CONTENTS

1. The Freedom of Information Act policy containing:

- Introduction
- Scope
- Dealing with requests
- Adopting and maintaining publication scheme
- Relationship with the Data Protection Act 1998
- Responsibilities

2. The Publication Scheme

3. Appendix 1- Freedom of Information Act 2000

4. Appendix 2 – Information Published/to be published

5. Appendix 3 – Contact Details

6. Appendix 4 – Process map for receiving requests

7. Appendix 5 – Process map for handling enquiries

Churchdown Village Infant School Freedom of Information Act Policy

Introduction

The school is committed to complying with and implementing the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act (2000)(Appendix 1) and related legislation. This provides a general entitlement to any person to be able to access information held by school, subject to exemptions and conditions laid down by law.

Scope

This policy applies to all information held by 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 fully 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.

It should be noted that access to personal information (that is information from which a living individual can be identified) is till governed under the **Data Protection Act 1998.** Requests for access to such information will be governed in line with the requirements of this legislation.

Dealing with Requests

The school will offer advice and assistance to anybody wishing to make a request for information. It is 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 of request and more speedily if possible. This will be extended in specific circumstances on legal advice in connection with the public interest test. However, the school is committed to providing a prompt service and every attempt will be made to provide the information earlier than the expiry of the 20 working day period. Repeated or vexatious requests for information will be refused. The school will claim exemptions as appropriate whilst maintaining a commitment to openness, scrutiny and the public interest.

Any request in writing will be considered a Freedom of Information request including those received by email and fax. There is no need for request 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

Churchdown Village Infant 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 1998

The school is under a legal duty to protect personal data under the Data Protection Act 1998. It will carefully consider its 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 Governing Body who will delegate those responsibilities to the Headteacher. Complaints regarding the use of the policy should be directed to the Governing Body.

All school staff have a responsibility to ensure that any request for information they receive is sent to the Headteacher who will action it under the Act and in compliance with this policy. The staff are responsible for good information handling practice and for implementing records, management policies and procedures as appropriate to their post top facilitate any requests.

<u>Review</u>

This policy was drafted in March 2014.

It will be formally adopted by the Governors on 21st May 2014

Its implementation is seen as the responsibility of all the staff. Its use and effectiveness will be supported and monitored by the Headteacher and the Chairman of Governors (responsible for non-curriculum policies).

Churchdown Village Infant School

Publication Scheme

Introduction

One of the aims of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 is that the school should be clear and proactive about the information it will make public. To do this the school will produce a Publication Scheme setting out:

- The classes of information which it will publish or intend to publish
- The manner in which the information will be published
- Whether the information is available free of charge or on payment

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.

Categories of Information Published.

The Publication Scheme guides you to information which is currently published, or have recently published or which will be published in the future. This is split into categories of information known as 'classes'. The classes of information that the school will undertake to make available are organised into four broad topic areas:-

- School Prospectus
- Governing Body Documents
- Pupil and Curriculum - information about policies that relate to pupils and school curriculum
- School Policies and other information related to the school
  (These are contained in Appendix 2.)

How to request information

If you require a paper version of any of the documents within the scheme, please contact the school by telephone, email or letter. Contact details can be found in Appendix 3.

Paying for Information

Information published on our website is free, although you may incur costs from your internet provider. The school website can also be accessed via the internet from your local library or internet cafe. Single copies of information covered by this publication are provided free unless stated. The school will inform you of any charge for photocopy or printing on request.

Review

This document was drafted in March 2014.

It will be formally adopted by the Governors on 21^{51} May 2014

Its implementation is seen as the responsibility of all the staff. Its use and effectiveness will be supported and monitored by the Headteacher and the Chairman of Governors (responsible for non-curriculum policies).

Signed ⎯c⎺⎺⎺˸Æ⎺ (Headteacher)_____

Freedom of Information Act 2000

What does the Act do?

- Provides a general right of access to anyone to information held by public authorities, this includes Schools, subject to certain conditions and exemptions;
- This right of access starts on the 1st of January 2005;
- All recorded information is covered and the Act is fully retrospiec;
- There are exemptions to what information will be made available (fo example personal information, information provided in confidence and some comm al information can be restricted)
- The majority of exemptions are dependent on whether disclosure is in the public interest

Why have a Freedom of Information Act?
In order to provide a more open and transparent government, providing citizens with clarity on what public money is spent on and how decisions are made.

The starting point of the act is that information should be made available rather than should not be made available.

What is required of individual schools?

- Adoption and maintenance of a publication scheme - which publicises what information your school already makes available.
- Set up a process to deal with information requests
- Set up a records management programme - policies and procedures to manage the information your school holds
- Ensure all requests are dealt with within 20 working days

Data Protection and Freedom of Information - how do the two interact?

The Data Protection Act 1998 came into force on 1 March 2000. It provides living individuals with a right of access to personal information held about them. The right applies to all information held in computerised form and also to non-computerised information held in filing systems structured so that specific information about particular individuals can retrieved readily. Individuals already have the right to access information about themselves (personal data), which is held on computer and in some paper files under the Data Protection Act 1998. The right also applies to those archives that meet these criteria. However, the right is subject to exemptions, which will affect whether information is provided.

The FOi Act does not give individuals access to their personal information, though if a request is made, the Data Protection Act gives the individual this right. If the individual chooses to make this information public it could be used alongside non-personal information gained by the public under the terms of the FOi Act.

Who is the Information Commissioner?

The Information Commissioner enforces and oversees the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The Commissioner is a UK independent supervisory authority reporting directly to the UK Parliament and has an international role as well as a

national one. In the UK, the Commissioner has a range of duties including the promotion of good information handling and the encouragement of codes of practice for data controllers, that is, anyone who decides how and why personal data, (information about identifiable, living individuals) are processed.

For further information see The Information Commissioner website: www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk/index.htm

Contact: Information Commissioner, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF; Fax: 01625 524 51O; Enquiry/Information Line Tel: 01625 545 745; E-mail: data@dataprotection.gov.uk

Campaign for the Freedom of Information (non-political, non-profit organisation: www.cfoi.org.uk/ (includes a link to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 as a single Acrobat file)

The Information Commissioner website (useful for information about Data Protection too): www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk/index.htm

Freedom of Information Act Starter Guide for Gloucestershire Schools

About this Document

Audience: This document is aimed at the School Governor who is aware that local authorities are subject to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) from January 2005, know that they must prepare and do not know where to start. It is **not** intended for those who are already expert or who are considering sophisticated implementations.

Scope: This document will describe what **must** be done to prepare for FOIA, and indicate what is the best practice that we have. It will be prescriptive, and suggest a single approach rather than suggesting options.

It is **not** intended to be a single source for all information on the subject, but it is intended to be a start point.

Structure: This document is a short b'llide structured around the principal areas that need to be addressed. The document identifies existing templates and examples as accompanying electronic files.

Liability, Ownership, Protection

This document is made available for use, without guarantees and without licensing costs, by local authorities and any other bodies referencing local government services.

Content can be reproduced free of charge in any format or media without requiring specific permission. This is subject to the material not being used in a derogatory manner or in a misleading context.

References
Freedom of Inforn1ation Act, 2000, ISBN 010 563   600

Freedom of Information Act Starter Guide for Gloucestershire Schools

About this Document

Audience: This document is aimed at the School Governor who is aware that local authorities are subject to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) from January 2005, know that they must prepare and do not know where to start. It is **not** intended for those who are already expert or who are considering sophisticated implementations.

Scope: This document will describe what **must** be done to prepare for FOIA, and indicate what is the best practice that we have. It will be prescriptive, and suggest a single approach rather than suggesting options.

It is **not** intended to be a single source for all information on the subject, but it is intended to be a start point.

Structure: This document is a short guide structured around the principal areas that need to be addressed. The document identifies existing templates and examples as accompanying electronic files.

Liability, Ownership, Protection

This document is made available for use, without guarantees and without licensing costs, by local authorities and any other bodies referencing local government services.

Content can be reproduced free of charge in any format or media without requiring specific permission. This is subject to the material not being used in a derogatory manner or in a misleading context.

References
Freedom of information Act, 2000, ISBN 010 563 600

Introduction to the Freedom of Information Act

The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) became law in November 2000. FOIA comes fully into force on 1st January 2005, and must be implemented by November 2005.

Upon request from a member of the public local authorities must confirm or deny the existence of a piece of infonnation. Ifthe infonnation exists you must make it available within 20 working days.

Your Responsibility

Members of the public will ask for access to information you hold. You need to be prepared. You need to know what you have and where it is, and how to access it. The expected level of requests mean that it is unlikely that you will have the time and resource to respond to each request without preparation. You need to manage requests for information.

The High Level Plan

There are five high level steps to follow:

- Prepare your organisation
- Know what information you have
- Publish what infonnation you hold
- Manage the information you have
- Manage requests from the public

The following five sections introduce an approach to following these five steps. Every organisation is different and it is impossible to provide a single detailed approach that is appropriate for everyone. Where there are resources available to help you find out more or tools and methods that can help, these are indicated at the end of each section.

Prepare Your School

All infonnation that your school has, in any fonn, is covered by the provisions of the Act. Your school needs to understand that and be prepared for the impact of FOIA on each part of the business and each of their business processes. Each individual needs to know this.

The details of how you prepare the organisation are in part dependent on what you do in the remaining steps of this plan. But you should expect to:

- Prepare the organisation and set expectations
- Establish and publish b'Uidelines on the use of systems and the creation and storage of all forms of infom1ation
- Develop a policy for the retention and disposal of records
- Develop and maintain a disposal schedule

- Identify where processes and responsibilities change, and ensure that a training programme is in place to support those staff

Available resources:
Example presentation
Example records management policy
Disposal schedule example
Records management Society – Retention Guidelines for Local Authorities
CRM Information Management Policy
National Archives – policy for managing ema.il
PRO Corporate policy on electronic records

Know What Information You Have

You need to know what information you have and the processes you follow to manage it. Only then will you be able to work out what to do with it to be prepared for FOIA.

You need to undertake an *information audit* to establish what you have. This is an essential step.

Purpose of the information audit

The information audit has a number of purposes:

- Establish what infonnation you have, who owns it, who uses it, and what format it is in
- Establish where the organisation will add further information
- Identify any gaps or any duplication of information
- Indicate any issues that you need to address
- Indicate the relative importance to you of the information resources and assess the likelihood of requests for them

What the information audit needs to cover
The information audit covers all types of information, including electronic information in compnter systems and printed materials. It includes formalised records, but also includes less structured information such as e-mail and documents. It includes information held in common and held on PCs.

What the information audit needs to record
The level of audit can vary. You need to audit to the level that is appropriate for your organisation. Ideally you should undertake all of the following:

- Information needs analysis: survey that asks what information resources and services people need to do their job. Good for finding out what is actually used and needed. Good at identifying both gaps and redundant infonnation
- Infonnation asset register: establish a complete and current database of what is held to support business procedures and activities. This is especially useful for identifying the structured information that is held in computer systems

- Information assessment: systematic, first level fact finding and analysis process to document and evaluate information flows and explicit or recorded infonnation resources. This is the detailed review of the information assets and will give you the basis for your information management system

Available resources:
Records Management Society - Information Audits
Information needs analysis example form
Classification form
Information asset Register Notes

Notes on Metadata and classification
Metadata is a way of classifying an information resource. Good quality metadata will improve the discoverability of information and speed processes associated with its disclosure.

Applying metadata consistently to information resources will:

- Provide a consistent way of recording FOIA information
- Ensure infonnation resources are consistently described - improves ability to locate information
- Eases the transfer of information if therc are changes in responsibility between organisation

During the information audit you need to collect info1mation so that you can identify what metadata you need to apply to the information that you will be managing.

You need to consider the *granularity* of the information and where you apply the metadata. Granularity defines the degree to which the content of an infonnation resource (e.g. folder or file, document, sub-document) is identified and accessible. Granularity is important because it helps detennine at what level metadata is applied.

There are a number of resources available to help you define metadata:

- E-Government Metadata Standard describes the wide range of metadata, and also indicates which fields are mandatory
- Local Government Category List provides a subject based list for all activities by local government, and is an excellent base for classification

Notes on exemption
You need to collect answers to the following key questions about each item of information as you undertake your information audit:

- Is it already in the public domain?
- Would it be difficult to make available for cost or technical reasons?
- Is the information likely to be requested on a regular basis? Who has requested this type of information in the past?

- Is the information subject to and absolute exemption or likely to be subject to a prejudice or public interest test?

The Act groups together information by type of exemption. There are 23 types of exemption. Reasons for exemption are:

- No exemptions apply
- Exemption applies subject to public interest test
- Exemption applies subject to public interest and prejudice tests
- Absoluter exemption applies

Publish What Information You Hold
You must make information available proactively, not just have infonnation ready for requests from the public. Section 19 of the Act sets out the Publication Scheme provisions. Publications Schemes give details of the classes of information that an authority makes available proactively and how they are accessible.

You must provide this information.

Available resources:
Department of Constitutional Affairs FOlA Publication Schemes
Department of Constitutional Affairs Publication Scheme (example)

Implementing information management systems and processes
You need to manage, store and retrieve information. You need to make sure that any solution you implement takes into account all your information resources.

Having a defined infonnation architecture allows you to make an informed decision on EDRMS, CMS, and CRM system to choose.

Whatever solution you select it must:

- Capture and classify information
- Search and retrieve – no matter where it is stored
- Maintain, store, and protect information
- Automate the update, archive and disposal of information
- Audit processes for information accountability

There are other likely benefits that accrue. These are not pre-requisites for FOIA. You will be able to:

- Find information easily
- Process information requests quickly
- Achieve a higher standard of customer service
- Have better information planning
- Improve information sharing between departments and organisations
- Demonstrate compliance and accountability

Available resources:

PRO guidelines on EDRMS selection
E-GMS
LGCL

Manage Customer Requests

Managing access to infonnation is as important as managing the information. You must ensure that the policies and procedures are in place to support your staff. The key procedures are:

- Correspondence procedure
- FOIA access request procedure
- Appeals procedure

As well as managing requests and your relationship with those making requests – you also need to capture, analyse and exploit that information to reduce the burden of compliance, improve customer satisfaction, and realise other benefits

Enquiries and responses

You must co-ordinate all interactions with enquirers, regardless of where they enter the authority. Your process must keep a log of all activities.

You must also develop a process to identify, locate, retrieve and deliver information. It is sensible to delegate this activity to the areas of the business that have expertise.

You need a process to apply exemptions. You should ask the area of the business to indicate where they believe that exemptions apply but that advice should be verified with an appropriate authority. You should also keep a log of all exemptions.

The purpose of having a proceduralised approach is to:

- Demonstrate compliance through audit trail
- Handle complaints effectively
- Identify vexatious and repeated requests
- Identify requests that appear to be part of an organised campaign
- Ensure one part of the organisation is not disclosing information another part thinks of as exempt
- Measure performance

Acquire knowledge

You can record information about requests and disclosures, about the people who are making requests and the information requested. You will understand what exemptions are being applied and where. Capturing this will enable you to:

- Apply exemptions consistently
- Develop an understanding of the public interest
- Further develop publication schemes
- Determine resources for FOIA compliance
- Detennine the level of granularity to apply metadata

- Deten11ine the scope and classes of infonnation

Exemption ...

Important note: Remember that the right to access is to "infonnation", not just documents. This means that you cannot simply consider whether a whole document is exempt. You need to consider whether parts of it may be covered by one or more exemptions. Parts of a document that are not covered by exemption must be made available.

Classes of information: include these in the publication scheme that you have to publish.

This must have meaning to people who are looking for infonnation and to those who create and manage the information. But this must not be primarily for internal needs or to follow historical filing systems if these do not support the principle of "reasonable accessibility".

Glossary of terms

Classification: the process by which the documents of an organisation are categorised or grouped in retrieval systems

Content management system (CMS): computer system that facilitates the creation, management and deployment of homogenous information content, usually for external publication. The content is nonnally stored in a neutral format. In some systems it can be published to multiple fonnats, not just web.

Customer relationship management (CRM): deals with all interactions with customers and includes the people, processes and technology involved in supporting customers.

Document: a document may be a text file, a spreadsheet, an email, a sound file, an image, a digital video. It can also be a printed item.

Document management (DM or DMS): Process for managing the lifecycle of a document from inception, version creation, publication, storage, retention and disposal

Electronic document and records management system (EDRMS): Combines the functions of document and records management in one system

Granularity: Granularity defines the degree to which the content of an infonnation resource (e.g. folder or file, document, sub-document) is identified and accessible. Granularity is important because it helps determine at what level metadata is applied. It is very useful in FOIA solution because it could be used to pull out a piece of non-exempt information in a large document that is subject to exemption. Identifying the right level of granularity to apply metadata will also improve the accuracy of searches, as only relevant information within documents or aggregations of documents will be returned. In practice the application of metadata to a level of granularity within a document will need to be prioritised based on the likelihood of that information being requested or subject to exemption.

Information architecture: The art of organising infonnation to best fulfil the needs of end users. This involves the investigation and analysis of existing content and the context in which it is or will be used, in order to identify the key units of information, and their attributes and behaviour

Information audit: A process which reviews and maps organisational information needs, creation, flow and storage. It identifies gaps, duplication, costs, and value. It uncovers the barriers to effective information tlow.

J\,fetadata: Describes the attributes of a piece of infonnation, usually a document or parts of a document and is composed of a number of fields. Examples: author, title, file type, size, content description, copyright, access and so on.

Records management (RM or RMS): Creation, storage, retrieval, and disposal of all format records (paper, electronic, etc) where information resides. It manages a corporate filing structure to which records are classified and stored. It holds explicit disposal schedules to determine how long records should be kept and how they should be disposed of.

Appendix 2

Information Currently Published on Website:

- School Prospectus
  includes all aspects of school life including session times, school curriculum, aims of school.

- Governing Body Documents
      School Profile
      Ofsted Report
  -   Value for Money statement

- Pupil and Curriculum
  - Pupil Premium
  - School Values
  - Curriculum Mid-Term Plans

- School Policies and other information related to the school
  -- Admissions Policy
  - Current Admissions Timetable

Information that will be published:

- Governing Body Action Plan
- Academy Order
- Policies –
  - Safeguarding
  - Discipline and Behaviour
  - Charging
  - Special Educational Needs
  - Attendance
  - Equality and Diversity

Appendix 3

<u>Address</u>

Churchdown Village Infant School
Station Road
Churchdown
Gloucester
Gloucestershire
GL3 2NB

<u>Website</u>

http://www.churchdownvillageinf.ik.org/p_Home_Page.ikml

<u>Email</u>

admin@cvis.org.uk

<u>Telephone Number</u>

01452 714178

Appendix 4

PROCESS MAP FOR RECEIVING REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

Request for information received

In writing (inc email)

By telephone or in person

Is it sin1ple enough to deal with?

Is the infrJrmation held by the school?

NO

NO   YES

If too complex, ask to put request in yriting

Provide information

Is the inforn1ation held by another public body

YES

Transfer request to relevant body, tell t11qu1rer

YES

Is it asking to see personal mfonnation about the enquirer

NO

NO

Inform the person the information is not held

Is it about environmental issues?

NO

YES

YES

YES

Treat as a subject access request under Data Protection Act

Treat as a request under environmental Information Regulations

Treat as a Freedom of Information request – Go to process map 2

Appendix 5

PROCESS MAP FOR RECEIVING REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

Request for infonnation received

In writing (inc email)

Hy telephone or in person

Is it simple mough to deal with?

ls the infcnmation held by the school?

NO

A

NO   YES

If too complex, ask to put request in ¥lriting

Provide information

YES

Is the information held by another public body

YES

Transter request to relevant body, tell enquirer

Is it asking to see personal information about the L11Qulfer

NO

NO

Inform the pc-rson the information is not held

Is it about environmental issues?

NO

YES

YES

YES

Treat as a subject access request under Data Protection Act

Treat as a request under enviromnental Information Regulations

Treat as a Freedom of Information request – Go to process map 2