



Scissett Middle School

Vision

To ensure that Scissett Middle School provides an outstanding education
For all its pupils and prepares them for life in the 21st century

Mission

We will create an inclusive culture of learning where all children will be challenged in their thinking, strive for continuous improvement and be motivated to become lifelong learners. We will empower our children to become respected citizens and enable them to make valuable contributions locally, nationally and globally.

Partnership Excellence Innovation

**Scissett Middle School has adopted Becta's guidance
on the use of biometric technology in school**

1. Introduction – what this guidance is about

This guidance was developed with support from the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and in consultation with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). It is aimed primarily at Head teachers, Governing Bodies and anyone else who may be involved in the process of introducing biometric technology into schools.

It is intended to provide Head teachers and School Governors with what they need to know about biometric technology systems if they are thinking of introducing such a system in their school, and to advise them on what steps they need to take to introduce it successfully.

The Department for Education has issued guidance on the Protection of Biometric Information of Children in Schools:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protection-of-biometric-information-of-children-in-schools>

2. What is biometric technology?

Everyone has physical or behavioural characteristics that are unique to them and change little over time. Fingerprints are a well-known example and (as is also well known) fingerprint details can be measured and recorded for subsequent identification purposes. There are other characteristics that can be used in this way, such as retina and iris patterns, voice, facial shape, hand measurements and behavioural characteristics such as handwriting and typing patterns.

Biometric technology describes the range of technologies used to measure, analyse and record one or more of these unique characteristics. The technology is generally used to support business processes which require confirmation of identity.

Scissett Middle School

At Scissett Middle School we use biometric technology to:

- Register and authorise pupil identity for the purchase of school meals
- The borrowing and returning of school library books

3. School fingerprint recognition systems

Biometric systems currently used in school are based on fingerprint recognition technology.

These systems work in the following manner. A numerical value is derived from the child's fingerprint when it is first placed on the reading device. It is this numerical value which is then stored. Each time the child's fingerprint is subsequently re-read, a numerical value is again generated. This is compared with the set of stored values, uniquely identifying the child within the population of the school if a match is found. It is not possible to recreate a pupil's fingerprint or even the image of a fingerprint from what is in effect a string of numbers.

The School does not keep an image of the fingerprint.

4. Cashless catering

Scissett Middle School uses a cashless catering system for school meals. Parents pay in advance for pupils' school lunches, crediting the pupils' accounts with the amount paid in. Pupils then use this credit to pay for their school lunches. Individual pupils are identified at the till by an automated mechanism, with the cost of their lunch being deducted from the credit paid for by the parent.

Pupils in receipt of free school meals are not identifiable, which can help to avoid a pupil being stigmatised. In addition, pupils do not need cash to pay for their lunches, reducing the opportunity for bullying and theft.

5. Lending books from the Learning Resource Centre

Scissett Middle School uses fingerprint recognition to help manage lending from the school library. An automated system identifies and records the pupil's name and the items they have borrowed or are returning. The advantages are similar to those outlined in the previous examples, in that;

- Pupils do not need to remember to bring anything with them to use the library and there is nothing that can be lost, stolen or exchanged
- There is reduced opportunity for bullying and theft; pupils must be physically present to borrow items and cannot use another pupil's identity to do so.

6. The legal position and the Data Protection Act 1998

The Governing Body of Scissett Middle School, as a maintained school incorporated under section 19(1) of the Education Act 2002 has a power under paragraph 3(1) of Schedule 1 of that Act to:

“do anything which appears to them to be necessary or expedient for the purposes of, or in conjunction with (a) the conduct of the school, or (b) the provision of facilities or services under section 27 [of that Act.]”

This general enabling power clearly covers such matters as the introduction of biometric technology systems for purposes such as improving the administrative efficiency of the school.

In introducing and using such systems, schools must also comply with the Data Protection Act (DPA) 1998 and the Department of Education’s guidelines set out in the Protection of Biometric Information of Children in Schools document. This is because the systems record biometric data – and that data must be treated just like any other personal data under the terms of the DPA. What this means is set out more fully below, in sections 5.1 and 5.2.

6.1 Data Protection Act 1998

Schools hold personal data about pupils in order to run the education system effectively and, in so doing, must follow the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998.

Scissett Middle School is deemed as the “data controllers” under the Act since they determine the purpose(s) for which and the manner in which any personal data is processed. Personal data is data which relates to individual pupils who can be identified from that data (or from that data and other information which the school holds). When personal data is obtained about pupils (who are the “data subjects”) schools must ensure that the pupils and/or the parents (as appropriate – see section 5.2) are provided with a Fair Processing Notice which will contain information as to:

- The name of the data controller (Scissett Middle School)
- The purposes for which the data is held
- Any information required to make the processing fair, including any third parties to whom the data may be passed.

The school must comply with the following data protection principles which state that data must:

- Be fairly and lawfully processed
- Be processed for limited purposes
- Be adequate, relevant and not excessive
- Be accurate
- Be kept no longer than necessary
- Be processed in accordance with data subjects' rights
- Be secure
- Not be transferred to other countries without adequate protection of data subjects' rights.

Biometric data must be handled in the same way as any other personal data and the same principles apply when a school decides to record pupils' biometric data.

The Data Protection Act 1998 can be viewed on the Office of Public Sector Information website: <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts1998/19980029.htm>

6.2 Pupil and parent consent

Schools must obtain written consent from at least one parent before processing any biometric information from a child, as set out in the Protection of Biometric Information of Children in Schools document published by the Department for Education:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protection-of-biometric-information-of-children-in-schools>

6.3 Other legislation

While this document is aimed at providing guidance under the Data Protection Act 1998 in relation to the collection of biometric data, there are other legal considerations that apply to the collection of data more generally, such as the Human Rights Act 1998 and the common law of confidentiality. Schools may wish to consult more general guidance on these matters, in particular Chapter 2 and Appendix 1 of "Data processing and sharing: DfES guidance to the law" (listed in Further sources of information below). As they judge appropriate schools may also wish to seek their own legal advice on these matters.

6.4 Security

Scissett Middle School recognises that security of personal data is of paramount importance and a particular concern of parents. Under the Data Protection Act 1998, Scissett Middle School has a duty to ensure that all the personal data they hold is kept secure.

The Department for Education has set out guidance on the Protection of Biometric Information of Children in Schools:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/268649/biometrics_advice_revised_12_12_2012.pdf

7. Parents

Scissett Middle School will reassure parents and pupils that we will not pass the data on to any third parties and that the pupils' personal data used will be kept safe

All biometric data will be destroyed when the pupil leaves the school.

If a parent decides to opt out from using the biometric systems, the parent will be able to pay for school lunches on a daily basis with cash or by writing a cheque to the Local Authority.

Library books will be stamped and a record of the pupil's name will be recorded manually in the Library Loans Book.

Further sources of information

- In addition to the guidance mentioned in section 1 above, the ICO has published a Report on the data protection guidance we gave schools in 2012: https://ico.org.uk/media/for-organisations/documents/1132/report_dp_guidance_for_schools.pdf