

Brentwood School and College

Freedom of Information Policy

Document Control	
Title	Freedom of Information Policy
Owner	Brentwood School and College
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Related Documents	Freedom of Information Act 2000
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As public bodies, maintained schools are obliged, under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA), to publish certain information about their activities and produce information requested by members of the public.

The FOIA only covers recorded information that is held by the school (or by another person on behalf of the school), including printed documents, computer files, letters, emails, photographs, and sound or video recordings. This means that we are not required to provide information that we do not collect and hold as part of our regular routines, or information such as the opinions or beliefs of individuals.

The principles of the FOI Act are:

- that everybody has a right to access official information;
- disclosure of information should be the default;
- requesters do not have to give a reason for wanting the information;
- all requests should be treated equally;
- information should only be disclosed if it is information that would be given to anyone (or the world at large).

Responding to requests for information:

- A valid FOI request must be in writing (letter, email, social media etc), include the requester's real name, include an address (postal or email) for correspondence, and describe the information requested.
- Under the Act, most public authorities may take up to 20 working days to respond, counting the first working day after the request is received as the first day. For schools, the standard time limit is 20 school days, or 60 working days if this is shorter..
Working day means any day other than a Saturday, Sunday, or UK public holidays and bank holidays.
- If clarification is required from the requester, the time limit to respond will be calculated from the date the school receive the required clarification.
- We will advise the requester whether we hold any information falling within the scope of their request; and
- We will provide that information unless an exemption applies.
- Where an exemption applies, we will confirm which exemption(s) and the reason it is engaged.

Where requested information is environmental information, it shall be dealt with under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR). This is similar to FOI however there are some differences, including:

- EIR requests may be submitted verbally or in writing
- The school has 20 working days to respond, However, Under EIR, if your request is complicated or there is a lot of information to provide, we can extend the request for a

further 20 working days.

- The requirement under EIR is to make information available, so a link to published data is a valid response.
- EIR has its own list of Exceptions, which allow the school to withhold information, when it is in the public interest to do so.

Disclosure of information

We aim to make the information available unless:

- we do not hold the information;
- Fulfilling a request under FOI will exceed the appropriate limits (£450 per request, where officer time is calculated at a standard rate of £25 per hour)
- A request is repeated or vexatious.
- the information is exempt under one of the FOIA exemptions or Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR) exceptions,

If the information is only held by another public authority, the school should provide details of where to obtain it.

Publication Scheme

Per Section 19 of FOIA, a public authority must adopt and maintain a Publication Scheme. A Publication Scheme is a guide to the classes of information that the school publishes or intends to publish routinely. The term “published” is broad and is not limited to information produced in paper forms. As far as the Freedom of Information Act 2000 is concerned, information made publicly available has been published. Therefore, information on the School’s website is as much part of the Publication Scheme as printed documents.

Publishing datasets for re-use

Per Section 11A of FOIA, Public authorities must publish under their publication scheme any dataset they hold that has been requested, together with any updated versions, unless they are satisfied that it is not appropriate to do so. So far as reasonably practicable, they must publish it in an electronic form that is capable of re-use.

If the dataset or any part of it is a relevant copyright work and the public authority is the only owner, the public authority must make it available for re-use under the terms of a specified licence. Datasets in which the Crown owns the copyright or the database rights are not relevant copyright works.

The Datasets Code of Practice recommends that public authorities make datasets available for re-use under the [Open Government Licence](#).

The term ‘dataset’ is defined in section 11(5) of FOIA. The terms ‘relevant copyright work’ and ‘specified licence’ are defined in section 19(8) of FOIA. The ICO has published [guidance on the dataset provisions in FOIA](#). This explains what is meant by “not appropriate” and “capable of re-use”.

Classes of Information

Who we are and what we do

Organisational information, structures, locations and contacts.

We would expect information in this class to be current information only.

- **Instrument of Government / Articles of Association**

The Instrument of Government is the document which records the name and category of the school/college and the name and constitution of its governing body. Academies and Free School/colleges have Articles of Association instead.

- **School/college prospectus and curriculum**

The contents of the school/college prospectus (if any).

Once a prospectus has been published and made available to parents, access to it should be available to anyone.

An outline of the school/college curriculum.

- **Governing Body**

The names of the governors should be available, and the basis on which they have been appointed, along with details of how to contact them via the school/college.

- **School/college session times and term dates**

Details of school/college session times and dates of school/college terms and holidays.

- **Location and contact information**

The address, telephone number, email address and website for the school/college together with the names of key personnel.

What we spend and how we spend it

Financial information about projected and actual income and expenditure, procurement, contracts and financial audit.

The minimum we would expect is that financial information for the current and previous two financial years should be available.

- **Annual budget plan and financial statements**

Details of the sources of funding and income provided to the school/college by a local authority or directly by central government or from elsewhere, including the private sector, together with the annual budget plan and the school/college's annual income and expenditure returns.

Details of items of expenditure over £5000, including costs, supplier and transaction information. This should be published at least annually but at a more frequent quarterly or six-monthly interval where it is practical for school/colleges to do so.

- **Capital funding**

Information on major plans for capital expenditure .Details of the capital funding allocated to or by the school/college together with information on related building projects and other capital projects.

This should include any private finance initiative and public-private partnership contracts.

- **Financial audit reports**
- **Procurement and contracts**

Details of procedures used for the acquisition of goods and services. Details of contracts that have gone through a formal tendering process.

- **Pay policy**

The statement of the school/college's policy and procedures regarding teachers' pay.

- **Staff allowances and expenses**

Details of the allowances and expenses that can be incurred or claimed. It should include the total of the allowances and expenses paid to individual senior staff members by reference to categories. This information should be produced in line with the school/college's policies, practices and procedures and must at least include travel, subsistence and accommodation.

For the purpose of this document, "senior staff" means staff on the Senior Management or Leadership

Team or equivalent level, or above, whose basic actual salary is at least £60,000 per annum.

- **Staff pay and grading structures**

The names and positions of all staff of the school/college, and how they may be contacted via the school/college. This may be provided as part of the organisational structure and should include, as a minimum, the salaries for senior staff as defined above. Those salaries should be stated in bands of £10,000. For more junior posts, levels of pay should be identified by salary range.

- **Governors' allowances**

Details of allowances and expenses that can be incurred or claimed, and a record of total payments made to individual governors.

What our priorities are and how we are doing

Strategies and plans, performance indicators, audits, inspections and reviews.

The minimum we would expect in this class is current information.

Below is a list of the type of information that we would expect school/colleges to have readily available for publication. Any other reports or recorded information showing the school/college's planned or actual performance should normally be included. If the information is readily and publicly available via an external website, the school/college may instead provide a direct link to that, as stated on page one of this document.

- **Performance data supplied to the government**
- **Latest Ofsted report**

The school/college should provide a link to its report on the Ofsted website.

- **Performance management information**

Performance management policy and procedures adopted by the governing body.

- **The school/college's future plans**

Any major proposals for the future of the school/college involving, for example, consultation on a change in school/college status.

- **Safeguarding and child protection**

The policies and procedures that are in place to ensure that that the school/college exercises its functions with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, including child protection, in compliance with legislation and any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

How we make decisions

Decision-making processes and records of decisions.

We would expect information in this class to be available at least for the current and previous three years.

- **Admissions policy / decisions**

The school/college's admission arrangements and procedures, together with information about the right of appeal. We would not expect individual admission decisions to be published, but we would expect information on application numbers/patterns of successful applicants (including criteria on which applications were successful) to be published if this information is held by the school/college. If the school/college is not its own admissions authority, it should provide an appropriate link to the local authority.

- **Minutes of meetings of the governing body and its committees**

Minutes, agendas and papers considered at such meetings should be published as soon as practicable, with the exception of information that is properly considered to be private to the meeting.

Our policies and procedures

Current written protocols, policies and procedures for delivering our services and responsibilities.

We would expect information in this class to be current only.

- **School/college policies and other documents**

This must include, as a minimum, policies, procedures and documents that the school/college is required to have by statute or by its funding agreement or equivalent. We would expect this information to include the required policies listed on the Department for Education's website. It will also include policies and procedures for handling information requests.

- **Records management and personal data policies**

This will include information security policies, records retention, destruction and archive policies, and data protection (including data sharing) policies.

- **Equality and diversity**

This will also include policies, schemes, statements, procedures and guidelines relating to equal opportunities.

- **Policies and procedures for the recruitment of staff**

If vacancies are advertised as part of recruitment policies, details of current vacancies will be readily available.

- **Charging regimes and policies**

Details of any statutory charging regimes should be provided. Charging policies should include charges made for information routinely published. They should clearly state what costs are to be recovered, the basis on which they are made, and how they are calculated.

If the school/college charges a fee for licensing the re-use of datasets, it should state in its guide to information how this is calculated and whether the charge is made under the Re-use Fees Regulations or under other legislation. It cannot charge a re-use fee if it makes the datasets available for re-use under the Open Government Licence.

Lists and registers

We expect this to be information in currently maintained lists and registers only.

- **Curriculum circulars and statutory instruments**

Statutory Instruments (for example Regulations), departmental circulars and administrative memoranda sent to the Head Teacher/Governing Body concerning the curriculum.

- **Disclosure logs**

If a school/college produces a disclosure log indicating the information provided in response to requests, it should be readily available. Disclosure logs are recommended as good practice.

- **Asset register**

We would expect some information from capital asset registers to be available, if such registers are held.

- **Any information the school/college is currently legally required to hold in publicly available registers**

The services we offer

Information about the services the school/college provides including leaflets, guidance and newsletters and Brentwood website.

Generally this is an extension of part of the first class of information and may also relate to information covered in other classes. Examples of services that could be included here are:

- **Extra-curricular activities**
Out of school/college clubs
- **School/college publications**
- **Services for which the school/college is entitled to recover a fee, together with those fees**
- **Leaflets, booklets and newsletters**

Reviewed: March 2025
Trafford Information Governance Officer Kathryn Wright