

## LITTLE HEATH SCHOOL

### FREEDOM OF INFORMATION POLICY (PUBLICATION SCHEME)

#### **Purpose and Background**

The purpose of the policy is to ensure that the school acts within the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 S19 (in force from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2005).

#### **Objectives**

To publish or otherwise make available, information which is held by the school and falls within the classifications of the Act.

To 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 regularly the information the school makes available under this scheme.

To provide a schedule of fees charged for access to information where applicable.

#### **Management of the Scheme**

School: This policy is implemented and managed by the Headteacher via the School Business Manager (following West Berkshire Council guidelines).

Governing Body: The Governing Body, via the Finance and Resources Committee, is responsible for maintenance of this scheme. The scheme should be reviewed every two years.

Approval: Approved by the Full Governing Body on 1 October 2020

Next Review date: September 2022

#### **Associated Policies and Statutory Documents**

Data Protection Policy

Complaints Policy

Financial Management Policy

ICT Acceptable Use Policy

Records Management and Retention Policy

#### **Practice and Procedures**

Where possible, general school information will be provided on the school website. Where it is impracticable to make information available on the website, or when an individual does not wish to access the information by the website, information can be obtained by other means.

#### **Appendices:**

Appendix i The Freedom of Information Act

Appendix ii Guidance from the LA

Appendix iii Charges to be made for information published under the scheme

Appendix iv Publication Scheme

## Appendix i

### The Freedom of Information Act (access to school information)

#### Requests for information:

- The Freedom of Information Act came in to force on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2005. Under this Act, all schools which receive a written or emailed request for information which they hold or publish, are required to respond within 20 working days.
- The schools Publication Scheme is available on the school website: [www.littleheath.org.uk](http://www.littleheath.org.uk)
- The school will provide information on where to access the information required eg the website link, or details of a charge if the publication/ information is charged, or send any free information. If the item is charged the school does not need to provide it until the payment is received.
- A refusal of any information requested will state the relevant exemption which has been applied or that the school does not hold the information, and will explain what public interest test has been made if this applies.
- If the information is published by another organisation (for example, Ofsted reports, DfE leaflets) the school will direct the enquirer to the organisation which supplied the information or publication unless it is legal and possible to provide the information direct (for example, a copy of the summary of an Ofsted report, spare copies of a DfE leaflet).
- In most cases it will not be legal to photocopy a publication in its entirety and supply this to an enquirer unless the school owns the copyright – this is particularly important where the original publication was a charged item. The enquirer will be required to obtain the publication from the publishing organisation or through a commercial source.
- The school will keep the original request and note against this who dealt with the request and when the information was provided.
- Any complaint about the provision of information will be handled by the Headteacher or another senior member of staff. All complaints should be in writing and documented.
- All enquirers should be advised that they may complain to the information Commissioner if they are unhappy with the way their request has been handled.

## Appendix ii

### Guidance from the local authority (LA)

#### Freedom of Information

##### Publication Schemes

- Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, all schools (primary, secondary and nursery) should have a 'publication scheme' – essentially a formal list of the types of non-personal information which the school produces or holds, and which is readily accessible to staff, pupils and parents or other enquirers.
- The publication scheme should be available as a hard copy and also posted on the website (if the school has one). The model scheme supplied by the Information Commissioner's Office should have been adopted from August 2013.
- Schools can link this document via their website to a list of publications with details of contacts and costs, and any appropriate downloads.
- There should be a named person with overall responsibility for published information within each school. In most cases this would be the Head Teacher. Their details should be available on the website with the Publication Scheme.

##### Requests for information

- Requests should be acknowledged within three school days and answered in 20 working days or 20 school days (this applies where requests come in shortly before school holidays).
- Any refusal of information must include details of the exemption used and a public interest test if this applies. Speak to the LA's Information Access Compliance Officer email [foi@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:foi@westberks.gov.uk) for guidance on this.
- All requesters should be advised they can request a review of the handling of their request if they are dissatisfied with the response – this should be carried out by another staff member or a Governor. The LA's Information Management Officer can provide guidance on the statutory Fol review process if required.
- After a review, requesters may contact the Information Commissioner if they remain dissatisfied and should be directed to his office. Again, ask for advice on this process from the LA's Information Management Officer.

#### Legislation:

##### **Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2005 (as amended):**

Retention of Pupil records, and rights to access these.

**Freedom of Information Act 2000:** The Freedom of Information Act covers the rights of requesters to request and receive information held in a recordable format by the public authority (for schools this is the school, not the Governing Body). There are a number of exemptions under which a refusal can be made, but all public authorities must offer requesters the opportunity to have a review of any refusal, and must direct them to the Information Commissioner if they remain dissatisfied.

#### **Bibliography**

##### **Information Commissioner**

The Information Commissioner is the Regulator for Freedom of Information and provides tailored guidance for schools on his website.

##### **Department for Education**

The Department for Education provides guidance on statutory responsibilities and non-statutory guidance.

##### **Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)**

The DBS (previously the Criminal Records Bureau), provides advice on checks for employees and those who work with children.

## **Appendix iii**

### **Charges to be made for information published under the 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 school for routinely published material will be justified and transparent and kept to a minimum.

Material which is published and accessed on a website will be provided free of charge.

Charges may be made for information subject to a charging regime suggested by the LA, and agreed by the Governing Body.

Charges may be made for actual disbursements incurred such as:

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

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.



## LITTLE HEATH SCHOOL FREEDOM OF INFORMATION PUBLICATION SCHEME

This Publication Scheme commits Little Heath School to making information available to the public as part of its normal business activities. The information covered is included in the classes of information mentioned below. The school will make information available unless:

- it does not hold the information;
- the information is exempt under one of the Freedom of Information Act exemptions or Environmental Information Regulations 2004 exceptions, or its release is prohibited under another statute;
- the information is readily and publicly available from an external website (such information may have been provided either by the school or on its behalf). The school must provide a direct link to that information;
- the information is archived, out of date or otherwise inaccessible; or
- it would be impractical or resource-intensive to prepare material for routine release.

If the information is only held by another public authority, the school will provide details of where to obtain it.

### CLASSES OF INFORMATION

#### 1) Who we are and what we do

Current organisational information, structures, locations and contacts.

- Instrument of Government
- School prospectus
- Outline of the school curriculum
- Governor's names and the basis on which they have been appointed, along with details of how to contact them via the school
- School session times and term dates
- Location and contact information, including the names of key personnel

#### 2) What we spend and how we spend it

Financial information (for the current and previous two financial years) about projected and actual income and expenditure, procurement, contracts and financial audit.

- Annual budget plan and financial statements, including: sources of income and funding; the school's annual income and expenditure returns; details of items of expenditure over £5000
- Capital funding including information on major plans for capital expenditure
- Financial audit reports
- Procurement and contracts
- Pay policy
- Staff allowances and expenses
- Staff pay and grading structures, including the names and positions of all staff of the school and how they may be contacted via the school
- Governors' allowances

### **3) What our priorities are and how we are doing**

Strategies and plans, performance indicators, audits, inspections and reviews.

- Performance data supplied to the government
- Latest Ofsted report
- Performance management information
- The school's future plans i.e. any major proposals for the future of the school involving, for example, consultation on a change in school status
- Safeguarding and child protection

### **4) How we make decisions**

Decision-making processes and records of decisions for the current and previous three years.

- Admissions policy/decisions
- Minutes of meetings of the governing body and its committees

### **5) Our policies and procedures**

Current written protocols, policies and procedures for delivering our services and responsibilities.

- School policies and other documents
- Records management and personal data policies
- Equality and diversity
- Policies and procedures for the recruitment of staff
- Charging regimes and policies

### **6) Lists and registers**

This relates only to information in currently maintained lists and registers.

- Curriculum circulars and statutory instruments
- Disclosure logs
- Asset register
- Any information the school is currently legally required to hold in publicly available registers

### **7) The services we offer**

Information about the services the school provides including leaflets, guidance and newsletters.

- Extra-curricular activities
- School publications
- Services for which the school is entitled to recover a fee
- Leaflets, booklets and newsletters

**The Headteacher, David Ramsden, has overall responsibility at Little Heath for published information. This Publication Scheme was approved by the Full Governing Body on 1 October 2020 and will be reviewed at least every two years.**