Beal High School
The Use of Biometric Information

BACKGROUND

Biometrics in schools have been used worldwide since the early first decade of the 21st century to address truancy, to replace library cards, or to charge for meals. School biometrics, typically electronic fingerprinting systems, have raised privacy concerns because of the creation of databases that would progressively include the entire population.

Biometrics at Beal High School

Beal High School started to implement biometric fingerprinting in 2001 in the Learning Resource Centre for library book issue and extended its use in 2010 to the School Canteen Cashless Catering Systems which enabled parents to deposit money into students catering accounts, to be debited by a child's biometric fingerscan at the point of sale.

When children use systems in which their biometric fingerprints are processed in schools, there is no image of the fingerprint stored. A series of digits (some 30) is created so the computer can recognise a child when he/she places their fingerprint on a scanner. Similar Automated Fingerprint Identification Systems (AFIS) are used by Police and FBI to store fingerprints.

For more information about the Cashless Catering system, please go to the Beal High School website www.bealhighschool.co.uk.

Data Protection

Beal High School understands the sensitivity regarding the use of biometrics in schools and takes its responsibility very seriously when dealing with personal information. Beal High School is a data controller for the purposes of the Data Protection Act 1998 (see Privacy Notice – Data Protection Act 1998 on the Beal High School website www.bealhighschool.co.uk).

We will not give information about you to anyone outside the school without your consent unless the law and our rules allow us to do so.

ParentPay

ParentPay is a web-portal based service which will allow parents to make secure online payments by credit or debit card to the School. These payments could typically be for school trips, uniforms, school meals, music lessons and other services provided for our students that they would otherwise have to bring money to school for. The service has enabled the school to significantly reduce some of its administrative costs, provide convenience for parents and remove many of the risks involved with children carrying money to school.

The ParentPay application and entire web site is hosted in a secure data-centre provided by NTT Europe Online and is a tier one facility with state-of-the-art technical infrastructure and the highest levels of physical, process and technical security available. The ParentPay service is already in use in over 1300 UK schools covering 106 Local Authorities.

In order for the service to operate we will need to pass a limited amount of parent/student data that we hold in school to the ParentPay web server. User names and password will then be generated and sent to parents by Beal High School which you will then be asked to change on first login. Changed passwords are treated as Personal Data under the Data Protection Act 1998 and are encrypted in the database. They cannot be viewed by either the School or ParentPay.

Beal High School retains ownership of the data and as a registered Data Controller is solely responsible for managing, maintaining, updating and accessing the data. ParentPay itself just provides the infrastructure and the application. For reassurance no personal information whatsoever will be used by ParentPay for marketing purposes.

Text Messaging to Parents/Guardians

Beal High School has a duty of care to all of their pupils, and this care comes into being every day at the start of the school day and whilst the pupil is on school premises. In order to assist with this duty this school has made the decision to use a text messaging service to communicate more easily on a number of subjects involving their children, such as First Day Absence, Emergency Closure, Reminders of Holidays and Events.

To inform parents or designated carers of important issues the Text Messaging Service will send a standard text message to the designated mobile phone number. Apart from the contact telephone number and the pupil's first name, no other personal data will be retained by the Texting Company.

Parent/Guardian Permission

In line with the new Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 it is required that we obtain parental permission for students to take part in the biometric systems used at Beal High School. By signing the "Pupil Information Form" you are declaring your acknowledgment that you agree for your child's data to be used for the use of biometric systems at Beal High School.

To Opt Out

Should you wish to OPT OUT, please inform the Data Manager by emailing
data@bealhighschool.co.uk.