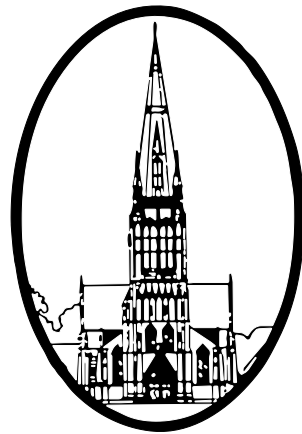


St. Mary's C. of E. Primary School

'Through God's love, we strive to be the best we can be.'



Freedom of Information Policy

Revised: March 2019

Review date: March 2021

Mission Statement and Values

“Through God’s love, we strive to be the best we can be.”

St Mary’s is an inspiring and creative school which fosters a love of learning as well as developing skills for life. We strive to enhance every child’s moral, spiritual, intellectual, social and physical well-being and celebrate every child’s gifts.

As a faith school we hold **love** at the centre of all we do. This and the following values reflect the ethos of our school.

Respect – ourselves, each other and our environment

Courage – to stand up for what is right, overcome our fears and embrace new challenges

Truth – in the choices we make and our dealings with family, friends, school and community

Hope – that inspires us to look forward in confidence to a better life for all

1. Terms of reference

1.1 The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and, where appropriate, the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 are adhered to within St. Mary’s C of E primary School.

1.2 We will ensure that:

- A significant amount of routinely published information about the school is made available to the public as a matter of course. This is known as a Publication Scheme.
- Requests for other information are dealt with within the statutory timescale of the appropriate legislation and, in cases where an exception or exemption is engaged, given appropriate considerations to whether or not the information should be released.

2. Aims

St. Mary’s C of E Primary School is a voluntary aided Church of England school with a commitment to the teaching the National Curriculum and Christian values, whilst supporting a multi-faith approach to the curriculum.

We recognise and value the linguistic and cultural diversity that exists in our school.

- We aim to be a school community that caters for children as individuals, understand their problems, appreciate their needs and enable them to be as literate and as numerate as possible to cope with everyday life in a world where such skills are increasingly important.
- We aim to be a school community that maintains a framework of behaviour that encourages initiative, responsibility, team work and above all, respect for others.
- We aim to be a school community that provides encouragement for personal growth and a positive learning environment where children, as individuals, can aim high and reach their full potential within the National Curriculum and beyond.
- We aim to be a school community that strives for excellence in all aspects of our leadership, teaching and management in an environment of mutual respect.

And this publication scheme is a means of showing how we are pursuing these aims.

3. Publication Scheme

3.1 Section 19 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 required that schools adopt and maintain an Information Commissioner approved publication scheme and to proactively publish information in accordance with that scheme.

3.2 This is a document that specified:

- The classes of information which are already published or intended to be published
- The manner in which the information will be published; and
- Whether or not there is any charge for the information

3.3 The Information Commissioner has produced both a model publication scheme and guidance for schools which makes provision for, but is not limited to the classes of information listed below.

Class 1 – Who we are and what we do

(Organisation information, structures, location and contacts)

Class 2 – What we send and how we spend it at St. Mary's C of E primary School

(Financial information relating to projected and actual income and expenditure, procurement, contracts and financial audit.)

Class 3 – What our priorities are and how we are doing

(strategies and plans, performance indicators, audits, inspections and review)

Class 4 – How we make decisions

(Decisions making processes and records of decisions)

Class 5 – Our policies and procedures

(Current written protocols, policies and procedures for delivering our services and responsibilities)

Class 6 – Lists and Registers

(Currently maintained lists and registers only)

Class 7 – The Services We Offer

(Information about the services we offer, including leaflets, guidance and newsletters produced for the public and businesses)

3.4 There is therefore an expectation on St. Mary's C of E primary School to make the above information available unless:

- we do not hold it;
- it is to be withheld under the Freedom of Information exemption or Environmental Information Regulations exception; or its release is prohibited under another statute;
- the information is archived, out of date or otherwise inaccessible;
- or it would be impractical or resource-intensive to prepare the material for routine release.

3.5 Our publication scheme can be found on the school website and hard copies of documents can be obtained from the school upon request.

3.6 The Governing Body has overall responsibility for the maintenance of this scheme which will be reviewed annually and following guidance from the Information Commissioner's office. Updated information will be placed on the publication scheme as soon as it is amended/approved.

3.7 We will not charge for information on the Publication Scheme except where specifically indicated.

3.8 In exceptional circumstances some information may be available only by viewing in person. Where this is the case, contact details will be provided and an appointment to view the information will be arranged within a reasonable timescale.

3.9 Information will be provided in the language in which it is held. Where we are legally required to translate any information, we will do so.

3.10 Obligations under disability and discrimination legislation and any other legislation to provide information in other forms and formats will be adhered to when providing information in accordance with this scheme.

4. Overview of requests for information not covered by our Publication Scheme

- 4.1 The Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 came into force for all public bodies on 1 January 2005 and their purpose is to promote both transparency and access to recorded information.
- 4.2 Anyone can make a request for recorded information.
- 4.3 Whilst a request can be made in the form of a question, rather than a request for specified documents, the school does not have to answer your question if this would mean creating new information or giving an opinion or judgement that is not already recorded.
- 4.4 We will acknowledge receipt of requests however we may need to seek clarification to establish or in some cases help you refine your request before it is deemed valid. The time scales for responses commence after receipt of a valid request.
- 4.5 Upon receipt of a valid request the information sought will be communicated to the applicant within statutory timescales subject to paragraphs 4.6 – 4.9 inclusive.
- 4.6 There will be occasions where we will not supply the requested information (e.g. the school may neither hold nor be the owner of the requested information; or we may consider that an appropriate exemption or exception applied). Applicants will be informed if this is the case.
- 4.7 If any information is to be withheld both the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 require a school, in its final response, to either confirm or deny whether the information sought is held (unless the act of doing so it itself exempt) and to provide details of the exemption applied.
- 4.8 The application of some exemptions/exceptions allow for an extension in the response timescale. Applicants will be informed if this is the case.
- 4.9 Charges may be applied to the communication costs of some requests (e.g. reprographics, postage and packaging, copying) and if this is the case requesters will be informed in advance. On the occasions the information will be collated and released upon receipt of those fees.
- 4.10 St. Mary's C of E primary School will not charge for information listed on its publication scheme except where specifically indicated on the scheme.

- 4.11 As part of the final response we will include details of how an applicant can request a review of their response if they remain unhappy with it. The school can be contacted within 60 days from the date of our response to request a review. Requests for review received after this timescale will not be considered.
- 4.12 Upon receipt of a request for review, both the original request and our initial response will be independently reviewed by the Chair of Governors or a nominated Governor. They will uphold or not uphold the original response in full or in part. Further clarification may be sought if the complaint is not clear.
- 4.13 Complaints which are not relevant to the response under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 will not be considered under the review process.
- 4.14 The reviewed response will be communicated to the applicant within 25 school days from the receipt date of that request.
- 4.15 Should an applicant remain dissatisfied following our reviewed response they may contact the Information Commissioner directly at: Wycliff House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF
Telephone: 01625 545 700 <https://ico.org.uk/>
- 4.16 The Information Commissioner is the independent regulatory authority for both the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Environmental Information Regulations 2004. The school will abide by the decisions of the Information Commissioner's Office, unless it considers itself to have grounds for an appeal to the Information Tribunal.
- 4.17 Requests for personal data and some third party information are covered solely by the Data Protection Act 1998.
- 4.18 If you require any documents / paperwork completed by a member of school staff you are required to give 2 weeks' notice in writing, the school will endeavour to complete your request asap however may take up to 2 weeks.

