person (phishing, cyber attack, etc.)
- Sending data to the wrong recipient
- Electronic devices containing personal data being lost or stolen
- Altering data without permission
- Loss of availability of data, e.g. due to unplanned system downtime, equipment failure, or files being lost

If a data protection breach occurs and there is a risk to the data subject, the RCS is required to report this to the ICO, not later than 72 hours after becoming aware of it. All breaches of this policy and data protection legislation must be reported immediately to the Data Protection Team, via the designated data protection email address [dataprotection@rcs.ac.uk](mailto:dataprotection@rcs.ac.uk). Third parties shall report via their RCS point of contact. A breach of this policy by an employee or

student may result in disciplinary action. A breach by a third party may result in a termination of contract.

### **13. Impact of non-compliance**

All staff and students of RCS are required to comply with this Data Protection Policy, the supporting guidance and the requirements specified in the GDPR. Any member of staff or student who is found to have made an unauthorised disclosure of personal information or breached the terms of this Policy may be subject to disciplinary action. Staff may also incur criminal liability if they knowingly or recklessly obtain and/or disclose personal information without the consent of the RCS i.e. for their own purposes, which are outside the legitimate purposes of the RCS. The RCS could be fined for non-compliance with the GDPR.

### **14. Data Protection Complaints Handling**

The Data (Use and Access) Act 2025 sets out a requirement for organisations to have a Data Protection complaints process in place.

In order to fulfil this requirement, RCS will:

- give people a way of making data protection complaints
- acknowledge receipt of complaints within 30 days of receiving them
- without undue delay, take appropriate steps to respond to complaints, including making appropriate enquiries, and to keep people informed
- without undue delay, tell people the outcome of their complaints

People may submit complaints about:

- the way RCS has responded to their data subject request, or other rights request
- the security measures RCS has used to store their information (e.g. someone who has been impacted by a data breach)
- how RCS has collected or used their personal information (e.g. where we've stored it, how long we've kept it for, or its accuracy)

People may complain about the RCS data protection service, or other matters related to RCS services. **This doesn't count as a data protection complaint** and should be handled via the usual Complaint Handling Procedure (CHP).

If RCS is not sure whether someone is making a data protection complaint, we will ask them to clarify.

## **15. Data Protection contacts**

The RCS's named Data Protection Officer is Lisa Powell. In the first instance, all enquiries or requests for further information or guidance relating to data protection should be addressed to the Data Protection Team via: [dataprotection@rcs.ac.uk](mailto:dataprotection@rcs.ac.uk)

The RCS Data Protection Team are:

- Caroline Cochrane, Head of Information Services
- Michelle Crowther, Information Compliance Officer