

Walderslade Girls' School



Freedom of Information Policy

October 2012

(Reviewed and re-ratified November 2012)

Freedom of Information Policy

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 is an act of the United Kingdom (UK) Parliament defining the ways in which the public may obtain access to government-held information. The intent is to allow private individuals and corporations reasonable access to information while minimising the risk of harm to any entity.

This is Walderslade Girls School Publication Scheme on information available under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

The governing body is responsible for maintenance of this scheme.

1 Introduction: what a publication scheme is and why it has been developed

One of the aims of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (which is referred to as FOIA in the rest of this document) is that public authorities, including all maintained schools, should be clear and proactive about the information they will make public.

To do this we must produce a publication scheme, setting out:

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

The scheme covers information already published and information which is to be published in the future. All information in our publication scheme is either available for you on our website to download and print off or available in paper form.

Some information which we hold may not be made public, for example personal information. The exemptions are:

- Personal Information (DPA)
- Information provided in confidence
- Commercial interests
- Health & Safety issues
- Environmental Information (EIR)
- Information intended for future publication

This publication scheme conforms to the model scheme for schools approved by the Information Commissioner.

A publication Scheme **must** be created and maintained

- Any person can make a request to the school for access to information held by the school
- The school has a duty to provide advice and assistance
- Enquirers do not have to say why they want the information

- The request does not have to mention the Act specifically
- The request **must** be in writing, which includes fax or email
- The request **must** include a name and address (email address will do if the information is requested to be sent electronically)
- The request **must** clearly set out the information requested
- Requests **must** be responded to within 20 working days
- The Act covers all information held regardless of the format in which it is held
- The school has a duty to provide the information requested unless it is covered by one of the exemptions provided for in the Act.

Information held on the school's website is exempt under the FOI Act. This means that if the information requested is already available on the website you can tell the requester which page holds the information. This saves you valuable time and removes the expense of having to post the information.

Any written expression of dissatisfaction should still be handled through the schools existing complaints procedures.

It is a criminal offence to wilfully conceal, alter, damage or destroy information in order to avoid answering an enquiry. Any individual and not the school may be at risk of criminal proceedings if such an offence occurs.

3 Categories of information published

The publication scheme guides you to information which we currently publish (or have recently published) or which we will publish in the future. This is split into categories of information known as 'classes'. These are contained in section 6 of this scheme.

The classes of information that we undertake to make available are organised into four broad topic areas:

School Prospectus — information published in the school prospectus.

Governors' Documents — information published in governing body documents.

Pupils & Curriculum — information about policies that relate to pupils and the school curriculum.

School Policies and other information related to the school - information about policies that relate to the school in general.

How to request information All requests must be logged with the FOI contact on the day the request has been made. Please ensure that a copy of the request is passed to the FOI contact as a matter of urgency so it can be logged and a written acknowledgement sent out.

FOI requests cannot be answered over the telephone. The request must be in writing e.g. letter or email. If someone tries to get information from you over the phone you must ask them to put their request in writing.

If the request goes over the 20 working day deadline, or we fail to respond adequately or not at all, the requester can submit a complaint to the Information Commissioner. The Information Commissioner promotes compliance, enforces the law and informs the public. The school could be subject to a full audit of its information processes and any enforcement decisions taken are publicly announced.

The school has a Freedom of Information Officer. All enquires and request should be made in writing to this person.

Further details and Privacy Notices for staff/pupils can be found on the school website.

If you require a paper version of any of the documents within the scheme, please contact the school by telephone, email, fax or letter. Contact details are set out below.

Email: office@waldersladegirls.org.uk

Tel: 01634 861596

Fax: 01634 666506

Contact Address: Bradfields Avenue, Chatham, Kent ME5 0LE

To help us process your request quickly, please clearly mark any correspondence "PUBLICATION SCHEME REQUEST" (in CAPITALS please)

If the information you're looking for isn't available via the scheme, you can still contact the school to ask if we have it.

4 Paying for information

Single copies of information covered by this publication are provided free unless stated otherwise in section 6. If your request means that we have to do a lot of photocopying or printing, or pay a large postage charge, or is for a priced item such as some printed publications or videos we will let you know the cost before fulfilling your request. Where there is a charge this will be indicated by a £ sign in the description box.

5 Classes of Information Currently Published

School Prospectus — this section sets out information published in the school prospectus.

Class	Description
School Prospectus	<p>The statutory contents of the school prospectus are as follows, (other items may be included in the prospectus at the school's discretion):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the name, address and telephone number of the school, and the type of school • the names of the head teacher and chair of governors • information on the school policy on admissions • a statement of the school's ethos and values • details of any affiliations with a particular religion or religious denomination, the religious education provided, parents' right to withdraw their child from religious education and collective worship and the alternative provision for those pupils • information about the school's policy on providing for pupils with special educational needs • number of pupils on roll and rates of pupils' authorised and unauthorised absences • National Curriculum assessment results for appropriate Key Stages, with national summary figures • GCSE/GNVQ results in the school, locally and nationally • a summary of GCE A/AS level results in the school and nationally • the number of pupils studying for and percentage achieving other vocational qualifications • the destinations of school leavers' • the arrangements for visits to the school by prospective parents • the number of places for pupils of normal age of entry in the preceding school year and the number of written applications / preferences expressed for those places

Pupils & Curriculum Policies - This section gives access to information about policies that relate to pupils and the school curriculum.

Class	Description
Home School agreement	Statement of the school's aims and values, the school's responsibilities, the parental responsibilities and the school's expectations of its pupils for example homework arrangements
Curriculum Policy	Statement on following the policy for the secular curriculum subjects and religious education and schemes of work and syllabuses currently used by the school
Sex Education Policy	Statement of policy with regard to sex and relationship education
Special Education Needs Policy	Information about the school's policy on providing for pupils with special educational needs
Accessibility Plans	Plan for increasing participation of disabled pupils in the school's curriculum, improving the accessibility of the physical environment and improving delivery of information to disabled pupils.
Race Equality Policy	Statement of policy for promoting race equality
Collective Worship	Statement of arrangements for the required daily act of collective worship
Careers Education Policy	Statement of the programmes of careers education provided for Key 4.
Child Protection Policy	Statement of policy for safeguarding and promoting welfare of pupils at the school.
Pupil Discipline	Statement of general principles on behaviour and discipline and of measures taken by the head teacher to prevent bullying.

School Policies and other information related to the school - This section gives access to information about policies that relate to the school in general.

Class	Description
Published reports of Ofsted referring expressly to the school	Published report of the last inspection of the school and the summary of the report and where appropriate inspection reports of religious education in those schools designated as having a religious character
Post-Ofsted inspection action plan	A plan setting out the actions required following the last Ofsted inspection and where appropriate an action plan following inspection of religious education where the school is designated as having a religious character
Charging and Remissions Policies	A statement of the school's policy with respect to charges and remissions for any optional extra or board and lodging for which charges are permitted, for example school publications, music tuition, trips
School session times and term dates	Details of school session and dates of school terms and holidays
Health and Safety Policy and risk assessment	Statement of general policy with respect to health and safety at work of employees (and others) and the organisation and arrangements for carrying out the policy
Complaints procedure	Statement of procedures for dealing with complaints
Performance Management of Staff	Statement of procedures adopted by the governing body relating to the performance management of staff and the annual report of the head teacher on the effectiveness of appraisal procedures
Staff Conduct, Discipline and Grievance	Statement of procedure for regulating conduct and discipline of school staff and procedures by which staff may seek redress for grievance
Curriculum circulars and statutory instruments	Any statutory instruments, departmental circulars and administrative memoranda sent by the Department of Education and Skills to the head teacher or governing body relating to the curriculum
Annex A - Other documents	Annex A provides a list of other documents that are held by the school and are available on request

6 Feedback and Complaints

We welcome any comments or suggestions you may have about the scheme. If you want to make any comments about this publication scheme or if you require further assistance or wish to make a complaint then initially this should be addressed to The Headteacher, Walderslade Girls School, Bradfields Avenue, Chatham Kent ME5 0LE.

If you are not satisfied with the assistance that you get or if we have not been able to resolve your complaint please contact the Chair of Governors, c/o Walderslade Girls School, Bradfields Avenue, Chatham Kent ME5 0LE.

If you feel that a formal complaint needs to be made then this should be addressed to the Information Commissioner's Office. This is the organisation that ensures compliance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and that deals with formal complaints. They can be contacted at Information Commissioner, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF or Enquiry/Information Line on 01625 545 700, E Mail: publicationseic-foi.demon.co.uk, Website : www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk

Freedom of Information Publication Scheme

Annex A — Further documents held by the school

Attendance Policy

Drugs Education Policy

Gifted and Talented Policy

ICT Policy

Literacy Policy

Teaching and Learning Policy

Checklist For Action On Receipt Of A Request For Information

- Decide whether the request is a request under DPA, EIR or FOI
- Decide whether the school holds the information or whether the request should be transferred to another body if the information is held by them
- Provide the information if it has already been made public
- Inform the enquirer if the information is not held
- Consider whether a third party's interests might be affected by disclosure and if so consult them
- Consider whether any exemptions apply and whether they are absolute or qualified
- Carry out a public interest test to decide if applying the qualified exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information
- Decide whether the estimated cost of complying with the request will exceed the appropriate limit (still to be agreed but expected to be around £500)
- If a request is made for a document that contains exempt personal information ensure that the personal information is removed by applying the redaction procedure
- Consider whether the request is vexatious or repeated

Remember

- Schools are under a duty to provide advice and assistance to anyone requesting information.
- The enquirer is entitled to be told whether the school holds the information (the duty to confirm or deny) except where certain exemptions apply.
- A well managed records and management information system is essential to help schools to meet requests.
- Requests should be dealt with within 20 days excluding school holidays.
- Wilfully concealing, damaging or destroying information in order to avoid answering an enquiry is an offence. A valid FOI request should be in writing, state the enquirer's name and correspondence address and describe the information requested.
- Expressions of dissatisfaction should be handled through the school's existing complaints procedure.