



## Freedom of Information Policy

### 1.0 Purpose of this Policy

The purpose of the policy is to ensure that Pond Meadow Academy Trust complies with the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA), and any subsequent relevant legislation. It is to ensure all information held by the school is treated in a manner that is fair and lawful. This policy should be used in conjunction with the school's E-safety and Data Protection Policies.

### 2.0 Data Gathering and Storage

Information will only be gathered and stored for specified purposes.

Information held by the school will be regularly reviewed with a view to archiving or destruction, where appropriate.

### 3.0 Publication Scheme

The school will adopt and publish the appropriate model publication scheme, as recommended by, Information Commissioner. The current recommended model schemes can be viewed via the Information Commissioner's website (<https://ico.org.uk/>)

### 4.0 Dealing with Requests for Information

Theoretically any request for information is a request under the FOIA, and the school receives a considerable number of requests for information through our day-to-day operations. Most of these are dealt with as 'business as usual' requests and responded to accordingly. The school is committed to responding to all requests for information.

Where an applicant wants to have their request dealt with under the access to information legislative framework, this should be in writing to the Headteacher and state the applicant's name, correspondence address and a description of the information requested.

The school will assist applicants in making their request to have access to information held by the school. Assistance will be given to applicants whose requests need to be transferred to another public authority (e.g. LEA, hospital).

The school will exercise its duty to confirm or deny the existence of requested data, subject to any exemptions that may apply.

The school will supply data requested within 20 working days, subject to any exemptions that may apply, and the estimated cost of complying with the request falling within the current defined



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charge limit. All requests for information should still be dealt with in compliance with the 20 day deadline, whether they are recorded as Freedom of Information requests or not.

If a request will take longer than 10 working days to respond to, an acknowledgement should be sent to the person making the request, informing them when the information will be supplied. This acknowledgement does to allow the school to exceed the overall 20 day deadline.

The school aims to respond to FOIA requests free of charge. However if significant costs are likely to be incurred (for example a significant amount of photocopying) these will be recharged at cost. The applicant will be informed and payment must be received before the information is provided. The charge limit is currently £450, as set by the Ministry of Justice. The school may turn down the request if it will cost more than £450 to retrieve the information.

The Headteacher, through the Senior Management Team and Office Team, will be responsible for ensuring requests are fulfilled within the stipulated deadline and recording details of the request in the school's records.

Persons requesting data will be supplied with a copy of our complaints procedure. Copies of data supplied should be retained for two years from the date it was put into the public domain.

## 5.0 Refusing request

A request for information under FOIA can only be refused for the following reasons:

- It would cost too much or take too much staff time to deal with the request.
- The request is vexatious.
- The request repeats a previous request from the same person.
- One or more exemptions apply.

A full list of exemptions can be found at the Information Commissioner's website.

The decision to apply exemptions should be made by the Headteacher. Advice should be sought from Legal Services if there is any doubt as to whether information should be disclosed.

## 6.0 Logging Requests Received

The school will keep a record of all requests received for monitoring purposes, noting:

- a) the date the request was received,
- b) name and contact details of the person or organisation making the request,
- c) the date the request was fulfilled or refused,
- d) the reason for any exemption being applied,
- e) the reason for any failure to meet the 20 day deadline.

Approved by the Finance and Staffing Committee March 2017.