

Policy Title: Freedom of Information Policy	Effective Date:	Nov 2022
SMT Member Responsible: Julia Finch	Review Date:	Nov 2025
Governors' Committee Responsible: Staffing, Care & Guidance		

1. Introduction

Sheldon School is subject to the The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. From that date schools and employees have new responsibilities. The FOIA creates a general right for any person to be told whether a public authority (including schools) holds information that they specify and, if so, to be given a copy of it within 20 working days.

2. Scope

The Act is fully retrospective, so that any past records which the Academy holds are covered by the Act. A Retention Schedule has been produced by the Records Management Society of Great Britain to guide schools on how long they should keep school records. It is an offence to wilfully conceal, to damage or destroy information in order to avoid responding to an enquiry, so it is important that no records that are the subject of an enquiry are amended or destroyed. Requests must be made in writing, (including email), and should include the enquirers name and correspondence address, and state what information they require. They do not have to mention the Act, nor do they have to say why they want the information. There is a duty to respond to all requests, telling the enquirer whether or not the information is held, and supplying any information that is held, except where exemptions apply. There is no need to collect data in specific response to an FOI enquiry. There is a time limit of 20 days excluding school holidays for responding to the request. Further information is available from the Department for Education.

3. Aims

In response to requests for information we will:

- Confirm whether the information is held and can be provided
- Supply the information within 20 working days, or give reasons for refusal

There are circumstances when the school is not obliged to provide information. There are four reasons for not complying with a request for information:

- One or more of the exemptions (see the FOIA for details) apply. These exemptions are intended to protect sensitive or confidential information
- The information is not held
- The cost threshold is reached (See the FOIA Publication Scheme for charges which may apply)
- The request is considered vexatious

Third party personal data must always be removed before any information is provided.

4. Timescale

The school will comply with requests for information under FOI within 20 working days. If there is a charge, the 20 working days will commence when payment has been received.

5. Responsibility

Any FOI request must be sent to the headteacher. The headteacher may choose to delegate the responsibility for collecting, preparing, sending, recording and dealing with follow-up correspondence for each request. The School Business Manager will normally undertake this task and will seek advice when required if there might be valid reasons for not providing the information requested.

6. Awareness

The school will ensure that all staff are aware of their obligations under FOI.

7.Charges

The following charges will apply:

- A £25 charge per hour will be used to calculate the staff costs of answering requests.
- A charge will be made for photocopying or printing (at 10p a sheet), and first class postage.
- Any cost required to satisfy a FOI request that is estimated to be under £10 will not be charged.

Payment will be required before the work is started.