

Catton Grove Primary School



Freedom of Information Policy and Publication Scheme

Approved by:	Peter Threadkell
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Approved on:	01.09.26
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Last reviewed on:	September 2026
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Next review due by:	September 2027
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DPE Model Freedom of Information Policy and Publication Scheme

[Version 2025 v1.3]

If you are reading a printed version of this document you should check the Data Protection/Information Management pages on the school website/network to ensure that you have the most up-to-date version. Alternatively, please ask the school office for a copy.

If you would like to discuss anything in this procedure, please contact:

Data Protection Officer: **Data Protection Education Ltd.**

Telephone: 0800 0862018

Email: dpo@dataprotection.education

If you would like a copy of any documentation, please contact the school office:
office@cattongrove.norfolk.sch.uk

DPE Model Freedom of Information Policy and Publication Scheme

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POLICY OBJECTIVES

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 (“FOIA”) sets out a public “right to know” in relation to public bodies. The FOIA also sets out certain exemptions to those rights.

The purpose of this Freedom of Information Policy is to outline Catton Grove Primary School’s approach to its FOIA obligations to create a climate of openness and dialogue.

ABOUT THIS POLICY

DPE Model Freedom of Information Policy and Publication Scheme

This policy sets out how Catton Grove Primary School will respond to a request under the FOIA.

This policy applies to the information held by Catton Grove Primary School or held by other parties on behalf of Catton Grove Primary School that is governed by the FOIA. To promote a culture of openness and accountability, and to comply with the FOIA, we have a responsibility to ensure that this information is either routinely made available or provided on request, unless there is a legitimate reason for withholding it.

THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT

The FOIA provides public access to information held by public authorities.

It does this in two ways:

- public authorities are obliged to publish certain information about their activities; and
- members of the public are entitled to request information from public authorities.

FOIA covers any recorded information that is held by a public authority in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and by UK-wide public authorities based in Scotland. Information held by Scottish public authorities is covered by Scotland's own Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002.

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

For a request to be dealt with according to the Freedom of Information Act, the requester must:

- contact the relevant authority directly;
- make the request in writing, for example in a letter or an email. They can make a verbal or written request for environmental information;
- give their real name; and
- give an address to which the authority can reply. This can be a postal or email address.

A requester does not have to:

- mention the Freedom of Information Act;
- know whether the information is covered by the Freedom of Information Act; or
- say why they want the information.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION PRINCIPLES

The main principle behind freedom of information legislation is that people have a right to know about the activities of public authorities, unless there is a good reason for them not to.

This means that:

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- everybody has a right to access official information. Disclosure of information should be the default – in other words, information should be kept private only when there is a good reason and it is permitted by FOIA;
- an applicant (requester) does not need to give you a reason for wanting the information. On the contrary, you must justify refusing them information;
- you must treat all requests for information equally, except under some circumstances relating to vexatious requests and personal data
- The information someone can get under FOIA should not be affected by who they are. You should treat all requesters equally, whether they are journalists, local residents, public authority employees, or foreign researchers; and
- because you should treat all requesters equally, you should only disclose information under FOIA if you would disclose it to anyone else who asked. In other words, you should consider any information you release under FOIA as if it were being released to the world at large.

APPLICATION OF EXEMPTIONS

The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) recognises that some information should not be disclosed. While many exemptions exist, in practice only a small number are commonly relevant to schools. These exemptions fall into two categories:

- **Absolute exemptions** – information can be withheld without applying the public interest test.
- **Qualified exemptions** – information can be withheld only if, after applying the public interest test, the public interest in withholding outweighs disclosure.

Absolute Exemptions commonly used:

- **Section 21 – Information accessible by other means**
If the information is already published (e.g. on the school website, in the prospectus, or in statutory reports), there is no need to provide it again. Instead, the requester can be directed to the source.
- **Section 40(1) – Personal data of the requester**
If someone asks for their own personal information (e.g. a parent requesting records about themselves), this should be handled under the Data Protection Act / Subject Access Request process, not FOIA.
- **Section 40(2) – Personal data of third parties**
Information that would identify a pupil, parent, or staff member cannot be disclosed if doing so would breach UK GDPR principles. For example, releasing exam results that identify individual pupils, or disciplinary records about staff, would usually be exempt.
- **Section 41 – Information provided in confidence**
Where information was obtained in confidence and disclosure would be an actionable

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breach of confidence. For example, safeguarding reports from social services, or confidential references provided to the school.

Qualified Exemptions commonly used:

- **Section 36 – Prejudice to the effective conduct of public affairs**
Used if disclosure would inhibit free and frank discussion, advice, or the ability of staff/governors to make decisions. For example, disclosing draft minutes of governing body discussions while decisions are still being debated.
- **Section 38 – Health and safety**
Applied if disclosure would endanger the physical or mental health or safety of an individual. For example, details of evacuation procedures that could create a security risk if misused.
- **Section 40(2) – Personal data (qualified application)**
In some cases, a balancing exercise may be needed to assess whether disclosure is fair (e.g. senior staff salaries). Routine publishing of pay bands is encouraged, but disclosure of identifiable details below senior level would usually be unfair.
- **Section 43 – Commercial interests**
Used to protect sensitive information about the financial or contractual interests of the school or its suppliers. For example, revealing details of a live procurement process or bids from contractors could prejudice fair competition.

GUIDANCE FOR STAFF

When considering exemptions:

- Always start from the assumption that information should be disclosed unless a valid exemption applies.
- Consider whether only part of the information is exempt, and release the remainder where possible (with redaction if necessary).
- Where a qualified exemption is applied, a documented **public interest test** must be carried out (see below).
- Only withhold the minimum necessary.
- Complex or borderline cases should be referred to the Data Protection Officer for advice.

A full list of exemptions is available on the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) website.

APPLYING THE PUBLIC INTEREST TEST

For qualified exemptions, the organisation will apply the public interest test. This requires balancing the public interest in disclosure against the public interest in withholding the information.

Step 1: Confirm that the exemption is engaged (i.e., the information falls within the scope of the exemption).

Step 2: Assess whether the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

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Factors in favour of disclosure may include:

- Promoting transparency and accountability of public authorities.
- Furthering public debate on important issues.
- Promoting better public understanding of decisions and spending.
- Enhancing public confidence in decision-making.

Factors in favour of withholding may include:

- Protecting sensitive commercial or financial interests.
- Preserving the confidentiality of legal or policy advice.
- Avoiding prejudice to the effective conduct of public affairs.
- Safeguarding the rights and interests of individuals.

Principles:

- There is a general presumption in favour of disclosure.
- Each request must be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- The reasoning behind the public interest test must be documented and retained for accountability.

REFUSAL NOTICES

Where a request for information is refused in full or in part, a refusal notice must be issued to the requester within **20 working days** of receipt of the request.

The refusal notice must include:

1. A clear statement that the request has been refused (in whole or in part).
2. The specific exemption(s) being relied upon.
3. A meaningful explanation of why the exemption applies.
4. Where relevant, an explanation of how the public interest test has been considered.
5. Information on the requester's right to request an internal review.
6. Information on the right to complain to the ICO if dissatisfied with the outcome of the internal review.

BREACH OF POLICY AND STANDARDS

Disciplinary action may be taken in accordance with the Catton Grove Primary School's disciplinary procedures against any employee who knowingly or recklessly:

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- Alters, defaces, blocks, erases, destroys or conceals any record held by the [insert name of organisation], with the intention of preventing the disclosure of all, or any part, of the information that has been requested as part of a Freedom of Information request;
- Contravenes any instruction contained in, or following from, this Policy and Standards.

We expect that similar disciplinary procedures will be applied by any of our contractors which deal with the [insert name of organisation]'s information and data on the [insert name of organisation]'s behalf.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Where a request for information is refused for any reason, we will notify the applicant and give the reasons. For exemptions we will state which exemption has been claimed, and unless apparent, why that exemption applies, specifying the public interest factors (for and against disclosure) if applicable. We will not simply repeat the wording of the exemption unless the explanation would involve the disclosure of information which would itself be exempted information.

When communicating any decision made in relation to a request under FOIA's general right of access, we will notify the applicant of their rights of complaint. A person dissatisfied with the way in which their request has been handled may ask for an internal review of the way in which their request was dealt with, and, if still dissatisfied, may apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision.

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Qualified Exemptions commonly used:

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- **Section 38 – Health and safety**

Applied if disclosure would endanger the physical or mental health or safety of an individual. For example, details of evacuation procedures that could create a security risk if misused.

- **Section 40(2) – Personal data (qualified application)**

In some cases, a balancing exercise may be needed to assess whether disclosure is fair (e.g. senior staff salaries). Routine publishing of pay bands is encouraged, but disclosure of identifiable details below senior level would usually be unfair.

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Factors in favour of disclosure may include:

- Promoting transparency and accountability of public authorities.
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Factors in favour of withholding may include:

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- Protecting sensitive commercial or financial interests.
- Preserving the confidentiality of legal or policy advice.
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- Alters, defaces, blocks, erases, destroys or conceals any record held by the [insert name of organisation], with the intention of preventing the disclosure of all, or any part, of the information that has been requested as part of a Freedom of Information request;
- Contravenes any instruction contained in, or following from, this Policy and Standards.

We expect that similar disciplinary procedures will be applied by any of our contractors which deal with the [insert name of organisation]'s information and data on the [insert name of organisation]'s behalf.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

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Where a request for information is refused for any reason, we will notify the applicant and give the reasons. For exemptions we will state which exemption has been claimed, and unless apparent, why that exemption applies, specifying the public interest factors (for and against disclosure) if applicable. We will not simply repeat the wording of the exemption unless the explanation would involve the disclosure of information which would itself be exempted information.

When communicating any decision made in relation to a request under FOIA's general right of access, we will notify the applicant of their rights of complaint. A person dissatisfied with the way in which their request has been handled may ask for an internal review of the way in which their request was dealt with, and, if still dissatisfied, may apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision.

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9. Publication Scheme

Background

The Governing Body must ensure that the school is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

Also, the school must conform to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 which gives a right of access to information held by public bodies, including schools and academies (schedule 1, Part IV). <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-freedom-of-information/what-is-the-foi-act/>

In line with Section 19 of this Act, schools must produce a publication scheme which makes it clear to the public what information they will make public when required to respond to requests for information under this legislation. Data Protection Education use the ICO model template for the Publication Scheme.

The school publication scheme should set out:

- The classes of information which will be published or which the school intends to publish either on their website or in hard copy version
- The manner in which the information will be published
- Whether the information is available to download from the website free of charge or via payment to the school

The publication scheme should conform to the model scheme for schools approved by the Information Commissioner (see references above) or a bespoke policy should be authorised by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

Introduction

The School is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) and conforms with its requirements under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. This Act gives a right of access to information held by public bodies, including schools and academies, which are required to produce a Publication Scheme that makes it clear to the public what information they will make public when required to respond to requests for information.

Requirements of the Policy: As a school we are required to publicise the fact that information is available under this scheme and this is carried out annually at the beginning of the new academic year in September.

Under this scheme, we agree to review the information we are publishing. This will be done annually as we update the website. We also agree to make new information available promptly – this will be done via the school newsletter and website.

As an organisation we agree to update old information. This is carried out regularly as a matter of course, often through national channels such as the Ofsted website or the DfE school performance tables.

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Information about the school is available through Local Authority as well as the government's official register of educational establishments in England and Wales - Get Information About Schools (GIAS). GIAS is also the national database of school governors <https://get-information-schools.service.gov.uk/>

What is Available: Information that is available is detailed below in table format and shows where the information can be sourced. Some information in our Publication Scheme is available in hard copy paper format from the school office, upon request. For ease of access, a large percentage of our Publication Scheme documents are available from our school website, and these are free to download.

Under this scheme, some personal and sensitive information is exempt from publication. Where information is not available online, we must respond promptly to any requests to see it. However, we are not required to create new information in order to comply with the act.

We seek at all times to keep parents and other members of the public fully informed of our activities through our website and newsletters (also available through the school's website)

Charging for access to information: Where information outlined in the Definition Document is not available on the website – either because it is not in electronic format or is too unwieldy to be transferred in such a format – we will make it available to be viewed in the school. In the first instance, you should contact the School office to arrange a viewing.

Photocopies of such information are also available, charges for copies are shown on the final page of this document.

The purpose of our publication scheme is to demonstrate how we respond to the specific requirements of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Reference documents

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following guidance document:

Definition document for governing bodies of maintained schools in England produced by the ICO (as revised in 2013)
<https://ico.org.uk/media/for-organisations/documents/1235/definition-document-schools-in-england.pdf>

Reference should be made to the following DPE/ School policies: Data Protection Policy and Retention of Records Policy.

Classes of information published

Class 1: Who we are and what we do - Organisational information, structures, locations and contacts

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Class 2: What we spend and how we spend it – Financial information relating to projected and actual income and expenditure, procurement, contractual agreements and financial audit

Class 3: The school's priorities and how they are being achieved - Strategies and plans, performance indicators, audits, inspections and reviews

Class 4: How we make decisions as a school - Decision making process and records of decisions

Class 5: Our policies and procedures –This list includes all statutory DfE Policies (to be published and for internal school use) under this class of information as well as our current written protocols, policies and procedures for delivering our services and responsibilities

Class 6: Lists and registers - Any information that the school is legally required to hold in publicly available registers

Class 7: The services offered by the school – Information about the services offered by the school, including leaflets, guidance and newsletters produced for public

Freedom of Information Act Publication Scheme

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

Information to be published	How the information can be obtained	Cost
<u>Who we are and what we do</u> <i>Organisational information, structures, locations and contacts</i> <i>This will be current information only. This will need to be monitored / maintained.</i>	Hard copy on request School website	see schedule of charges
Who's who in the school / Location and contact information	School website	
Who's who on the governing body and the basis of their appointment	School website	

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Instrument of Government / Articles of Association	School website	
School prospectus (if any)	N/A	
Annual Report (if any)	N/A	
Staffing structure	School website Hard copy on request	
School session times and term dates	School website	

Information to be published	How the information can be obtained	Cost
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<u>What we spend and how we spend it</u> Financial information relating to projected and actual income and expenditure, procurement, contracts and financial audit There is an expectation that information in this class should be made available for at least the current and previous two financial years. This will need to be monitored / maintained.	Hard copy on request	see schedule of charges
Annual budget plan and financial statements	Hard copy on request	see schedule of charges
Capital funding	Hard copy on request	see schedule of charges
Financial audit reports	Hard copy on request	see schedule of charges
Details on expenditure of items over £5000 Published at least annually but at a more frequent quarterly or six-monthly interval where practical.	Hard copy on request	see schedule of charges

Procurement and contracts Details of procedures used for the acquisition of goods and services Detail of contracts that have gone through a formal tendering process Possibly information relating to / a link to information held by an organisation which has done so on its behalf (for example a local authority or diocese).	Hard copy on request	see schedule of charges
Pay policy	Hard copy on request	see schedule of charges

Staff allowances and expenses Details of the allowances and expenses that <u>can</u> be incurred or claimed. It should include the total of the allowances and expenses paid to individual senior staff members (Senior Leadership Team or equivalent whose basic annual salary is at least £60,000 per annum) by reference to categories.	Hard copy on request	see schedule of charges
Staff pay and grading structure As a minimum the pay information should include salaries for senior staff (Senior Leadership Team or equivalent as above) in bands of £10,000; for more junior posts, by salary range.	Hard copy on request	see schedule of charges
Governors' allowances Allowances and that <u>can</u> be incurred or claimed and a record of total payments made to individual governors.	Hard copy on request	see schedule of charges
Information to be published	How the information can be obtained	Cost

<u>What our priorities are and how we are doing</u> <i>Strategies and plans, performance indicators, audits, inspections and reviews</i> <i>Current information as a minimum. This will need to be monitored / maintained.</i>	Hard copy on request Ofsted: https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/21/134960 Performance: https://www.cattongrove.norfolk.sch.uk/attainment	
School profile (if any) <i>Performance data supplied to the government or a direct link to the data.</i> <i>The latest Ofsted report – Summary / Direct link to report on Ofsted website</i> <i>The latest Ofsted report – Full / Direct link to report on Ofsted website</i> <i>Post inspection action plan</i>	School website	
Performance management policy and procedures adopted by the governing body	Hard copy on request	see schedule of charges

Schools future plans Proposals for and any consultation on the future of the school, such as change in status, plans to federate.	Hard copy on request	see schedule of charges
Safeguarding and child protection The policies and procedures that are in place to ensure that the school exercises its functions with a view to safeguarding.	School website	
Information to be published	How the information can be obtained	Cost
<u>How we make decisions</u> Decision making processes and records of decisions There is an expectation for information in this class to be made available for at least the current and previous three years. This will need to be monitored / maintained.	Hard copy on request	see schedule of charges
Admissions policy / decisions The school's admission arrangements and procedures, together with information about the right of appeal.	School website	

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Minutes of meetings of the governing body and its committees Excluding information that is properly considered private to the meeting.	Hard copy on request	see schedule of charges
Information to be published	How the information can be obtained	Cost
<u>Our policies and procedures</u> Current written protocols, policies and procedures for delivering school services and responsibilities There is an expectation for information in this class to be current information. As a minimum these must include policies, procedures and documents that the school is required to have by statute or by its funding agreement or equivalent, or by the government. These will include policies and procedures for handling information requests. This will need to be monitored / maintained.		
School policies	School website Hard copy on request	see schedule of charges

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Pupil and curriculum policies	School website Hard copy on request	see schedule of charges
Records management and personal data policies	School website Hard copy on request	see schedule of charges
Equality and diversity (including equal opportunities) policies	School website Hard copy on request	see schedule of charges
Policies and procedures for the recruitment of staff	School website Hard copy on request	see schedule of charges
Charging regimes and policies	School website Hard copy on request	see schedule of charges

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Information to be published	How the information can be obtained	Cost
<u>Lists and Registers</u> Currently maintained lists and registers only (this does not include the attendance register.) This will need to be monitored / maintained.	Hard copy on request	see schedule of charges
Curriculum circulars and statutory instruments	Hard copy on request	see schedule of charges
Disclosure logs	Inspection only – contact school	
Asset register	Inspection only – contact school	
Any information the school is currently legally required to hold in publicly available registers This does not include the attendance register.	Inspection only – contact school	
Information to be published	How the	Cost

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	information can be obtained	
<u>The services we offer</u> Information about the services the school offers including leaflets, guidance and newsletters produced for the public and businesses Current information only. This will need to be monitored / maintained.	Hard copy and/or website	see schedule of charges
Extra-curricular activities	School website	
Out of school clubs	School website	
Services for which the school is entitled to recover a fee, together with those fees	School website	
School publications, leaflets books and newsletters	School website	
Information to be published	How the information can be	Cost

	obtained	
<u>Additional Information</u> This will provide schools with the opportunity to publish information that is not itemised in the lists above	Hard copy on request	see schedule of charges

Schedule of Charges

Charges which may be made for Information published under this scheme

The purpose of this scheme is to make the maximum amount of information readily available at minimum inconvenience and cost to the public. Charges made by the authority for routinely published material will be justified and transparent and kept to a minimum.

Material which is published and accessed on our website will be provided free of charge. Charges may be made for information subject to a charging regime specified by Parliament. Charges may be made for actual disbursements incurred such as photocopying, postage & packaging and the costs directly incurred as a result of viewing information

TYPE OF CHARGE	DESCRIPTION	BASIS OF CHARGE
Disbursement cost	Photocopying/printing @5p per sheet (black & white)	Actual cost *
	Photocopying/printing @10p per sheet (colour)	Actual cost *

DPE Model Freedom of Information Policy and Publication Scheme

	Postage	Actual cost of Royal Mail standard 2 nd class
Statutory Fee		In accordance with the relevant legislation

* The actual cost incurred by the school.