



St Faith and St Martin CE Junior School

Freedom of Information and Records Policy



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Freedom of Information Policy and Publication Scheme

1. Policy Statement

St Faith and St Martin Church of England Junior School (SFSM) is committed to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and to the principles of accountability and the general rights of access to information, subject to legal exemptions. This policy outlines our response to the FOIA and the framework for managing requests.

SFSM seeks to implement this policy through adherence to the procedures set out in the rest of this document.

This document is available on request from the school office and should be read in conjunction with the Record Management and Retention Policy.

The Governing Body at SFSM is responsible for maintenance of this policy. This document is reviewed annually by the Governing Body or as events or legislation change requires. The next scheduled date for review is March 2019.

2. Background

The FOIA came into force on 1 January 2005 for all schools. Under the Act, any person has a legal right to ask for 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.

All information that the school makes available to the public is included in the Publication Scheme. Requests for other information should be dealt with in accordance with statutory guidance. There are exemptions in place to protect sensitive information.

3. Obligations and Duties

SFSM recognises its duty to:

- *Provide advice and assistance to anyone requesting information.*
- *Tell enquiries whether or not the school holds the information they are requesting and provide access to the information we hold in accordance with the Freedom of Information Procedures.*

4. Publication Scheme

One of the aims of the FOIA is that public authorities, including all maintained schools, should be clear and proactive about the information they will make public.

To do this we must produce a Publication Scheme, setting out:

- *The classes of information which we publish or intent to publish;*
- *The manner in which the information will be published; and*
- *Whether the information is available free of charge or on payment.*

The scheme covers information already published and information which is to be published in the future. All information in our publication scheme is available in paper form. A nominal charge will be incurred for photocopying.

Some information which we hold may not be made public, for example personal information.

This publication scheme conforms to the model scheme for schools approved by the Information Commissioner.

5. Aims and Objectives

SFSM aims to:

- *Enable every child to fulfil their learning potential, with an education that meets the needs of each child.*
- *Help every child develop the skills, knowledge and personal qualities needed for life and work.*

This Publication Scheme is a means of showing how we are pursuing these aims.

6. Categories of Information Published

The Publication Scheme guides you to information which we currently publish (or have recently published) or which we will publish in the future. This is split into categories of information known as 'classes'. These are contained in Section 6 of this Scheme.

The classes of information that we undertake to make available are organised into four broad topic areas:

- *School Prospectus*
- *Governors' Documents*
- *Pupils and Curriculum*
- *School Policies and other general information related to the school*

7. How to Request Information

If you require a paper version of any of the documents within the scheme, please contact the school by telephone, e-mail, or letter. Contact details are set out below.

Address: St Faith and St Martin Church of England Junior School, Hampton Street, Lincoln, LN1 1LW

Telephone: 01522 528063

Email: enquiries@sfsm.lincs.sch.uk

To help us process your request quickly, please clearly mark any correspondence "PUBLICATION SCHEME REQUEST".

All requests should:

- *Be in writing (including email).*
- *State the enquirer's name and correspondence address.*
- *Describe the information requested so that it is clearly identifiable.*
- *Not be covered by other legislation (e.g. data protection or environmental information).*

If the information you're looking for isn't available via the publication scheme you can still contact the school and ask if we have it.

Verbal requests are not covered under the FOIA.

Enquiries will be dealt with within 20 working days (or 60 working days if the request is received during the school holidays). If this deadline cannot be met, the school will inform the enquirer.

8. Non-Disclosure of Requested Information

Information will not be disclosed if one or more of the following applies:

- *An exemption to disclosure.*
- *The information sought is not held.*
- *Requests are considered vexatious or repeated.*
- *The cost of compliance exceeds the threshold (£450).*

9. Exemptions

Certain information is subject to either absolute or qualified exemptions.

Absolute: where there is no obligation to confirm or deny the information is held, disclose the information or consider the public interest test.

Qualified: where, even if an exemption applies, there is a duty to consider the public interest test.

10. Public Interest Test

When we wish to apply a qualified exemption to a request we will invoke the public interest test procedures to determine if public interest outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information. The school will maintain a register of requests where we have refused to supply information and the reasons for the refusal. Information will be retained for five years.

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

It is worth noting that what is in the public interest may not be the same as that which may be of interest to the public.

Information on applying the Public Interest Test can be found in Appendix 1.

11. Paying for Information

If your request means we have to do a lot of photocopying or printing, or pay a large postage charge, or is for a priced item such as some printed publications or videos, we will let you know the cost before fulfilling your request. If you decide not to pay, then we will not release the information. If you decide to refine the request so it reduces the cost, we are happy to discuss that with you.

We reserve the right to refuse to supply information where the cost of doing so exceeds the current statutory maximum of £450.

12. Comments and Complaints

If you are not satisfied with the assistance that you receive, or feel that a formal complaint needs to be made, then this should be addressed to the Information Commissioner's Office. Their contact details are set out below.

Address: Information Commissioner, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF

Telephone: 0303 123 1113

Website: www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk

Appendix 1: Public Interest Test

Factors taken into account when weighing up public interest include but are not limited to:

For Disclosure	Against Disclosure
Is the disclosure likely to increase access to information held by the school?	Is disclosure likely to distort public reporting or be misleading because it is incomplete?
Is disclosure likely to give the reason for a decision to allow individuals to understand decisions affecting their lives or assist them in challenging those decisions?	Is premature disclosure likely to prejudice fair scrutiny, or release sensitive issues still on the internal agenda or evolving?
Is disclosure likely to improve the accountability and transparency of the school in the use of funds and help show that it obtains value for money?	Is disclosure likely to cause unnecessary public alarm or confusion?
Is disclosure likely to contribute to public debate and assist the understanding of existing or proposed policy?	Is disclosure likely to seriously jeopardise the school's legal or contractual position?
Is disclosure likely to increase public participation in decision making?	Is disclosure likely to infringe other legislation?
Is disclosure likely to increase public participation in political processes in general?	Is disclosure likely to create a controversial precedent on the release of information or impair your ability to obtain information in the future?
Is disclosure likely to bring to light information affecting public safety?	Is disclosure likely to adversely affect the school's proper functioning and discourage openness in expressing opinions?
Is disclosure likely to reduce further enquiries on the topic?	If a large amount of information on the topic has already been made available, would further disclosure shed any more light or serve any useful purpose?



St Faith and St Martin Church of England Junior School

Policy adopted on: 15 July 2019

Signed by:  Chair of Governors

Dated: 15/7/19 

