

Thrive Federation

Federation of Special Schools comprising Oak Grove College, Cornfield, Herons Dale and Palatine Schools



Freedom of Information Policy

The Governing Body has adopted the WSCC Model Policy

Policy Created

Policy Adopted

Review Date

Signed by Chair

R.M. Coates

Introduction

The Federation of Schools are 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); and
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:

The Federation complies with its duties under the FOIA and EIR and handles requests under the correct regime.

The Federation 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 Federation Schools 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 Federation Schools or by a third party on the Schools behalf.

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

Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Body of the Federation has overall responsibility for ensuring compliance with the Freedom of Information Act. The individual Headteacher's have day to day responsibility for FOI /EIR compliance and the Business Managers are 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 Business Manager of the associated school.

Publication Scheme

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

Requests handling

The Federation 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 individual School concerned 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 Federation Schools 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 Complaint Policy and will be responded to within 20 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