

Springwood Infant and Junior School Federation

TOGETHER WE LEARN, TOGETHER WE GROW



Freedom of Information Policy

Statutory Policy

Approved By: **Governing Body**

Effective Date: **November 2024**

Review By: **November 2026**

Stay Safe,
Treat Others How You Wish to be Treated,
Try Your Best and be Proud

1. Introduction

The Freedom of Information Act is intended to promote a culture of openness and accountability amongst public authorities by providing people with the rights of access to information held by them. It is expected that these rights will enable better public understanding of how public authorities carry out their duties, why they make the decisions they do and how they spend public money.

One of the aims of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 is that public authorities, ***including all maintained schools***, should be clear and proactive about the information they will make public.

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
- members of the public are entitled to request information from public authorities

It is the policy of Springwood Federation that the aims of the Act will be implemented and fulfilled in the best possible way.

In order to fulfil that policy, and to fall in line with many other schools and public bodies, it has been decided by the School Management jointly with the Board of Governors that Springwood Federation will 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*
- *Whether the information is available free of charge or on payment*

The scheme will cover information already published and information which is to be published in the future. All information in the publication scheme will be available in paper form. The Publication scheme is set out in Section 9 of this policy.

There will, however, be some information we hold that may not be public, for example, personal information.

The publication scheme will conform to the model scheme for schools and approved by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

2. Access to Information

Anyone has a right to request information from a public authority. You have two separate duties when responding to these requests:

- to tell the applicant whether you hold any information falling within the scope of their request; and
- to provide that information

For a request to be valid under the Freedom of Information Act it must be in writing.

You may access official information by consulting Springwood Federation's Publication Scheme. However, if the information sought is not included in the Publication scheme, a separate request can be made.

3. Your rights under Freedom of Information

In addition to accessing standard information via the publication scheme, you may make a request for specific information you think the school retains. We must deal with such requests in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.

The Act will allow access to information held by the school, regardless of when that information was created or how long it has been held.

4. Making a Request

In order to help you receive the information requested, the school will need to record the request, contact you and locate the information.

The request:

1. must be made in writing (by email if preferred)
2. should state name and contact address
3. must describe the information required

5. Who do I contact?

Springwood Federation has appointed Mrs K Simmons (Senior Admin Officer) as the dedicated 'Freedom of Information' contact and you are encouraged to direct your requests to her at the school.

6. Springwood Federation's responsibility

The school is required to confirm or deny the existence of the information requested and, if it does exist, provide it to you within **twenty working days** of receiving your request, unless:

- an exemption applies or
- a fee is required for supplying the information.

Public bodies are also required to provide advice and assistance to people who have made or who are thinking of making a request. This to help applicants understand their rights under the Act and identify the information they want.

7. Exemptions from access

Whilst the Freedom of Information Act creates a right to request specific information held by public bodies, it also creates a number of exemptions from that right. These have the effect of permitting public authorities to withhold some or all of the information requested, where that information fits the terms of one or more of the exemptions.

Further advice on the application of exemptions and other issues concerned with the Act has been provided by the Information Commissioner. The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) recommendations are attached to support this document.

8. Complaints

If you are dissatisfied with the school's handling of the request for information, a complaint may be made using the Springwood Federation Freedom of Information Complaints Procedure.

9. Publication Scheme

The Publication Scheme will set out:

- Who we are and what we do
- Instrument of Government/Articles of Association
- School prospectus and curriculum
- Governing body
- School session times and term dates
- Location and contact information
- What we spend and how we spend it
- Annual budget plan and financial statements
- Capital funding
- Financial audit reports
- Procurement and contracts
- Pay Policy
- Staff allowances and expenses
- Staff pay and grading structures
- Governors' allowances
- What our priorities are and how we are doing
- Performance data supplied to the government
- Latest Ofsted report
- Performance management information
- The school's future plans

- Safeguarding and child protection
- How we make decisions
- Admissions policy / decisions
- Minutes of meetings of the governing body and its committees
- Our policies and procedures
- 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
- Lists and registers
- Curriculum circulars and statutory instruments
- Disclosure logs
- Asset register