

# Written Ministerial Statement

*The content of this written ministerial statement is as received at the time from the Minister. It has not been subject to the official reporting (Hansard) process.*

## Department of Education

### DATA BREACH RELATING TO SOME PARENTS OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

*Published on 2 August 2024.*

**Mr Givan (The Minister of Education):** It is with regret that I must inform Members of the commencement of an investigation into the circumstances of a data breach within my Department. On Thursday 1 August 2024 my Department wrote out to 174 parents of children with special educational needs (SEN) who had registered interest for an event about the end-to-end review of SEN. Attached in error was a spreadsheet containing the names, email address and titles of 407 individuals who had registered an interest in attending End-to End Review of SEN events across Northern Ireland. The spreadsheet also included comments made by a number of individuals.

The 174 individuals who received the personal data in error have been asked to delete the information and confirm they have done so.

My Department has written to the 407 individuals to make them aware of the data breach, appreciating the concern that this may cause them. We will do all that we can to mitigate any such concerns.

I regret that this has happened and this is an issue I am taking extremely seriously. I have instructed my Permanent Secretary to instigate an investigation into how this breach occurred and how any future instances can be averted. As the investigation continues all those impacted, as well as the Information Commissioner's Office, will be kept updated.