



St Edward's Catholic First School
Parsonage Lane, Windsor SL4 5EN
Head Teacher : Mrs Sarah Matthews
Telephone : 01753 860607
Fax : 01753 869107
office@secfs.org.uk
<http://stedwardscatholicfirstschool.co.uk>

ST EDWARDS FIRST SCHOOL
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT
PUBLICATION SCHEME
September 2023

Contents

1. Introduction

2. Background

3. Scope.....

4. Obligations and Duties.....

5. Publication Scheme.....

6. Dealing with Requests.....

7. Exemptions.....

8. Public Interest Test.....

9. Charging.....

10. Complaints

11 Monitoring of this Policy.....

12 Evaluation and Review.....

Appendix 1: Publication Scheme.....

1. Introduction

St Edward's Catholic First School is committed to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and to the principles of accountability and the general right of access to information, subject to legal exemptions.

This policy outlines our response to the Act and a framework for managing requests.

Governing bodies are responsible for ensuring that schools comply with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FoIA). Some aspects, such as charging, are at the discretion of the Governing Board. This document fully adopts the model publication scheme which was prepared and approved by the Information Commissioner. Throughout, it refers to "a public authority" or "an authority", which should be taken to be the Governing Body.

The school aims to be open and transparent with all members of our school community. Our Mission Statement encourages us to "see Jesus in everything we do".

2. Background

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FoI) came fully into force from January 2005. Under the Act, any person with a legal right can ask for access to information held by the school. They are entitled to be told whether the school holds the information, and to receive a copy, subject to certain exemptions.

The information which the school routinely makes available to the public is included in the Publication Scheme (see Appendix 1)

Requests for other information should be dealt with in accordance with the statutory guidance. While the Act assumes openness, it recognises that certain information is sensitive. There are exemptions to protect this information. The Act is fully retrospective, so that any past records which the school holds are Covered by the Act.

The School follows Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenheads, Retention of Records Guidance for school when keeping records. A copy can be accessed via the school office.

It is an offence to wilfully conceal, damage or destroy information in order to avoid responding to an enquiry, so it is important that no records that are the subject of an enquiry are amended or destroyed. Requests under FoI can be addressed to anyone in the school; so, all staff need to be aware of the process for dealing with requests. Requests must be made in writing, (including email), and should include the enquirers name and correspondence address, and state what information they require. They do not have to mention the Act, nor do they have to say why they want the information. There is a duty to respond to all requests, telling the enquirer whether or not the information is held, and supplying any information that is held, except where exemptions apply. There is no need to collect data in specific response to an FoI enquiry. There is a time limit of 20 days excluding school holidays for responding to the request.

3. Scope

The FoI Act joins the GDPR and the Environmental Information Regulations as legislation under which anyone is entitled to request information from the school.

Requests for personal data are still covered by the GDPR. Individuals can request to see what information the school holds about them. This is known as a Subject Access Request and must be dealt with according to the GDPR regulations.

Requests for information about anything relating to the environment – such as air, water, land, the natural world or the built environment and any factor or measure affecting these – are covered by the [Environmental Information Regulations](#). They also cover issues relating to Health and Safety. For example, queries about chemicals used in the school or on school land, phone masts, car parks etc. would all be covered by the EIR. Requests under EIR are dealt with in the same way as those under FoIA, but unlike FoIA requests, they do not need to be written and can be verbal.

If any element of a request to the school includes personal or environmental information, these elements must be dealt with under GPDR or EIR. Any other information is a request under FoIA and must be dealt with accordingly.

If you have any questions, concerns or would like more information about anything mentioned in this policy notice, please contact our data protection officer:

Satswana Ltd – Tel: 01252-759177email admin@satswana.com

4. Obligations and Duties

The school recognises its duty to

- provide advice and assistance to anyone requesting information. We will respond to Straight forward verbal requests for information and will help enquirers to put more complex verbal requests into writing so that they can be handled under the Act.
- tell enquirers whether or not we hold the information they are requesting (the duty to confirm or deny), and provide access to the information we hold in accordance with the procedures laid down by the local authority.

5. Publication Scheme

St Edward's Catholic School has adopted the Model Publication Scheme for Schools approved by the Information Commissioner available at ico.org.uk . The text has been incorporated into our publication scheme which can be found in **Appendix 1**.

6. Dealing with Requests

We will respond to all requests in accordance with best practice.

7. Exemptions

Certain information is subject to either absolute or qualified exemptions. When we wish to apply a qualified exemption to a request, we will invoke the public interest test procedures to determine if public interest in applying the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information. We will maintain a register of requests where we have refused to supply information, and the reasons for the refusal. The register will be retained for 5 years.

8. Public Interest Test

Unless it is in the public interest to withhold information, it must be released. We will apply the Public Interest Test before any qualified exemptions are applied.

9. Charging

We reserve the right to refuse to supply information (unless statutory under GDPR) where the cost of doing so exceeds the statutory maximum, currently £450.

Most of our information is available on the school website as soft-copy documents (usually PDFs) and can be downloaded for free. Where information is not on the website, single hard copies of the requested information are provided for free and postal charges at the time will apply. Where items are available on our website, but a hard copy is requested, the following charges will apply:

Type of Charges	Description	Basis of Charge
Disbursement cost	Photocopying/printing @ 5p per sheet (black & white)	The actual cost incurred by the public authority
	Photocopying/printing @ 10p per sheet (colour)	
	Postage	Actual cost of Royal Mail standard 2nd class

10. Complaints

Any comments or complaints will be dealt with through the school's normal complaints procedure. The school will maintain records of all complaints and their outcome. If on investigation the school's original decision is upheld, then the school has a duty to inform the complainant of their right to appeal to the Information Commissioner's office.

If you are able to complain to us, you will need have the following information:

- copies of any letters or emails between you and the organisation that contain details of your request(s) for information;
- a copy of your request for an internal review (where appropriate);
- a letter of consent from the person you are complaining for, if you are complaining for someone else; or evidence of your concern.

If you do not provide the information we need, we may not accept your complaint.

Appeals should be made in writing to the Information Commissioner's office. They can be contacted at:

FOI/EIR Complaints Resolution
Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane

Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

11. Monitoring of this Policy

The Senior Leadership Team of the school will monitor Freedom of Information requests to assess the effectiveness of our response to them and compliance with this policy.

12. Evaluation and Review

The policy will be reviewed in line with National Legislation by the Headteacher, SLT and Governors or on any occasion when the policy has proved to be ineffective.

APPENDIX 1

Publication scheme

Freedom of Information Act

This publication scheme has been prepared and approved by the Information Commissioner. It may be adopted without modification by any public authority without further approval and will be valid until further notice.

This publication scheme commits an authority to make information available to the public as part of its normal business activities. The information covered is included in the classes of information mentioned below, where this information is held by the authority. Additional assistance is provided to the definition of these classes in sector specific guidance manuals issued by the Information Commissioner.

The scheme commits an authority:

- To proactively publish or otherwise make available as a matter of routine, information, including environmental information, which is held by the authority 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.
- 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 authority is the only owner, to make the information available for re-use under the terms of the Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2015, if they apply, and otherwise under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act section 19.

The term 'dataset' is defined in section 11(5) of the Freedom of Information Act. The term 'relevant copyright work' is defined in section 19(8) of that Act.

Classes of information

Who we are and what we do.

- Organizational 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.

The classes of information will not generally include:

- 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.

The method by which information published under this Scheme will be made available

The authority will indicate clearly to the public what information is covered by this scheme and how it can be obtained.

Where it is within the capability of a public authority, information will be provided on a website. Where it is impracticable to make information available on a website or when an individual does not wish to access the information by the website, a public authority will indicate how information can be obtained by other means and provide it by those means.

In exceptional circumstances some information may be available only by viewing in person. Where this manner is specified, contact details will be provided. An appointment to view the information will be arranged within a reasonable timescale.

Information will be provided in the language in which it is held or in such other language that is legally required. Where an authority is legally required to translate any information, it will do so.

Obligations under disability and discrimination legislation and any other legislation to provide information

in other forms and formats will be adhered to when providing information in accordance with this scheme.

Charges which may be made for information published under this scheme

The purpose of this scheme is to make the maximum amount of information readily available at minimum inconvenience and cost to the public. Charges made by the authority for routinely published material will be justified and transparent and kept to a minimum.

Material which is published and accessed on a website will be provided free of charge.

Charges may be made for information subject to a charging regime specified by Parliament.

Charges may be made for actual disbursements incurred such as:

- photocopying
- postage and packaging
- the costs directly incurred as a result of viewing information

Charges may also be made for information provided under this scheme where they are legally authorised, they are in all the circumstances, including the general principles of the right of access to information held by public authorities, justified and are in accordance with a published schedule or schedules of fees which is readily available to the public.

Charges may also be made for making datasets (or parts of datasets) that are relevant copyright works available for re-use. These charges will be in accordance with the terms of the Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2015, where they apply, or with regulations made under section 11B of the Freedom of Information Act, or with other statutory powers of the public authority.

If a charge is to be made, confirmation of the payment due will be given before the information is provided. Payment may be requested prior to provision of the information.

Written requests

Information held by a public authority that is not published under this scheme can be requested in writing, when its provision will be considered in accordance with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act.

Reviewed:	School Business Manger	September 2023
Ratified:	FGB	Draft Awaiting Ratification