# UNITY LOGO

# **FREEDOM OF INFORMATION**

**March 2021**

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1. **Introduction**

The school will comply with the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and any other relevant legislation to ensure requests for access to information held by the school are treated in a manner that is fair and lawful.

The school has an appointed Data Protection Officer (DPO), HY Professional Services, who can be contacted in writing at HY Professional Services, 1 Reed House, Hunters Lane, Rochdale, OL16 1YL or by telephone on 0161 804 1144. The DPO is responsible for dealing with data protection and FOI issues within the school and you can contact the DPO should you wish to discuss any issues or concerns that you have in this regard.

## **Data Gathering and Storage**

## Information will only be gathered and stored for specified purposes.

In order to be able to respond to requests for information the school will implement effective records management policies to enable staff to identify whether data is held and, if it is, locate it quickly and easily.

## The school’s retention policies will be based on the guidance in the Information and

## Records Management Society’s Records Management toolkit for schools and will be

## reviewed regularly in line with any updates to this toolkit.

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

## **Publication Scheme**

## The school will adopt and publish the appropriate model publication scheme, as

## recommended by the DfE and the Information Commissioner, and approved by school

## governors.

## **Dealing with Requests for Information**

* 1. Theoretically any request for information is a request under the Freedom of Information Act, however we will not consider any request that forms part of the normal pattern of work to be a Freedom of Information request. Only those requests which are considered to be outside the normal remit of the day to day running of the school will be recorded as Freedom of Information requests.
  2. The school will assist applicants in making their request to have access to information held by the school.
  3. Assistance will be given to applicants whose requests need to be transferred to another public authority (e.g. school, council, hospital).
  4. The school will exercise its duty to confirm or deny the existence of requested data, subject to any exemptions that may apply.
  5. The school will supply data requested within 20 working days (or in line with the Information Commissioner’s current policy during school holidays), subject to any exemptions that may apply, and the estimated cost of complying with the request falling within the current defined charge limit. All requests for information will still be dealt with in compliance with the 20-working day deadline, whether they are recorded as Freedom of Information requests or not.
  6. The charge limit is currently £450, calculated at 18 hours work at a flat rate of £25 per hour, as set by government statute. If the estimated cost of complying with the request does not exceed this amount the school is not entitled to make a charge for fulfilling the request.
  7. A designated member of staff will be responsible for ensuring requests are fulfilled within the stipulated deadline and recording details of the request on the school’s tracking database.
  8. Persons requesting data will be supplied with a copy of our complaints procedure upon request. Any complaints regarding Freedom of Information requests must firstly be addressed by the school. If, once we have had opportunity to reconsider our decision, we believe the initial response was correct the applicant shall be entitled to take the matter to the Information Commissioner’s Office.

1. **Applying Exemptions**
   1. A full list of exemptions can be found at the Information Commissioner’s website. There are two types of exemption – absolute and qualified. In practice there are very few which are likely to be applied by the education sector.
   2. The decision to apply an exemption will not be taken by individual members of staff but by the DPO in conjunction with the Headteacher.
2. **Logging Requests Received**

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

* 1. the date the request was received
  2. name and contact details of the person or organisation making the request
  3. the date the request was fulfilled or refused,
  4. the reason for any exemption being applied,
  5. the reason for any failure to meet the 20-day deadline.