

WALKDEN HIGH SCHOOL

Freedom of Information Policy

Introduction

Walkden High School takes its responsibilities with regard to the management of the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 very seriously. This document provides the policy framework through which this effective management can be achieved and audited. It covers:

- Scope of the policy
- Responsibilities
- Available Guidance
- Specific Requests for Information
- Charges
- Complaints
- Exemptions
- Contacts

1. Scope of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 are adhered to and in particular that:

- a significant amount of routinely published information about the School is made available to the public as a matter of course through developing a Publication Scheme;
- other information not included in such a Publication Scheme is readily available on request and such a request is dealt with in a timely manner; and
- in cases where information is covered by an exemption, consideration is given as to whether or not the information should be released.

2. Available Guidance

Guidance on the procedures necessary to comply with this Policy is available from the Schools Office.

3. Specific Requests for Information

Information not already made available to the public will be accessible through a specific request for information. In this regard the Freedom of Information Act establishes two related rights:

- the right to be told whether information exists, and
- the right to receive the information (subject to exemptions)

These rights can be exercised by anyone – natural or legal persons, worldwide. These specific requests for information will be dealt with by the School.

Any request must be made in a permanent form (for example in writing or by email) and a charge may be made for dealing with any request. Requestors will not be entitled to information to which any of the exemptions in the Act applies. However, only those specific pieces of information to which the exemption applies will be withheld, and information covered by an exemption will be subject to review by the School.

The School must respond to any request within 20 working days although further reasonable details can be requested in order to identify and locate the information. If a fee is required, the period of 20 working days is extended by up to 3 months until the fee is paid.

4. Charges

The School reserves the right to charge an appropriate fee for dealing with a specific request for information not listed in any publication scheme in accordance with the Act.

5. Complaints

The School Office will co ordinate any complaints received in respect of this policy.

- The complaint should be addressed to the Headteacher in the first instance. The complaint will be acknowledged immediately and every reasonable effort will be made to offer a more comprehensive reply within 21 days.

If applicants are dissatisfied with the outcome of the Complaints Procedure they may seek an independent review from the Information Commissioner. Requests for review by the Information Commissioner should be made in writing to:

The Information Commissioner
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF
Tel. 01625-545-700
Fax. 01625-545-510

6. Exemptions under the Act

There are 23 exemptions under the Act, some exemptions where the public interest test applies, and others which are absolute exemptions.

The School may decide that some information it holds could be regarded as exempt information under the Act. Where a request is made for information which includes exemptions the School will consider the prejudice test and the public interest test, and may in some circumstances withhold the requested information.

7. Contacts

For further information, please contact school through telephone (0161 975 8000), email (info@walkden.uk.com) or fax (0161 975 8079).