



SHIRE OAK
C of E (VC) Primary School

Rooted in the community – growing for the future

Freedom of Information Policy

Written January 2014

Adopted at Governing Body on 11th February 2014 and re-adopted on 14/3/18, updated for GDPR and approved by governors 26/11/18, March 2019 and Resources committee 25/1/22 as recorded in minutes and signed by the Chair of Governors, Antonia Nicholls:

Antonia Nicholls

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This policy is due for review by January 2025

All our policies should be read in conjunction with our Shire Oak Values and the principles and practices detailed in our Single Equality Scheme.

Freedom of Information Policy

Background

Our school is committed to complying with and implementing the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act (2000) and related legislation. This provides a general entitlement to any person to be able to access information held by school, subject to exemptions and conditions laid down by law.

Scope

This policy applies to all information held by school regardless of how it was created or received. It applies irrespective of the media on which the information is stored and whether the information is recorded on paper or held electronically. The Act's powers are fully retrospective and thus information is accessible no matter how old it may be. Similarly, information in draft form will also be accessible under the Act.

It should be noted that access to personal information (that is information from which a living individual can be identified) is still governed under the Data Protection Act 1998. Requests for access to such information will be governed in line with the requirements of this legislation.

Dealing with Requests

School will offer advice and assistance to anybody wishing to make a request for information. We are committed to dealing with requests within statutory guidelines, which means that a response will be made no more than 20 working days from the date of request and more speedily if possible. This will be extended in specific circumstances on legal advice in connection with the public interest test. However, school is committed to providing a prompt service and every attempt will be made to provide the information earlier than the expiry of the 20 working day period. Repeated or vexatious requests for information will be refused. School will claim exemptions as appropriate whilst maintaining a commitment to openness, scrutiny and the public interest. School will put in place an appropriate procedure for measuring the public interest when considering a qualified (also known as "non-absolute") exemption which requires such a test.

Any request in writing will be considered a Freedom of Information request including those received by email and fax. There is no need for requests to indicate that they are made under the Act and all requests will be dealt with under this policy. School reserves the right to refuse requests where the cost of locating, retrieving and editing (where necessary) the information would exceed the statutory maximum (currently £450).

School recognises that requests for environmental information may be made over the telephone and that different exemptions apply.

Adopting and Maintaining Publication Schemes

School has adopted a Publication Scheme in accordance with Section 19 of the Freedom of Information Act and is committed to updating and maintaining it to keep it current and relevant. The Publication Scheme contains many of the documents, policies, plans and guidance which are regularly asked for. Material contained within the publication scheme, and a copy of the scheme itself, will be readily available. Where charges are applied these will be stated in the Scheme. The scheme can be accessed in school on request. School staff will give advice and assistance on how to use the scheme as appropriate.

Relationship with the Data Protection Act 1998

School is under a legal duty to protect personal data under the Data Protection Act 1998. We will carefully consider our responsibilities under this Act before releasing personal information about living individuals, including current and former employees and pupils.

Responsibilities

School has a responsibility to make information available in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.

Responsibility for compliance with this and related policies will rest with the Governing Body who will delegate those responsibilities to the Head Teacher. Complaints regarding the use of this policy should be directed to the Governing Body.

All school staff have a responsibility to ensure that any request for information they receive is dealt with under the Act and in compliance with this policy. They are also responsible for good information handling practice and for implementing records management policies and procedures as appropriate to their post.

Contact Details

For advice and assistance please contact ***Jackie Vollans, school administrator or Jane Astrid Devane, headteacher (0113 275 5890)***

Further advice and information about the Freedom of Information Act, including full details of exemptions and advice on the public interest test, is available from the Information Commissioner's website at www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk