



June 2024

Freedom of Information Publication Scheme

Statement of intent

As an educational provider, our school has an obligation to publish a freedom of information statement, outlining how we will meet our duties under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and associated regulations. The development and effective implementation of this policy fulfils that requirement.

More specifically, this policy outlines:

- How our school will respond to requests from individuals for access to information held about them.
- Our school's policy and procedures for the release and publication of private data and public records.
- Our school's policy and procedures for providing applicants with advice and assistance throughout the duration of their requests.

It also clarifies our position regarding the appropriate limit to the costs incurred by the school in obtaining any requested information, and on charging fees for its provision.

This scheme follows the model approved by the Information Commissioner and sets out the classes of information which we publish or intend to publish; the format in which the information will be made available and whether the information is available free of charge or on payment.

1. Classes of information

Information that is available under this scheme includes:

- Who we are and what we do
- What we spend and how we spend it
- What are our priorities and how we are doing
- How we make decisions
- Our policies and procedures
- Lists and registers
- The services we offer

Information which **will not** be made available under this scheme includes:

- Information the disclosure of which is prevented by law, or exempt under the Freedom of Information Act, or is otherwise properly considered to be protected from disclosure.
- Information in draft form.
- Information that is no longer readily available as it is contained in files that have been placed in archive storage, or is difficult to access for similar reasons.

2. How to request information

The school will only accept for information which meets all of the following criteria:

- It is in writing (this includes requests sent to the school's official social media accounts)
- It states the name of the applicant (not a pseudonym) and an address for correspondence
- It adequately describes the information requested.

A request will be treated as made in writing if it meets all the following requirements:

- It is transmitted by electronic means
- It is received in legible form
- It is capable of being used for subsequent reference

Where a request is submitted in a foreign language, the school is not expected to obtain a translation of the request. For the request to be processed, the school will ask the applicant to provide their request in English.

Requested documents under this scheme will be delivered electronically where possible, but paper copies can be provided by contacting the school using the below contact details.

To enable us to process your request quickly, please mark all correspondence:

“FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST”

Documents can be translated under disability legislation into accessible formats where possible.

3. General rights of access to information held by school

Provided that the request meets the requirements set out in section 2 of this policy, the school will comply with its duty to:

- Confirm or deny to any person making a request for information to the school, whether it holds information of the description specified in the request.
- Provide the documentation, if the school confirms that it holds the requested information.

This will be completed no later than twenty school days or sixty working days if this is shorter, from receipt of the request. Where a fee is charged, the timeframe within which the school has to respond to the request begins from the day the fee is received.

The School will not comply with this duty where:

- The school reasonably requires further information to meet a freedom of information request, has informed the applicant of this requirement, but was not subsequently supplied with that further information.
- The information is no longer readily available as it is contained in files that have been placed in archive storage or is difficult to access for similar reasons.
- A request for information is exempt under section 2 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.
- The cost of providing the information exceeds the appropriate limit.
- The request is vexatious.
- The request is a repeated request from the same person made with sixty consecutive working days of the initial one.
- A fee notice is not honoured.
- The requested information is not held by the school for the purposes of the school's business.

Where information is, or is thought to be, exempt, the school will, within twenty school days, give notice to the applicant which:

- States the fact.
- Specifies the exemption in question.

If information falls within scope of a qualified exemption and the school needs additional time to consider the public interest test, the school may extend the deadline. In most cases, the extension will exceed no more than a further twenty school days; however, the extension will be decided on a case-by-case basis.

Where a deadline has to be further extended, the school will write to the applicant again, stating the information outlined above.

Requests for information that is not recorded by the school (eg requests for explanations, clarification of policy and comments on the school's business) will not be considered valid requests. In these cases, the applicant will be provided with an explanation of why their request will not be treated under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the school will respond to the applicant through other channels as appropriate.

The information provided to the applicant will be in the format that they have requested, where possible. Where it is not possible to provide the information in the requested format, the school will assist the applicant by discussing alternative formats in which it can be provided. The information provided will also be in the language in which it is held, or another language that is legally required. If, under relevant disability and discrimination regulations, the school is legally obliged to provide the information in other forms and formats, it will do so.

In some cases, a request may be dealt with under more than one access regime, eg, if the request involves both information about the school and personal information, it will be dealt with under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Staff are made aware that it is a criminal offence to alter, deface, block, erase, destroy or conceal any information held by the school with the intention of preventing disclosure following a request.

4. The appropriate limit

The school will not comply with any freedom of information request that exceeds the statutorily imposed appropriate limit of £450.

When determining whether the cost of complying with a freedom of information request is within the appropriate limit, the school will take into account any of the costs we reasonably expect to incur in relation to:

- Determining whether it holds the information
- Locating the information, or a document which may contain the information.
- Retrieving the information, or a document which may contain the information.
- Extracting the information from a document containing it.
- Costs related to the time spent by any person undertaking any of the activities outlined in section 4.2 of this policy on behalf of the school, are to be estimated at a rate of £25 per person per hour.

The school is not required to search for information in scope of a request until it is within the cost limit. If responding to one part of a request would exceed the cost limit, the school does not have to respond.

Where multiple requests for information are made to the school within sixty consecutive working days of each other, either by a single person or by different persons who appear to be acting in concert, the estimated cost of complying with any of the request is to be taken to be the total cost of complying with all of them.

5. Providing advice and assistance

The school will meet its duty to provide advice and assistance, as far as is reasonable, to any person who proposes to make, or has made, requests for information to the school.

The school may offer advice and assistance in the following circumstances:

- If an individual requests to know what types of information the school holds and the format in which it is available, as well as information on the fees regulations and charging procedures.
- If a request has been made, but the school is unable to regard it as a valid request due to insufficient information, leading to an inability to identify and locate the information.
- If a request has been refused, eg due to an excessive cost, and it is necessary for the school to assist the individual who has submitted the request.

The school will provide assistance for each individual on a case by case basis; examples of how the school will provide assistance include the following:

- Informing an applicant of their rights under the Freedom of Information Act 2000

- Assisting an individual in the focus of their request, eg by advising of the types of information available within the requested category.
- Advising an applicant if information is available elsewhere and how to access this information.
- Keeping an applicant informed on the progress of their request.

Where the school wishes to ask a different public authority to deal with a request by transferring it to them, this will only be done with the agreement of the applicant.

6. Charges

Documents contained in this scheme are free to view on the school website. Paper copies are also available free of charge to parents and prospective parents of the school.