

Heckmondwike Grammar School

Policy: Freedom of Information

Status: Statutory

Last revision by: J Flynn

Date of last revision: August 2019

Open view on website: External

Approved by:	Governing Body
Approval date:	July 2019
Date of next review:	July 2021

Action	Date	By whom
On secure website	October 2019	DJN
On public website (if applicable)	October 2019	LMS
In review schedule	July 2021	JMF

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION POLICY

Background

As a public authority the academy (referred to as the school) must comply fully with requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 where it holds that information unless a relevant exemption applies.

Scope

All staff and individuals working on behalf of the school are required to comply with this policy in full and at all times.

This policy applies to all information held by the 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 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.

Access to personal information (that is information from which a living individual can be identified) is governed under the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulation 2016 and requests for access to such information will be governed by the requirements of this legislation.

Dealing with Requests

The 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 a request is received.

This will be extended in specific circumstances on legal advice in connection with the public interest test. Repeated or vexatious requests for information will be refused and the school may claim exemptions as appropriate whilst maintaining a commitment to openness, scrutiny and the public interest. The 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. The 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).

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

Adopting and Maintaining Publication Schemes

The 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 2018 & GDPR

The school is under a legal duty to protect personal data under the Data Protection Act 2018 and comply with latest GDPR requirements. We will carefully consider our responsibilities under this Act before releasing personal information about living individuals, including current and former employees and pupils.

Responsibilities

The 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 Headteacher who may delegate this responsibility to a member of the Senior Leadership Team. Complaints regarding the use of this policy should be directed to the Chair of the Governing Body.

All school employees 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.

Any employee who receives a request for information under the Act must forward this as soon as it has been received to the Headteacher to allow for compliance with the time limits and procedures under the Act. The Headteacher will consider any request received and allocate responsibility for dealing with a request to a member of staff, usually a member of the Leadership Team.

Contact Details

Requests for information should be made in writing and addressed to:

Mr Peter Roberts
Headteacher
Heckmondwike Grammar School
High street
Heckmondwike
WF16 0AH.

Alternatively, requests may be sent to the general school e-mail address:
info@heckgrammar.co.uk.

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