

St Laurence Church Infant School

Freedom of Information Policy and Publication Scheme



Approved By:

Whole Governing Board

Last Reviewed on:

March 2024

Next review due by:

March 2025

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This policy should be used in conjunction with the school's Acceptable Use Policy and Data Protection Policy.

Data Gathering and Storage

Information will only be gathered and stored for specified purposes.

In order to be able to respond to requests for information the school will implement effective records management policies to enable staff to identify whether data is held and, if it is, locate it quickly and easily.

Information held by the school will be regularly reviewed with a view to archiving or destruction, where appropriate.

Publication Scheme

All public authorities, including schools, are required under the Freedom of Information Act to adopt a publication scheme that has been approved by the Information Commissioner.

There is currently one approved model publication scheme, which has been produced by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). It can be found at: <https://ico.org.uk/media/for-organisations/documents/1153/model-publication-scheme.pdf>

The scheme commits the school:

- To proactively publish or otherwise make available as a matter of routine, information, including environmental information, which is held by the authority (the school) and falls within the classifications below.
- To specify the information which is held by the authority and falls within the classifications below.
- To proactively publish or otherwise make available as a matter of routine, information in line with the statements contained within this scheme.
- To produce and publish the methods by which the specific information is made routinely available so that it can be easily identified and accessed by members of the public.
- To review and update on a regular basis the information the authority makes available under this scheme.
- To produce a schedule of any fees charged for access to information which is made proactively available.
- To make this publication scheme available to the public.

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- To publish any dataset held by the authority that has been requested, and any updated versions it holds, unless the authority is satisfied that it is not appropriate to do so;
- To publish the dataset, where reasonably practicable, in an electronic form that is capable of re-use; and, if any information in the dataset is a relevant copyright work and the public

Classes of information

Who we are and what we do.

Organisational information, locations and contacts, constitutional and legal governance.

What we spend and how we spend it.

Financial information relating to projected and actual income and expenditure, tendering, procurement and contracts.

What our priorities are and how we are doing.

Strategy and performance information, plans, assessments, inspections and reviews.

How we make decisions.

Policy proposals and decisions. Decision making processes, internal criteria and procedures, consultations.

Our policies and procedures.

Current written protocols for delivering our functions and responsibilities.

Lists and registers.

Information held in registers required by law and other lists and registers relating to the functions of the authority.

The services we offer.

Advice and guidance, booklets and leaflets, transactions and media releases. A description of the services offered.

Dealing with Requests for Information

Theoretically any request for information is a request under the Freedom of Information Act, however Birmingham City Council has taken the decision that it will not consider any request that forms part of the normal pattern of work to be a Freedom of Information request. Only those requests which are considered to be outside the normal remit of the service provided will be recorded as Freedom of Information requests.

The school will assist applicants in making their request to have access to information held by the school.

Assistance will be given to applicants whose requests need to be transferred to another public authority (eg school, LA, hospital).

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The school will exercise its duty to confirm or deny the existence of requested data, subject to any exemptions that may apply.

The school will supply data requested within 20 working days (or in line with the Information Commissioner's current policy during school holidays), subject to any exemptions that may apply, and the estimated cost of complying with the request falling within the current defined charge limit. All requests for information should still be dealt with in compliance with the 20 day deadline, whether they are recorded as Freedom of Information requests or not.

If a response will take longer than 10 working days to respond an acknowledgement should be sent to the person making the request, informing them when the information will be supplied. This acknowledgement does to allow the school to exceed the overall 20 day deadline.

A senior member of staff will be responsible for ensuring requests are fulfilled within the stipulated deadline and recording details of the request on the school's tracking database.

Persons requesting data will be supplied with a copy of our complaints procedure.

Copies of data supplied should be retained for two years from the date it was put into the public domain.

Applying Exemptions

The UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018 set out exemptions from some of the rights and obligations in some circumstances.

Education data may be exempt if it is processed by a court, would cause serious harm or refers to child abuse.

The decision to apply exemptions should not be taken by individual members of staff but should be made by a constituted group of at least three of the following: Chair of Governors, other governors, Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher.

Even if the group decides information should not be disclosed, a public interest test should be carried out when applying qualified exemptions, to decide whether the public interest in disclosure outweighs the objection to disclosure. If it does the information must be disclosed.

Advice should be sought from Learning and Culture's Data Protection and Freedom of Information Manager or Legal Services if there is any doubt as to whether information should be disclosed.

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Logging Requests Received

The school should keep a record of all requests received for monitoring purposes, noting:

- a) the date the request was received,
- b) name and contact details of the person or organisation making the request,
- c) the date the request was fulfilled or refused,
- d) the reason for any exemption being applied,
- e) the reason for any failure to meet the 20 day deadline.

Charges:

Any charges made will be based on actual costs incurred by the school which includes the cost of printing at a per/page cost and of the postage using the postage choice of the request maker.