Tidbury Green School Dickens
Heath Road
Tidbury Green
Solihull
B90 1QW

Policy Name

Freedom of Information Policy

Date of Review

Summer Term 2025

Next Review Date

Summer Term 2028

Agreed by Governors

Summer Term 2026

Date

May 2026

Policy:	Freedom of Information
People Authorised to make changes to this policy:	• Mrs R Fitter • Mrs E Smith
Committee responsible for approving policy:	Full Governing Body

Questions for the reviewer of this policy:	
Does this policy comply with statutory requirements and is relevant legislation and guidance referenced in the policy?	Yes
Does the policy reflect current evidence-based good practice?	Yes
Is the policy consistent with the vision and ethos of the school?	Yes
Does the policy reflect current practice in the school?	Yes

After policy review:	
Changes made:	Roles and responsibilities updated.
Expected impact of updated policy:	In line with Data Protection Policy.
Updated policy sent to governors:	Summer Term 2026
Updated policy sent to staff:	Summer Term 2026
Updated policy put on website:	Summer Term 2026

Freedom of Information Policy

(to be read alongside the Publication Scheme and Data Protection Policy)

1. Purpose

1.1. Tidbury Green School is committed to openness and transparency in its dealings with all individuals and organisations. The school fully complies with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and promotes a culture of accountability and public trust.

1.2. This policy sets out how the school will meet its obligations under the Act and ensure that requests for information are handled efficiently, fairly and lawfully.

2. Scope

2.1. This policy applies to:

- All staff, governors and volunteers
- All recorded information held by the school, regardless of format (paper or electronic)
- Information created, received or maintained during school business

2.2 This policy forms part of the school's wider information governance framework, alongside data protection, information security and records management policies.

3. About Freedom of Information Act

3.1 The Freedom of Information Act 2000 provides a general right of access to recorded information held by public authorities. It gives the public the opportunity to find out what the school does and how we do it, enables the public to question our decisions more closely and ensures that the services we provide are efficiently and properly delivered.

3.2 Under the Act, the school is required to:

- Make Information which is routinely published by the school available in accordance with the school's Publication Scheme
- Respond to requests for information within 20 working days, unless an exemption or limit applies.
- Apply exemptions appropriately and in accordance with the legislation
- Maintain a system for internal review and complaints
- Ensure a structured approach is in place for effective records management practices

3.3 The Act applies to all recorded information created and held by the school and its staff, regardless of format, storage medium and age.

3.4 The Act does not provide access to personal data about an individual. Requests for personal data must be handled under the Data Protection Act 2018 as a Subject Access Request.

4. Publication Scheme

4.1 The school has adopted the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) Model Publication Scheme for Schools.

4.2 This scheme:

- Identifies information routinely made available
- Includes policies, procedures, financial and governance information
- Is published on the school website or available on request

4.3 The school will:

- Keep the scheme under regular review
- Ensure information is accurate and up to date
- Consider publishing information disclosed through FOI requests where appropriate

5. Requests for Information

5.1. Making a Request

- Requests for information can be made in writing (including email). The school will also provide reasonable assistance to individuals who require help making a request.
  Requests do not need to mention the Freedom of Information Act to be valid.

5.2 Response Times

- The school will respond promptly and within 20 working days of receiving a valid request.
  Where clarification is required, the school may contact the applicant. The response timeframe will be paused until clarification is received.

5.3 Format of Information

- Information will be provided in the format requested, where reasonably practicable.

5.4 Environmental Information

- Requests for environmental information will be handled in accordance with the Environmental Information Regulations 2004, which may differ slightly from FOIA requirements.

5.5 Accessibility

- Information will be provided in alternative formats where required, including to meet accessibility needs.

5.6 Logging Requests

- The school will maintain a record of all Freedom of Information requests, including response times and outcomes, to support monitoring and compliance.

6. Refusals and Exemptions

6.1 The school may refuse to disclose information where permitted under the Act, including where:

- The information is not held
- An exemption applies to the disclosure
- The request exceeds the cost limit (see Section 7)
- The request is considered a vexatious or a repeated request.

6.2 There are 23 exemptions whereby information can be withheld, in particular those concerning:

- The school's duties under the Data Protection Act 2018 to keep confidential personal and sensitive information about individuals
- Other legal and contractual obligations
- Material detrimental to the safe and efficient operation of the school
- Information which is commercially sensitive.

6.3 Some exemptions are qualified exemptions and require the school to apply a public Interest test. This involves considering whether the public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in disclosure.
Where information is withheld, the school will explain the reason and provide details of any appeal process.

7. Fees and Charges

7.1 Most requests will be free of charge.
The school may charge for:

- Photocopying and printing
- Postage
- Providing information in a specific format

If a fee is applicable, the school will inform the applicant before proceeding.

7.2 The school may refuse a request where the cost of compliance exceeds the statutory limit of £450 (18 hours of staff time).

8. Datasets

8.1 Where appropriate, the school will make datasets available in accordance with FOIA requirements. This may include providing data in a reusable electronic format, where reasonably practicable.

9. Responsibilities

9.1 The Governing Body has overall responsibility for ensuring compliance with the Act and is accountable to the Information Commissioner's Office.

9.2 The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Day-to-day implementation of this policy
- Ensuring staff awareness and compliance
- Maintaining the Publication Scheme
- Monitoring FOI activity the day-to-day management of compliance with the Act. This includes the development of procedures and guidance, their promotion to staff through training and outreach, and the maintenance and periodic review of the Publication Scheme.

9.3 All School staff are responsible for:

- Recognising and appropriately handling FOI requests
- Assisting with responses when required
- Maintaining good records management practices

Staff must not alter, conceal or destroy information that is subject to a request.

10. Training and Awareness

10.1 The school will ensure that staff receive appropriate guidance and training to understand their responsibilities under the Freedom of Information Act.

11. Monitoring and Review

11.1 The school will:

- Monitor FOI requests and response times
- Review compliance and identify improvements where necessary
- Regularly review this policy to ensure it reflects current legislation and best practice

12. Complaints and Internal Review

12.1. If an applicant is dissatisfied with the response, they may request an internal review
Internal reviews will:

- Be conducted by an appropriate senior member of staff or governor not involved in the original response
- Normally be completed within 20 working days

12.2. If the applicant remains dissatisfied, they may refer the matter to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

13. Contacts

13.1. For requests or enquiries relating to this policy, please contact:
Headteacher
Tidbury Green School
Dickens Heath Road
Solihull
B90 1QW

14. Approval and Review

14.1. This policy was approved by the Full Governing Body in Summer Term 2026.
It will be reviewed every three years or sooner if required due to changes in legislation or guidance.