

Freedom of Information Policy

St Germans Primary School

Introduction

St Germans Primary School recognises the need to hold information in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and make it available in accordance with provisions of the Act, subject to any legal exemptions. The Governing Body has overall responsibility for ensuring records are maintained in accordance with the Act, Education Regulations and all other statutory provisions.

The Head teacher and Governors of the school are committed to openness and transparency and intend to comply fully with the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

This Policy applies to all information held by St Germans Primary School regardless of whether it is held electronically or physically.

Publication Scheme

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FIOA) came into force on 1st January 2005. Under the Act any citizen has the right to request information from the School. They are entitled to know whether the information is held and if it is held be given a copy of the information, subject to certain exemptions.

The School provides a Publication Scheme which provides a guide to the current information routinely published or intended to be published. The Scheme aims to help you understand what information is available and how to access it. If you require any information that is not listed within the Publication Scheme then a request can be made in writing under the terms of the Act.

Making a Request

Any requests for information should be made in writing to the school via post, email or dropped off at the school office. The request will then be acknowledged in writing (post or e-mail) and if necessary clarification will be sought on what is being asked for. A response will be made under the requirements of the Act within 20 working days (working days refers to term time only as contained in Statutory Instrument 3364).

A response will include confirmation of whether the information is held and if so a copy of the information, if you are entitled to it, will be provided. If not then the relevant exemption will be provided.

If you have a request relating to the environment, such as air, water, land, or health and safety then these fall under the requirements of the Environmental Information Regulations (EIR). Requests under EIR do not have to be in writing but can be made verbally.

Charges

Most information requested will be provided free of charge, although we may charge a fee for the photocopying/printing/faxing/postage of larger documents and where it is not listed in our Publications Scheme as being available either free of charge.

If we intend to charge for the provision of information, we will tell you in advance what the charge will be (through a fees notice) and information will be provided to you when payment is received (cash or cheque). The time allowed for us to provide the information (20 working days) does not include the period between the issuing of the fees notice and the receipt of the payment.

The general charge for photocopying, printing or faxing information as an attachment is 10p per sheet. Postage charges will be at the appropriate rate. For more substantial items, the fee charged depends on whether we estimate that it would cost more or less than £450.00 to provide the information. In the vast majority of cases the cost will be under £450.00 and we will then charge only for photocopying, printing, faxing and postage. We may also charge for any work required to put the information into specific format, which could involve, for example:

- summarising the information;
- putting the information onto CD, video or audio cassette;
- translating the information into a different language.

We will not normally charge for providing information in an alternative format where this is requested on grounds of disability.

Exempt Information

There may be times when we are unable to provide the information you request for any of the following reasons:

- we do not hold the information;
- we are applying an exemption to the disclosure, such as the information requested related to personal information and therefore falls under the remit of the Data Protection Act 1998, or the information is commercially sensitive;
- the request is considered to be vexatious or repeated;
- it would cost the School more than £450.00 to provide the information (this figure is set by Government and is based on the work exceeding 18.5 man hours to gather the information).

If we are unable to provide the information requested, we will do all we can to advise you as to how you might obtain the information elsewhere or in a different way to bring the costs within the cost limit.

The School will seek advice from the Local Authority's Information Governance Department if necessary to clarify any points or to help resolve any disputes over information requests.

Complaints and Appeals

If you feel you have not been given the information requested, you should in the first instance write to the Chair of Governors. If you are not happy with their response you may wish to contact the Information Commissioner at:

The Information Commissioners Office

Wycliffe House

Water Lane

Wilmslow

Cheshire

SK9 5AF Telephone 01625 545700 – Helpline is open from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

Fax 01625 524510

Email mail@ico.gsi.gov.uk