

South Farnham Educational Trust

Freedom of Information Policy

The Freedom of Information Act (2000) gives the general right of access to all types of recorded information held by public authorities. All Academies are obliged under the Freedom of Information Act to have in place a Publication Scheme similar to that relating to all maintained schools. This legislation gives the public the opportunity to find out what the School does and how we do it, and makes us more accountable. This policy covers:

- Scope
- Responsibilities
- Relationships

1. Scope of the policy

1.1 The Freedom of Information Act applies to all recorded information held by the Trust, the schools within the Trust and the SSF SCITT and its staff, regardless of format, storage medium and age.

1.2 The Act places the following requirements on the Trust:

- Information which is routinely published by the Trust is made available in accordance with the Trust's Publication Scheme
- Information which is not covered by the Publication Scheme is made available to enquirers on request, within 20 working days, unless a valid exemption or limit applies
- Exemptions under the Act and Regulations are applied appropriately, and in accordance with the legislation
- A fair and efficient internal appeal system is administered
- A properly structured approach to managing records is in place to ensure that essential records of the School's activities are maintained in appropriate detail

1.3 The Trust is obliged to produce a publication scheme setting out:

- The classes of information which will be published or which the school intends to publish
- The manner in which the information will be published
- Whether the information is available free of charge or on payment

2. Responsibilities

2.1 The Trust has a legal responsibility to comply with the Act and is accountable to the Information Commissioner. The person with overall responsibility for this policy is the CEO.

2.2 The CEO is responsible for the day-to-day management of compliance with the Act. This includes the development of procedures, guidance and standards of good practice; their promotion to staff through training and outreach; the maintenance and periodic review of the Freedom of Information Publication Scheme; the co-ordination of responses to more difficult or complex information requests; and the provision of advice and assistance on Freedom of Information issues.

2.3 All staff have a responsibility to respond to requests for information in accordance with the Act and to provide all the necessary assistance when requested to do so for the purpose of responding to requests for information.

3. Relationship with existing policies

This policy has been formulated within the context of the following Trust documents:

- Management and retention of records policy
- GDPR Data protection policy
- Secure data handling policy

Compliance with this policy will in turn facilitate compliance not only with information-related legislation (specifically DP 1998 and the GDPR data protection laws that come into force on 25 May 2018) but also with other legislation or regulations (including audit, equal opportunities and research ethics) affecting the school.

The Trust Board are responsible for maintenance of this policy and will review it every two years.

Next Review.....Spring Term 2020