

# Freedom of information policy



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## **1. Statement of Principle**

- 1.1 The School, Governing Body and its employees are committed to being open and transparent about what the School does.
- 1.2 The School is aware of its obligations as a public authority in relation to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI) and intends to fulfil its obligations under FOI.

## **2. The Act**

- 2.1 FOI creates significant rights of access for citizens to the School's recorded information.
- 2.2 FOI requires the School to discharge two specific legal obligations:
  - (i) To adopt and maintain a publication scheme setting out details of information that the School will routinely make available and how the information can be obtained;
  - (ii) To comply with requests for information.
- 2.3 This policy states how the School will discharge its obligations with a view to the School serving its pupils, parents and guardians, customers, stakeholders and the wider public more effectively and thereby increasing public trust and confidence in the way the School carries out its community leadership role.

## **3. The School's Publication Scheme**

3.1 <If the publication scheme is on the internet add this paragraph and the specific link>The School's Publication Scheme is available School website:

3.2 <If the publication scheme is only accessible on paper add this paragraph>Copies of the School's Publication Scheme is available at School.

- 3.3 The School's Publication Scheme will be monitored so that amendments to the scheme can be made as the need arises.
- 3.4 Specific information published under the School's Publication Scheme covers the following:
  - Who we are and what we do
  - What we spend and how we spend it
  - What our priorities are and how we are doing
  - How we make decisions
  - Our policies and procedures

- Lists and registers
- The services we offer

#### **4. Dealing with requests for information**

- 4.3 The School will provide advice and assistance to persons making requests for information.
- 4.4 Requests for information have to be in writing and can be sent to The Head Teacher. Alternatively, requests can be e-mailed to: <add email address>.
- 4.5 All requests are to be logged centrally outlining information on the request, the reference number and the deadline date.
- 4.6 Every endeavour will be made by the School to provide appropriate advice and assistance which might include but not be limited to:-
- Informing the public about the provisions of FOI;
  - Providing assistance in the framing of a request; and
  - Advising upon when another public authority may be able to assist.
- 4.7 Once a request has been received the School may seek clarification or more details to establish the information which is sought. Clarification will be sought where it is deemed necessary to enable the identification and location of the information sought.
- 4.8 At this stage every endeavour will be made by the School to provide appropriate advice and assistance which might include but not be limited to providing an outline of the different interpretations of the request and therefore the kinds of information which might meet its terms.
- 4.9 If, however, despite clarification the information is not described in a way which enables the School to locate it, the School may disclose any information located and explain to the applicant why the request cannot be answered further. At the same time details of the School's complaints procedure will be supplied (see Section 5 below).
- 4.10 If a fees notice has been given and an applicant is not prepared to pay the fee, the School may:
- i. Consider whether any information that may be of interest to the applicant is available free of charge; or
  - ii. Consider providing an indication of what, if any, information could be provided within the cost ceiling; or
  - iii. Consider advising the applicant that by reforming or reframing the request, information may be able to be supplied for a lower, or no fee.

- 4.11 The School will not provide assistance to applicants whose requests are –
- i. Vexatious, or
  - ii. Repeated

In treating a request as either a vexatious or repeated request the School will consider guidance from the Information Commissioner's Office.

- 4.12 If the School is not able to comply with a request (in whole or in part) because it does not hold the information requested the School will confirm that it does not hold that information. This may involve:

- More usually informing the applicant to make a request to the other public authority, providing contact details if possible; or
- Less-often and only if it is likely that the applicant will not object transferring the request to the other public authority following confirmation from the transferee authority that they do hold the information.

In either case, the applicant will be informed as soon as possible.

- 4.13 There may be circumstances in which requests for information relate to persons other than the applicant or the School or disclosure of information is likely to affect the interests of persons other than the applicant or the School.

- 4.14 The School will make as much information as possible available in as many formats as are possible, in line with FOI. In particular the School will, so far as is reasonably practicable, give effect to a preference expressed by an applicant for information to be communicated to them.

- 4.15 FOI provides for certain information to be exempt from the general right of access.

- 4.16 Certain information will be withheld because it is covered by an absolute exemption. Certain information may be withheld because it is covered by a qualified exemption. If information is subject to a qualified exemption, the School will undertake the Public Interest Test and carefully consider whether the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

- 4.17 The School will act fairly and transparently when considering the application of exemptions and undertaking the Public Interest Test. An Exemptions Panel acting under strict Terms of Reference will be established every time the application of exemptions is considered.

- 4.18 If any application for information is refused, the School will always tell an applicant the reason for the refusal, and fulfil its obligations in issuing a refusal notice under section 17 of the Act.

## **5. Sign off process**

- 5.1 Before a response is provided to the requester it must first be signed off by the Head Teacher (or most senior manager available).

## **6. Complaints**

- 6.3 When the School informs an applicant that a request has been refused in reliance on an exemption, the applicant will also be informed about the School's complaints procedure.
- 6.4 Additionally, if the outcome of a complaint is that an initial decision to withhold information is upheld, or is otherwise in the School's favour, the applicant will be informed of his or her right to apply to the Information Commissioner's Office together with contact details for such an application.