



# CHATHAM & CLARENDON GRAMMAR SCHOOL

## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

### POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Agreed by Governors: November 2023

#### 1. Introduction

Chatham & Clarendon Grammar School is committed to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and to the principles of accountability and the general rights of access to information, subject to legal exemptions. This policy outlines our response to the FOIA and the framework for managing requests.

#### 2. Background

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA), any person has a legal right to ask for information held by Chatham & Clarendon Grammar School, and to receive a copy subject to certain exemptions.

All the information that the school routinely makes available to the public is included in the Publication Scheme. Requests for other information should be dealt with in accordance with the statutory guidance. Whilst the Act assumes openness, it recognises that certain information is sensitive. There are exemptions to protect this information.

The school has a Records Retention Policy, which clearly states that it is an offence to wilfully conceal damage or destroy information in order to avoid responding to an enquiry.

Requests for information can be made to any member of staff and staff need to be aware of the procedure to forward all requests to the Business Manager immediately. Requests must be in writing (including email), and should include the enquirers name and address and state what information they require. They do not have to mention the FOIA or why they want the information. The school has a duty to respond to each request appropriately within 20 working days. Please refer to the Freedom of Information Procedure for information on the process upon receiving a request.

#### 3. Obligations and Duties

The School recognises its duty to

- Provide advice and assistance to anyone requesting information

- Tell enquirers whether or not we hold the information they are requesting (the duty to confirm or deny), and provide access to the information we hold in accordance with the School's Freedom of Information Procedure.

#### **4. Chatham & Clarendon Grammar School Publication Scheme**

The School's Publication Scheme sets out the following

- 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 covers information already published and information which is to be published in the future. The Publication Scheme and the materials it covers will be readily available in hard copy from the school. Some information is also available on the school website.

This Publication Scheme conforms to the model scheme for Academies approved by the Information Commissioner.

#### **5. Dealing with Requests**

All requests will be responded to in accordance with the School's Freedom of Information Procedure.

#### **6. Exemptions**

Certain information is subject to either absolute or qualified exemptions. Details can be found in the School's Freedom of Information Procedure.

When we wish to apply a qualified exemption to a request we will invoke the public interest test procedures to determine if public interest in applying the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

The School will maintain a register of requests where we have refused to supply information and the reasons for the refusal. Information will be retained for 5 years.

#### **7. Public Interest Test**

Unless it is in the public interest to withhold information, it has to be released. The school will apply the Public Interest Test before any qualified exemptions are applied.

Information on applying the Public Interest Test is available in the School's Freedom of Information Procedure.

#### **8. Charging**

We reserve the right to refuse to supply information where the cost of doing so exceeds the current statutory maximum of £450.

Information published on the school website is free, although you may incur costs from an Internet service provider. If you do not have access to the Internet, you can access our websites using the local library or Internet café.

## 9. Postage and Copying

Where the cost of postage, printing or photocopying is below £10, we will not make any charge. Where it is over £10, the first £10 will be free of charge. After that, we will charge the full estimated cost of postage and copying. Before we produce the information we will tell you how much it will cost.

If you decide not to pay, then we will not release the information.

If you decide to refine the request so it reduces the cost of, say, copying we are happy to discuss that with you.

## 10. Classes of Information currently published

Who are we and what do we do – organisational information, structures, locations and contracts.

Description	Availability
Governing Body Members and the basis of their appointment	SCHOOL and Website
Contact details of the Headteacher and Governing Body	SCHOOL and Website
Master Funding Agreement	SCHOOL and Website
School Prospectus	SCHOOL and Website
Annual Report	SCHOOL and Website
Senior Staff Structure	SCHOOL
School session times and term dates	SCHOOL and Website

What we spend and how we spend it – current and previous year financial information relating to projected and actual income and expenditure, procurement, contracts and financial audit.

Description	Availability
Annual budgets	SCHOOL
Capitalised Funding	SCHOOL
Procurement and projects	SCHOOL
Pay Policy	SCHOOL
Staff structure	SCHOOL

Our Priorities – strategies and plans, performance indicators, audits, inspections and reviews

Description	Availability
Government supplied performance data	SCHOOL
Latest Ofsted report	SCHOOL
Performance management policy and procedure	SCHOOL
School Improvement Plan	SCHOOL and Website
Safeguarding policies and procedures	SCHOOL and Website
Governing Body meeting dates	SCHOOL

Decision making – process and records for last three years.

Description	Availability
Admissions Policy and decisions (not individual decisions)	SCHOOL
Governing body meeting agendas, minutes and papers (excluding information properly regarded as private to the meetings).	SCHOOL with approved minutes posted to the website

Policies and Procedures – current written protocols, policies and procedures.

Description	Availability
Attendance Policy	SCHOOL and Website
Behaviour Management Policy	SCHOOL and Website
Charging and Remissions Policy	SCHOOL and Website
Child Protection Policy	SCHOOL and Website
Complaints Procedure	SCHOOL and Website
Curriculum Policy	SCHOOL and Website
Data Protection Policy	SCHOOL and Website
Disability Policy (including Accessibility)	SCHOOL
Equal Opportunities Policy	SCHOOL
Equality Policy	SCHOOL and Website
Exclusion of Pupils	SCHOOL and Website
Freedom of Information Policy and Procedure	SCHOOL and Website
Health and Safety Policy	SCHOOL and Website
Home School Agreement	SCHOOL and Website
Pupil Discipline Policy	SCHOOL and Website
Records Retention Policy	SCHOOL and Website
Sex and Relationships Policy	SCHOOL and Website
Specialist Educational Needs Policy	SCHOOL and Website
Staff Conduct Policy	SCHOOL

Services – services we offer including leaflets, guidance and newsletters

Description	Availability
Extra-Curricular activities	SCHOOL and Website
Newsletters	SCHOOL and Website

## 11 How to Request Information under the Freedom of Information Act

If you require hard copies of any of the documents within the Publication Scheme, please contact the Business Manager at

Address: Chatham & Clarendon Grammar School,  
Chatham Street, Ramsgate, Kent, CT11 7PS  
Email: [freedomofinformation@ccgrammarschool.co.uk](mailto:freedomofinformation@ccgrammarschool.co.uk)

To help us process your request quickly please clearly mark any correspondence **PUBLICATION SCHEME REQUEST** (in capitals please).

All requests should

- Be in writing (including email or fax)
- State the enquirers name and correspondence address
- Describe the information requested so that it is clearly identifiable
- Not be covered by other legislation (i.e. data protection or environmental information)

If the information you are looking for is not available via the publication scheme or on our website please contact the Business Manager on the details above to ask if we hold the information.

Verbal requests are not covered under the FOIA.

Enquiries will be dealt with within 20 working days. If this deadline cannot be met the school will inform the enquirer.

## 12. Non Disclosure of Requested Information

Information will not be disclosed if one or more of the following applies:

- An exemption to disclosure
- The information sought is not held
- Requests are considered vexatious or repeated
- The cost of compliance exceeds the threshold of £450

## 13. Exemptions

There are two general categories for exemptions

- Absolute – where there is no obligation to confirm or deny the information is held, disclose the information or consider the public interest test.
- Qualified – where, even if an exemption applies, there is a duty to consider the public interest test.

## 14. Applying the Public Interest Test

Once it has been established that a qualified exemption applies to the request, the school will apply the public interest test to establish whether the public interest in applying the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing it.

It is worth noting that what is in the public interest may not be the same as that which may be of interest to the public.

Factors taken into account when weighting up public interest include but are not limited to:

For Disclosure	Against Disclosure
Is the disclosure likely to increase access to information held by the school	Is disclosure likely to distort public reporting or be misleading because it is incomplete
Is disclosure likely to give the reasons for a decision or allow individuals to understand decisions affecting their lives or assist them in challenging those decisions	Is premature disclosure likely to prejudice fair scrutiny or release sensitive issues still on the internal agenda or evolving
Is disclosure likely to improve the accountability and transparency of the Federation in the use of funds and help show that it obtains value for money	Is disclosure likely to cause unnecessary public alarm or confusion
Is disclosure likely to contribute to public debate and assist the understanding of existing or proposed policy	Is disclosure likely to seriously jeopardise the Federation's legal or contractual position.
Is disclosure likely to increase public participation in decision making	Is disclosure likely to infringe other legislation
Is disclosure likely to increase public participation in political processes in general	Is disclosure like to create a controversial precedent on the release of information or impair your ability to obtain information in the future
Is disclosure likely to bring to light information affecting public safety	Is disclosure likely to adversely affect the schools proper functioning and discourage openness in expressing opinions
Is disclosure like to reduce further enquiries on the topic	If a large amount of information on the topic has already been made available, would further disclosure shed any more light or serve any useful purpose

## 15. Comments and Complaints

We welcome comments and suggestions you may have about the scheme. If you want to make any comments about the Publication Scheme or if you require further assistance or wish to make a complaint, this should be addressed to: **The Business Manager, Chatham & Clarendon Grammar School, Chatham Street, Ramsgate, CT11 7PS.**

If you are not satisfied with the assistance that you get or if we have not been able to resolve your complaint and you feel that a formal complaint needs to be made, then this should be addressed to the Information Commissioners Office. They can be contacted at:

**Information Commissioner, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.**

**Helpline: 0303 123 1113**

**Web: [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk)**