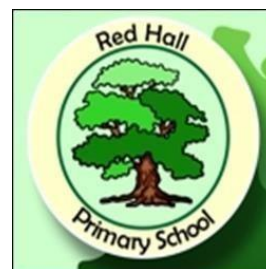


Red Hall Primary School



Freedom of Information Policy



Document History	
Originally Written:	March 2021
By:	SCBM
Updated:	March 2021 - MD March 2023 -MD September 2026 - AJ
Additional guidance added:	Updated the policy to reflect current school policy standards.
Approved by Governing Body:	March 2021
	March 2024
	September 2026
Next Review Date:	September 2029 or sooner if legislation changes

Introduction

Red Hall Primary School is committed to openness, transparency and accountability in all aspects of its work.

As a publicly funded school, the school is a public authority under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and is required to make information available to the public where appropriate. The school also has responsibilities under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR).

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that requests for information are managed consistently, lawfully and within statutory timescales.

The Freedom of Information Act provides a general right of access to recorded information held by the school, subject to certain exemptions. Requests for an individual's own personal data are not covered by FOIA and will be dealt with under the school's Data Protection and Subject Access Request procedures.

Aim

This policy aims to ensure that:

- The school complies with its duties under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Environmental Information Regulations 2004.
- Requests for information are handled fairly, consistently and within statutory deadlines.
- Members of the public understand how to request information held by the school.
- Information is proactively published whenever possible through the school's Publication Scheme.
- Staff understand their responsibilities relating to information requests.

- Personal data and confidential information are protected appropriately.
- The school promotes openness while safeguarding information that is exempt from disclosure.

Scope

This policy applies to all recorded information held by the school, regardless of format, including:

- Paper records and documents
- Electronic records
- Emails and correspondence
- Reports and meeting minutes
- Photographs and images
- Audio and video recordings
- Information held on behalf of the school by a third party

The policy applies to all employees, governors, volunteers, contractors and anyone acting on behalf of the school.

Roles and Responsibilities

Governing Body

The Governing Body has overall responsibility for ensuring that the school complies with its statutory obligations under Freedom of Information legislation.

Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for overseeing day-to-day compliance with this policy and ensuring appropriate procedures are in place.

School Business Manager

The School Business Manager acts as the school's designated Freedom of Information lead and is responsible for:

- Coordinating responses to requests.
- Maintaining records of requests and responses.
- Providing advice and guidance to staff.
- Liaising with external agencies where required.

Staff

All staff are responsible for:

- Recognising Freedom of Information requests.
- Passing requests promptly to the School Business Manager.
- Assisting in locating information when requested.
- Ensuring records are maintained appropriately.

Publication Scheme

The school adopts and maintains the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) Model Publication Scheme for Schools.

The Publication Scheme sets out information that is routinely made available to the public and can be accessed through:

- The school website
- School policies
- Statutory publications
- Information available on request

The school will review published information regularly to ensure it remains accurate and up to date.

Making a Freedom of Information Request

Requests for information should be made in writing and include:

- The applicant's name.
- Contact details.
- A clear description of the information requested.

Requests should be directed to:

School Business Manager

Red Hall Primary School

01325 254770

scbm@redhall.darlington.sch.uk

Where a request is unclear, the school will provide reasonable advice and assistance to help the applicant refine their request

Responding to Requests

The school will:

- Acknowledge requests promptly.
- Respond within statutory timescales.
- Provide information where disclosure is required.
- Explain any applicable exemptions where information cannot be released.
- Ensure personal data is not disclosed unlawfully.
- Maintain records of all requests received and responses issued.

The school will normally respond within:

- **20 school days**, or
- **60 working days**, whichever is the shorter period.

Where additional time is permitted by legislation, the applicant will be informed

Exemptions

Certain information may be exempt from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act or Environmental Information Regulations.

Examples may include:

- Personal data protected under data protection legislation.
- Information intended for future publication.
- Commercially sensitive information.
- Information provided in confidence.
- Information relating to safeguarding, health and safety or security where disclosure would create a risk.

Each request will be considered individually, and where exemptions apply, the school will explain the reasons for withholding information.

Third-Party Information

Information supplied to the school by external organisations or individuals may be subject to a Freedom of Information request.

The school may consult the third party concerned before making a disclosure decision. However, responsibility for the final decision rests with the school.

Complaints and Internal Reviews

Applicants who are dissatisfied with the handling of their request may ask for an internal review.

Requests for review should be submitted in writing within 40 working days of receiving the school's response.

The review will be undertaken by a senior member of staff or governor not involved in the original decision wherever possible.

The school will normally respond within 20 school days.

Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)

If an applicant remains dissatisfied following an internal review, they have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

Information Commissioner's Office

Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Telephone: 0303 123 1113

Website: www.ico.org.uk

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years or sooner if:

- There are significant changes in legislation.
- Guidance from the Information Commissioner's Office changes.
- Operational changes within the school require amendments.

The Governing Body will approve all substantive revisions.