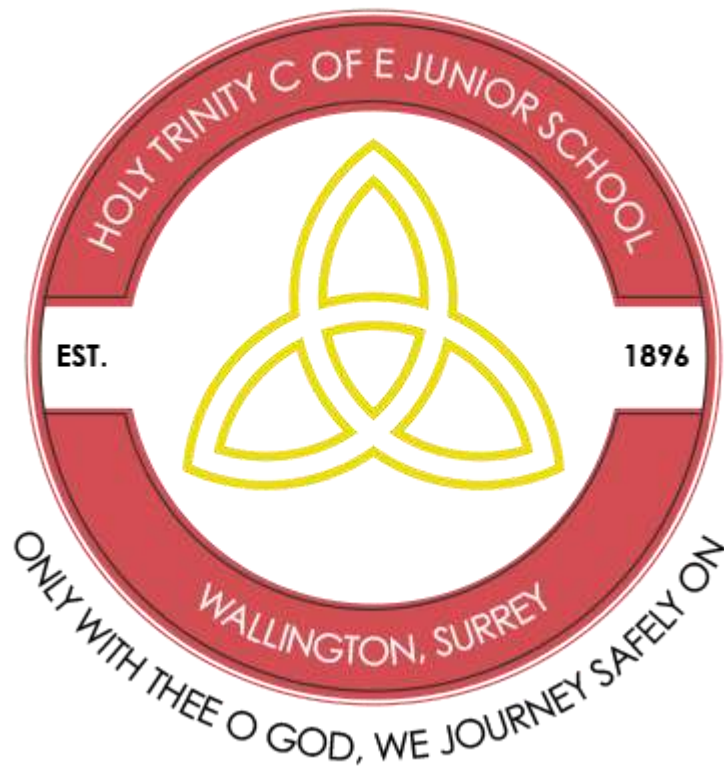


Holy Trinity C of E Junior School



Policy for: Freedom of Information Policy
Written by: Pupils' Committee
Date: July 2020
Review Date: SU 2025

Motto	Only with Thee, O God, we journey safely on
Vision	Exemplary education for all, through God's amazing grace.
<u>4 year Vision target:</u>	By the end of July 2023: attainment and progress will remain above or within the national average; children will retain their knowledge securely; children will confidently articulate Christian values, children will be proactive learners and have aspirations for what they can achieve in life; children recognise how to behave towards one another in everyone's best interests; children will know how to be healthy, safe and enjoy life to the full!
<u>Values</u>	Learning, Dignity, Integrity, Confidence, Love
<u>Values statement</u>	Learning together, as we journey with God in Love, we act with Integrity, treat others with Dignity and grow in Confidence.
We Learn:	"Everything was created through Jesus and for him" Colossians 1.16. The sub values are: Curiosity, Wisdom, Teamwork, Hard Work and Failing Well
We Love:	"We love each other because he loved us first" 1 John 4.19. The sub values are: Community, being Non-judgmental, Forgiveness, Compassion and Kindness
We act with Integrity:	"People judge by outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart" 1 Samuel 16.7. The sub values are: Faithfulness, Generosity, Honesty, Trustworthiness, Self-Control and Responsibility
Each person has Dignity:	Each person has Dignity: "So God created human beings in his own image." Genesis 1.27. The sub values are: Equality, The Whole Person, Every Person, Tolerance and Advocacy
We have Confidence:	We have Confidence: "Blessed are those who trust in the Lord and have made the Lord their hope and confidence." Jeremiah 17:7. The sub values are: Wholeheartedness, Hopefulness, Joy, Humility and Resilience

Policy

Holy Trinity Church of England Junior School



Freedom of Information Policy

1. The Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA)

The primary object of the legislation is to confer a right on individuals to obtain disclosure of information held by public bodies, including schools, rather than leaving public bodies to confer access to the information they hold as a favour. This is achieved in two ways:

- by imposing on public authorities a positive duty to make information available through the publication of schemes setting out what information it has decided to make routinely available and how/where the information is available to an interested individual.
- by giving the individual who makes a request for information the right to be told whether the body holds such information, and if it does, the right to have that information communicated to them, subject to exemptions.

2. Model Publication Schemes

A new model publication scheme is being adopted because of (the launch of) the school's new website which provides the facility for information to be accessible on the website. This is based on the 'model' publication scheme for a maintained primary school approved by the Information Commissioner.

Changes may not be made to the model without the approval of the Information commissioner, save as provided in the model by the use of square brackets.

3. What adopting the model publication scheme commits the school to do

A school has to make its publication scheme available and publish information in accordance with that scheme.

As new information is produced which falls within a class definition, it should be prepared for publication and made available.

4. How the information should be made available under the publication scheme

The scheme provides for all the information to be available on the school's website. A copy of the information will also be in paper form to be available on request as not everyone has access to the internet. See below under paragraph 9 for responsibilities.

The FOIA does not introduce any new requirements for making documents available in another language. However, account should be taken of the need to ensure accessibility to the information and conform with existing legal requirements eg Disability Discrimination Act.

The Freedom of Information Act aims to develop a culture of openness amongst public authorities. Schools should raise awareness of the existence and contents of the scheme among the general public and parents in particular. To do this a paragraph along the following lines will be included in the school's newsletter and website.

The Freedom of Information Act requires publicly funded bodies, including schools, to be clear about the information they publish. We have produced a publication scheme setting out all the information we publish on a regular basis and where to find it. Ask the school office to let you see the scheme or provide you with a copy free of charge.

5. Freedom of Information and the Data Protection Act

Personal information is exempt under the FOIA. However individuals may continue to make a 'subject access request' under the Data Protection Act. If a request is made for a document e.g. Governing Body minutes which contains personal information, the minutes may be issued by blanking out the relevant personal information.

6. Right to request information under FOIA

There is a legal right for any person to make a request to a school for access to information held by that school. Schools are under a duty to provide advice and assistance to anyone requesting information. Enquirers do not have to say why they want the information and the request does not have to mention FOIA. The request must be in writing, which includes fax or email. All requests for information that are not covered by the Data Protection Act 1998 (i.e. from individuals to see their own personal information) or Environmental Information Regulations 1992 are covered by FOIA.

The following summary is extracted from guidance issued by the DCSF to help schools i.e. governing bodies, headteachers and school staff understand the requirements of FOIA and to handle requests for information under the Act and reference should be made to this guidance.

- Under the FOIA the governing body of every school needs to ensure that employees at the school are able to comply with requests for information under FOIA.
- The FOIA adds to the framework of legislation on disclosure of information held by schools. Any request for information in writing is either a request under FOIA, environmental legislation, the Data Protection Act, or a combination of any of them.
- Schools have a duty to provide advice and assistance to anyone requesting information.
- The FOIA presumes openness. But it recognises the need to protect sensitive information in certain circumstances and provides for exemptions. Even where certain exemptions apply, information must still be released if it is in the public interest to do so.
- DCSF advises that governing bodies and those with delegated responsibilities adopt a straight-forward approach to meeting the presumption of openness that underlies the FOIA.
- Governing bodies may choose to charge a fee for complying with a request for information. The fee must be calculated according to FOIA regulations and the person notified of the charge before supplying the information. DCSF recommends that schools respond to straightforward enquiries free of charge and charge where the costs are significant.
- There are prescribed time limits for responding to requests for information and a well managed record and information system will enable the school to reply promptly to requests.

7. Vexatious Requests

There is no obligation on the School to comply with vexatious requests. A vexatious request is one which is designed to cause inconvenience, harassment or expense rather than to obtain information, and would require a substantial diversion of resources or would otherwise undermine the work of the school. This however does not provide an excuse for bad records management.

In addition, the School do not have to comply with repeated identical or substantially similar requests from the same applicant unless a "reasonable" interval has elapsed between requests.

8. Exemptions

The presumption of the Freedom of Information Act is that the School will disclose information unless the Act provides a specific reason to withhold it. The Act recognises the need to preserve confidentiality and protect sensitive material in certain circumstances.

The School may refuse all/part of a request, if one of the following applies: -

- 1) There is an exemption to disclosure within the act;
- 2) The information sought is not held;
- 3) The request is considered vexatious or repeated; or
- 4) The cost of compliance exceeds the threshold.

A series of exemptions are set out in the Act which allow the withholding of information in relation to an enquiry.

9. Refusal

If it is decided to refuse a request, the School will send a refusals notice, which must contain

- The fact that the responsible person cannot provide the information asked for;
- Which exemption(s) apply;
- Why the exemption(s) apply to this enquiry (if it is not self-evident);
- Reasons for refusal; and
- The School's complaints procedure.

For monitoring purposes and in case of an appeal against a decision not to release the information or an investigation by the Information Commissioner, the responsible person must keep a record of all enquiries where all or part of the requested information is withheld and exemptions are claimed. The record must include the reasons for the decision to withhold the information.

10. Time Limits

Compliance with a request will be prompt and within the time limit of 20 working days (excluding school holidays).. The response time starts from the time the request is received.

Where the School has asked the enquirer for more information to enable it to answer it, the 20 working days start time begins when this further information has been received.

If some information is exempt this will be detailed in the School's response.

If a qualified exemption applies and the School need more time to consider the public interest test, the School will reply in 20 working days stating that an exemption applies but will include an estimate of the date by which a decision on the public interest test will be made. This should be within a "reasonable" time.

Where the School has notified the enquirer that a charge is to be made, the time period stops until payment is received.

11. Fees

The headteacher shall determine the scale of charges to be applied to the provision of information under the FOIA.

Where there is a charge for an item to be supplied under the publication scheme, this has been annotated with a £ sign in the publication scheme next to the description.

Charges will be notified to persons seeking information prior to supply.

If the request requires a lot of photocopying or large postage costs a school will need to make clear to enquirers that there could be a handling charge in line with any existing policy on charging.

12. Responsibilities

The headteacher shall be responsible for dealing with requests for information under the FOIA (including under the scheme) and for keeping a record of requests and refusals.

The chair of the governing body will maintain an up to date record in paper and on the website of all school policies reviewed and approved by the governing body and of all governing body and committee meeting minutes.

The headteacher will ensure that all records and information which may be supplied under the FOIA is maintained and accessible.

13. Review

This policy will be reviewed in June 2025.

Further Help and Assistance

General enquiries about FOI, publication schemes, the FOIA or the submission process and subsequent operation of the scheme once adopted should be addressed to the FOI compliance team at the Information Commissioner's Office (see below)

To submit a bespoke scheme, the procedure is detailed in the Commissioner's booklets; Publication Schemes – Approval Documentation and Guidance & Methodology. These are available on the Commissioner's website at www.ico.org.uk or by telephoning 0303 123 1113

Information Commissioner's Office

Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF or Enquiry/Information Line:0303 123 1113 , www.ico.org.uk