

Data Protection Training Case Studies

October 2023

Case Study 1

Background

The parent of a former pupil, Phillip Billing, emails a PE teacher the following.

Sent 20 February 2023

We request all of the information held on Phillip. In particular, regarding the incident which led to his suspension. I have spoken to Phillip and he consents to us making this request on his behalf. Please confirm receipt of this.

Phillip joined the School in September 2015.

One of the incidents that led to his suspension involved changing the detention list on the teacher's computer whilst the teacher was attending another student.

1. What steps should you take to deal with this request?
2. Assuming that you progress to preparing the documents below for disclosure - what should be disclosed? Which exemptions are relevant to withhold personal data?

Document 1

An archived electronic detention note from December 2016 that reads:

Student: Phillip

Reason: Constantly talking back and disrupting the class.

Teacher: Rich Smith

Document 2

Email dated: 12 January 2020

Hi Jonny

I've just caught Phillip Billing selling sweets that he bought from the local corner shop. I've warned him about this before and I think firmer action is needed.

If you are going to call his parents, please can you also talk to them about Elsa. I'm concerned that she isn't paying attention or contributing in class. Please can you ask if they have noticed anything at home?

I'll come and see you later.

Rich

Document 3

Email dated: 16 May 2022

Hi Tom

I spoke with Clara, she is happy with what we discussed and will take part in the hockey team.

Phil scored another great try on the weekend, he really could be something special.



Also, I've got a spare ticket to the rugby on Saturday, if you want to come?

Joe

Document 4

Email dated 2 February 2023

Hi Julie

I have a sensitive issue to speak to you about.

Grace Fletcher came to speak to me earlier about Phillip Billing.

She told me about some text messages that Phillip Billing sent to her. I'm not sure if there is too much in these messages in particular, but I've noticed an increase in messaging trolls and an assembly highlighting that this isn't acceptable would be beneficial.

Can we discuss later please?

Thanks

Ellie

Document 5

Email dated: 28 February 2023

Hi Sofia

I saw PB for the first time since his suspension. He seems to be doing well considering the circumstances.

Apparently his parents have now made a subject access request. Some parents just can't accept that their children aren't perfect little angels!

Joe

Case study 2

To: bursar@school.co.uk
From: roberttuck@school.co.uk
CC: headofIT@school.co.uk
Subject: Data breaches
Date: 15 May 2023

Dear Bursar

I hope you enjoyed your week off. I need to flag a few things that happened whilst you were away!

1. Sam, the DSL, opened an email about Harriet Smith whilst he was covering a biology class. He forgot he was sharing his screen on the whiteboard and disclosed Harriet's sensitive medical issues. Luckily Harriet wasn't in the room!

Sam realised his error and stressed to the class that the email, and its content, was not to be discussed further. Debbie, the teaching assistant, confirmed that none of the students took a picture of the information - luckily she happened to be looking at them the whole time.

Despite this, Harriet has since told Sally that other pupils have been teasing her about her condition but she doesn't know why.

To Sam's credit he did report this as soon as the class had finished, but it makes me think about when this has happened and we haven't heard!

I don't think this needs to be reported to the ICO because it only relates to one pupil and the class have been told not to share the information. Also, there's a spreadsheet of all data breach reports on the ICO's website and we don't want to appear on there again!!

2. It turns out that our safeguarding platform provider was the victim of a cyber attack. The hacker gained access to our safeguarding files. We heard that the hacker identified that our provider hadn't patched some known vulnerabilities and exploited this to access up to 15 pupils' safeguarding information. All the affected pupils were part of Leavers 2022.

We were informed this morning, two weeks after they discovered this cyber attack. To put it lightly, I'm not best pleased about the delay in telling us.

I've asked the Head of IT to look into how we can ensure that all of our cloud providers do better in future.

We haven't told any of the affected parties, do you think this is necessary considering the hysteria this would cause and none of the children are at the school anymore?

3. Kate also mentioned that she accidentally sent an email to the wrong person. I've seen the email and it has minimal personal data in it. No more action needed here.

Please drop in to discuss!

Rob

