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Avon College Limited: Information Security Policy

Version 1: May 2025

Next review: April 2026

# 1. Purpose

This Information Security Policy outlines Avon College Limited’s commitment to maintaining the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of all data, especially that relating to candidates and staff, in alignment with requirements from LanguageCert and other awarding bodies for secure language testing and assessment environments.

# 2. Scope

This policy applies to all staff, contractors, and third-party service providers who have access to candidate or staff data or are involved in the handling of examination materials.

# 3. Data Retention and Storage

# 3.1 Paper-Based Documentation

Paper records containing personal or sensitive data related to candidates and staff are stored in secure, locked filing cabinets located in restricted-access offices within Avon College Limited premises.

Access to these documents is strictly limited to authorised personnel only, based on their job role and need-to-know basis.

Documents are clearly labelled and managed according to data protection regulations.

# 3.2 Digital Files

Digital records are stored on secure, password-protected systems that include role-based access controls.

Access is granted only to staff whose roles require interaction with such data, reviewed regularly by the Data Protection Officer (DPO).

Files are protected by encryption at rest and in transit, and stored on a secure internal network and/or compliant cloud services.

# 4. Data Backup Procedures

Digital files are backed up daily using a GDPR-compliant cloud-based backup service with UK-based data centres.

Backup access is limited to designated IT staff and the DPO.

Backup processes are automated and monitored regularly to ensure data integrity and restore capability.

# 5. Examination Material Handling

Examination materials received from LanguageCert are stored in a secure, access-controlled examination vault or locked cabinet until required.

Only authorised examination officers and invigilators have access to the materials.

A log is maintained detailing when materials are received, accessed, and returned or disposed of.

# 6. Record Retention

All records related to candidates and examinations are retained in accordance with LanguageCert requirements, currently a minimum of 3 years.

After the retention period, records are securely disposed of either through cross-cut shredding (for paper records) or certified digital data destruction methods.

# 7. Access Control

All systems are protected by user authentication mechanisms including strong password policies and, where appropriate, multi-factor authentication.

Staff accounts are regularly reviewed, and permissions revoked promptly upon role changes or departures.

Physical access to sensitive areas such as examination storage rooms is restricted via keycard or key-controlled entry.

# 8. Staff Training and Awareness

All staff undergo initial and annual refresher training on data protection, information security, and secure examination procedures.

Awareness campaigns are held regularly to reinforce the importance of information security best practices.

# 9. Incident Management

Avon College maintains an incident response plan for any suspected or confirmed data breaches, including immediate mitigation, reporting to awarding bodies, and notification to affected individuals as per ICO guidelines.

# 10. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if prompted by regulatory changes or audit findings.

The review is conducted by the Data Protection Officer and ratified by the College’s Senior Management Team.