St Mary's C of E (Aided) Primary School, Pulborough

A Christ-centred school with a child-centred curriculum

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION POLICY

This policy was adopted in: November 2018

The policy will next be reviewed in: November 2019

INTRODUCTION

The school is a “public authority”.

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) provides public access to information held by public authorities.

The Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR) provides public access to environmental information as defined in the Regulations.

FOIA and EIR promote openness and transparency.

Information is provided in two ways:

1. It is mandatory to publish certain information (publication scheme).
2. Any person is entitled to request information which subject to the application of any exemptions must be provided free of charge.

The Act does not give people access to their own personal data. Subject Access Requests are dealt with in accordance with the Data Protection Policy.

AIM

This Policy will ensure that:

- The school complies with its duties under the FOIA and EIR and handles requests under the correct regime.
- The school has a system in place which will result in proactive publication of what information is available.
- Any person knows they can make a request and who to contact.
- All appropriate staff will be able to recognise and respond appropriately to a valid request for information.
- That there is awareness amongst staff, contractors or others having contact with the school that the duties under FOIA and EIR may impact on the ability to guarantee confidentiality of information.

SCOPE

This Policy applies to:

- All recorded information held by the school or by a third party on the school’s behalf.

- Recorded information includes printed documents, computer files, letters, emails, photographs, and sound or video recordings.

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

The Governing Body of the school has overall responsibility for ensuring compliance with the Freedom of Information Act. The Headteacher has day to day responsibility for FOI /EIR compliance and the School Business Manager is the point of contact for enquiries.

All staff will be trained on recognising a request for information

A designated member of staff is responsible for handling request for information. Requests should be made to the School Business Manager.

PUBLICATION SCHEME

The School has adopted the 'Model Publication Scheme for Schools' as approved by the Information Commissioner.

HANDLING OF REQUESTS

The school will ensure that:

- Advice and assistance is provided to the requestor if required.
- Responses will be provided promptly and within the statutory time limit of 20 school days. A 'school' day will be any day on which there is a session and the pupils are in attendance. In the alternative the school will respond within 60 working days if that is shorter.
- Information will only be withheld in accordance with the exemptions specified by legislation. The reasons for applying the exemption will be provided to the requester.
- Care will be taken to ensure that personal data is not unlawfully disclosed in response to a request for information made under FOIA or EIR.
- Information provided to the school from third parties may be the subject of a request for information. In considering whether exemptions apply, the school will seek to consult with the third party, but the legal responsibility for deciding whether or not the information should be released rests with the school.
- Any requests for internal reviews will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Complaints Policy and will be responded to within twenty school days as recommended by the Information Commissioner.

- If 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.

Appeals should be made in writing to the Information Commissioner and addressed to:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF