Drayton Junior School

Freedom of Information Policy

[Version 2019 v1.1]

If you are reading a printed version of this document you should check the Information Management pages on the school website to ensure that you have the most up-to-date version.

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

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

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If you would like a copy of any documentation please contact the organisation office: admin@draytonjunior.norfolk.sch.uk or 01603 867504

Document version

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1. POLICY OBJECTIVES

The School fully supports the objectives of the Act and will take all necessary steps to ensure that its duty under the Act is observed and that all information collected and used by it is managed in line with the Act. We will ensure:

- A general right of access to recorded information we hold, subject to certain conditions and exemptions;
- That we adopt and maintain a Publication Scheme, in accordance with the Information Commissioner's guidance, which relates to the publication of certain types of information;
- That we provide access to all information described in our Publication Scheme which we will endeavour to keep as up to date as possible;
- That we will respond to written requests for information that are not covered by our Publication Scheme. We will inform applicants whether or not we hold the requested information, and if held we will supply it unless there is a justifiable reason or any of the Act's exemptions apply;
- That we provide adequate and relevant advice and assistance to applicants to aid them in their application;
- In circumstances where information is covered by an exemption, we will give consideration as to whether the information should be released;
- In cases where information is exempted from disclosure, except where an absolute exemption applies, we will:
- Inform the applicant whether we hold the information requested, unless a neither confirm nor deny response is required, and;
- Communicate that information to him or her, unless the public interest in maintaining the exemption in question outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

2. ABOUT THIS POLICY

2.1. This policy sets out how the school will respond to a request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

2.2. This policy applies to the information held by the School or held by other parties on behalf of the School that is governed by the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the Act). To promote a culture of openness and accountability, and to comply with the Act, 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.

3. THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT

3.1 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.

3.2 The Act 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.

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

3.4 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 or Environmental Information Regulations, although it may help to do so;
- know whether the information is covered by the Freedom of Information Act or the Environmental Information Regulations; or
- say why they want the information.

4. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION PRINCIPLES

4.1 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:

- 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 the Act;

- 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 the Act 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 the Act if you would disclose it to anyone else who asked. In other words, you should consider any information you release under the Act as if it were being released to the world at large.

5. BREACH OF POLICY AND STANDARDS

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

- Alters, defaces, blocks, erases, destroys or conceals any record held by the School, 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.

5.2 We expect that similar disciplinary procedures will be applied by any of our contractors which deal with the School's information and data on the School's behalf.

6. COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

6.1 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.

6.2 When communicating any decision made in relation to a request under the Act'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.

7. PUBLICATION OF INFORMATION

7.1. The organisation maintains and publishes a publication scheme on its website outlining classes of information that will be made routinely available, including policies and procedures.

7.2. Classes of information specified in the publication scheme will be made available quickly and easily on request.

7.3. The organisation will not publish any personal information, including photos, on its website without the permission of the affected individual.

7.4. When uploading information to the organisation website, staff will be considerate of any metadata or deletions which could be accessed in documents and images on the site.

8. CHANGES TO THIS POLICY

8.1 We may change this policy at any time. Where appropriate, we will notify data subjects of those changes.

This Policy was approved by the board of Governors on [ADD DATE]. It will be reviewed annually.