

Freedom of Information Policy

September 2021

St. Gabriel's C.E. Primary School



Our statement of mission:

Our aim is to nurture children with the confidence and self-belief to achieve their best; to be resilient in their learning and ambitious in their hopes and dreams; to live in harmony, respecting others; to have the courage to think for themselves; to search and question throughout life's journey and, if their paths should lead them, to find a personal faith, hope and love in Jesus Christ.

Seeking to nurture:

sel**F**-belief cour**A**ge res**I**llience ambi**T**ion **H**armony

“Stand firm... be courageous” 1 Corinthians 16:13

Policy Reviewed: Autumn 2021

Introduction

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 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.**

St. Gabriel's is committed to following the Freedom of Information Policy to make information easily available upon request. However, St. Gabriel's does have the right to refuse access to information in certain circumstances which is outlined in this policy.

The Act does not give people access to their own personal data (information about themselves). If a member of the public wants to see information that a public authority holds about them, they should make a subject access request under GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

1. Publication Scheme

As well as responding to requests for information, public authorities must publish information proactively. The Freedom of Information Act requires every public authority to have a publication scheme, approved by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), and to publish information covered by the scheme.

The scheme sets out our commitment to make certain classes of information routinely available, such as policies and procedures, minutes of meetings, annual reports and financial information. The school has adopted the ICO's model publication scheme and this is available in full in Appendix 1.

2. Written Requests

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 is sometimes described as a presumption or assumption in favour of disclosure. The Act is also sometimes described as purpose and applicant blind. **Anyone can make a freedom of information request** – they do not have to be UK citizens, or resident in the UK. Freedom of information requests can also be made by organisations, for example a newspaper, a campaign group, or a company.

The Act covers any recorded information that is held by a public authority in England, public authorities including school. Recorded information includes printed documents, computer files, letters, emails, photographs, and sound or video recordings.

For a request to be valid under the Freedom of Information Act it must be in writing. Freedom of Information requests must either be submitted electronically to insert office@stgabriels.blackburn.sch.uk or in writing to **St. Gabriel's C.E. Primary School, Wilworth Crescent, Blackburn, BB1 8QN**. **Responses made under the Act will be issued within 20 working days following the date of receipt, excluding any day which is not a school day** (this effectively equates to a period of 20 school days).

A requester may ask for any information that is held by a public authority. However, this does not mean the school is always obliged to provide the information. In some cases, there will be a good reason why we should not make public some or all of the information requested. **The school can refuse an entire request under the following circumstances:**

- **It would cost too much or take too much staff time to deal with the request.**
- **The request is vexatious.**

- **The request repeats a previous request from the same person.**

In addition, the Freedom of Information Act contains a number of exemptions that allow the school to withhold information from a requester.

3. Fees and Charges

Where it would not exceed the appropriate limit to comply with a request, and **a public authority wishes to charge a fee, it can only include the charges it reasonably expects to incur in:**

- Informing the requestor whether it holds the requested information (even if the information will not be provided), and
- Communicating that information to the requestor.

This generally means that a public authority can only charge for expenses actually incurred, for example, **photocopying or postage. It must issue a fees notice advising the requestor of the amount it will charge.**

4. Environmental Information

The Environmental Information Regulations 2004 provide public access to environmental information held by public authorities. The Regulations are derived from European law. The Regulations give people a right of access to information about the activities of public authorities that relate to or affect the environment, unless there is good reason for them not to have the information. Any request for environmental information will be dealt with under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

5. Complaints

If the applicant wishes to make a complaint or request a review of the school's decision, they should write to the Chair of Governors at office@stgabriels.blackburn.sch.uk (Subject FAO Mr. N. Reeve) or **St. Gabriel's C.E. Primary School, Wilworth Crescent, Blackburn, BB1 8QN.**

If they are not content with the outcome of their complaint, they may apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the complaints procedure provided by the school. The ICO can be contacted at The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF or telephone 0303 123 1113.

6. Further Information and other policies

Further information on the schools obligations under the act can be found at:

- www.ico.org.uk.
- FOI Act available at <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/36/contents>
- EIR Regulations available at <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2004/3391/made>.
- Data Protection Policy
- CCTV in Schools Policy

Appendix 1 – Publication Scheme

The scheme commits an authority:

- To **proactively publish or otherwise make available as a matter of routine, information**, including **environmental information**, which is held by the authority and falls within the classifications below.
- To **specify the information which is held by the authority** and falls within the classifications below.
- To **proactively publish or otherwise make available as a matter of routine, information in line with the statements contained within this scheme.**
- To **produce and publish the methods by which the specific information is made routinely available so that it can be easily identified and accessed by members of the public.**
- To **review and update on a regular basis the information the authority makes available under this scheme.**
- To **produce a schedule of any fees** charged for access to information which is made proactively available.
- **To make this publication scheme available to the public.**
- To publish any dataset held by the authority that has been requested, and any updated versions it holds, unless the authority is satisfied that it is not appropriate to do so; to publish the dataset, where reasonably practicable, in an electronic form that is capable of re-use; and, if any information in the dataset is a relevant copyright work and the public authority is the only owner, to make the information available for re-use under the terms of the Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2015, if they apply, and otherwise under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act section 19. The term 'dataset' is defined in section 11(5) of the Freedom of Information Act. The term 'relevant copyright work' is defined in section 19(8) of that Act.

Classes of Information

Who we are and what we do.

Organisational information, locations and contacts, constitutional and legal governance.

| Description of Information | Location | Charge |
|--|---|--------|
| Instrument of Government / Articles of Association | Available on request | Free |
| School prospectus and curriculum | http://www.stgabrielssch.co.uk/ | N/A |
| Governing Body | http://www.stgabrielssch.co.uk/ | N/A |
| School session times and term dates | http://www.stgabrielssch.co.uk/ | N/A |
| Location and Contact Information | http://www.stgabrielssch.co.uk/ | N/A |

What we spend and how we spend it.

Financial information relating to projected and actual income and expenditure, tendering, procurement and contracts.

| Description of Information | Location | Charge |
|---|----------------------|--------|
| Annual budget plan and financial statements | Available on request | Free |
| Capital funding | Available on request | Free |
| Financial audit reports | Available on request | Free |
| Procurement and contracts | Available on request | Free |
| Pay policy | Available on request | Free |
| Staff allowances and expenses | Available on request | Free |
| Staff pay and grading structures | Available on request | Free |
| Governors' allowances | Available on request | Free |

What our priorities are and how we are doing.

Strategy and performance information, plans, assessments, inspections and reviews.

| Description of Information | Location | Charge |
|---|---|--------|
| Performance data supplied to the government | Available on request | Free |
| Latest Ofsted report | http://www.stgabrielssch.co.uk/ | N/A |
| Performance management information | Available on request | Free |
| The school's future plans | Available on request | Free |
| Safeguarding and child protection | http://www.stgabrielssch.co.uk/ | N/A |

How we make decisions.

Policy proposals and decisions. Decision making processes, internal criteria and procedures, consultations.

| Description of Information | Location | Charge |
|--|---|--------|
| Admissions policy / decisions | http://www.stgabrielssch.co.uk/ | N/A |
| Minutes of meetings of the governing body and its committees | Available on request | Free |

Our policies and procedures.

Current written protocols for delivering our functions and responsibilities.

| Description of Information | Location | Charge |
|--|----------------------|--------|
| School policies and other documents | Available on request | Free |
| Records management and personal data policies | Available on request | Free |
| Equality and diversity | Available on request | Free |
| Policies and procedures for the recruitment of staff | Available on request | Free |
| Charging regimes and policies | Available on request | Free |

Lists and Registers.

Information held in registers required by law and other lists and registers relating to the functions of the authority.

| Description of Information | Location | Charge |
|--|----------------------|--------|
| Curriculum circulars and statutory instruments | Available on request | Free |
| Disclosure logs | Available on request | Free |
| Asset register | Available on request | Free |
| Any information the school is currently legally required to hold in publicly available registers | Available on request | Free |

The Services we Offer.

Advice and guidance, booklets and leaflets, transactions and media releases. A description of the services offered.

| Description of Information | Location | Charge |
|-----------------------------|---|--------|
| Extra-curricular activities | http://www.stgabrielssch.co.uk/ | N/A |
| Out of school clubs | http://www.stgabrielssch.co.uk/ | N/A |

| | | |
|--|---|------|
| School publications | http://www.stgabrielssch.co.uk/ | N/A |
| Services for which the school is entitled to recover a fee, together with those fees | Available on request | Free |
| Leaflets, booklets and newsletters | http://www.stgabrielssch.co.uk/ | N/A |

The classes of information will not generally include:

- *Information the disclosure of which is prevented by law, or exempt under the Freedom of Information Act, or is otherwise properly considered to be protected from disclosure.*
- *Information in draft form.*
- *Information that is no longer readily available as it is contained in files that have been placed in archive storage, or is difficult to access for similar reasons.*

In exceptional circumstances some information may be available only by viewing in person. Where this manner is specified, contact details will be provided. An appointment to view the information will be arranged within a reasonable timescale.

Information will be provided in the language in which it is held or in such other language that is legally required. Where an authority is legally required to translate any information, it will do so.

Obligations under disability and discrimination legislation and any other legislation to provide information in other forms and formats will be adhered to when providing information in accordance with this scheme.

Charges & Fees

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.

Charges may be made for actual disbursements incurred such as:

- *photocopying*
- *postage and packaging*
- *the costs directly incurred as a result of viewing information*

Charges may also be made for information provided under this scheme where they are legally authorised, they are in all the circumstances, including the general principles of the right of access to information held by public authorities, justified and are in accordance with a published schedule or schedules of fees which is readily available to the public.

Charges may also be made for making datasets (or parts of datasets) that are relevant copyright works available for re-use. These charges will be in accordance with the terms of the Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2015, where they apply, or with regulations made under section 11B of the Freedom of Information Act, or with other statutory powers of the public authority.

If a charge is to be made, confirmation of the payment due will be given before the information is provided. Payment may be requested prior to provision of the information.

Written Requests

Information held by a public authority that is not published under this scheme can be requested in writing, when its provision will be considered in accordance with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act.