



Houghton Conquest Lower School and Pre-School

Freedom of Information Policy

Introduction

Houghton Conquest Lower School is committed to the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the principles of accountability and the general right of access to information, subject to legal exemptions. This policy outlines our response to the Act and a framework for managing requests.

Background

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 came fully in to force in 2005. Under the Act, any person has a legal right to ask for access to information held by the school. They are entitled to be told whether the school holds the information, and to retrieve a copy, subject to certain exemptions.

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 provides public access to information held by public authorities.

It does this in two ways:

- public authorities are obliged to publish certain information about their activities;
- members of the public are entitled to request information from public authorities.

The Act covers any recorded information that is held by a public authority in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and by UK-wide public authorities based in Scotland. Information held by Scottish public authorities is covered by Scotland's own Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002. Public authorities include government departments, local authorities, the NHS, state schools and police forces.

The main principle behind freedom of information legislation is that people have a right to know about the activities of public authorities, unless there is a good reason for them not to. This is sometimes described as a presumption or assumption in favour of disclosure. The Act is also sometimes described as purpose and applicant blind.

This means that:

- everybody has a right to access official information. Disclosure of information should be the default – in other words, information should be kept private only when there is a good reason and it is permitted by the Act;
- an applicant (requester) does not need to give you a reason for wanting the information. On the contrary, an organisation must justify refusing them information;
- all requests for information must be treated equally, except under some circumstances relating to vexatious requests and personal data;

- because all requesters should be treated equally, information should only be disclosed under the Act if it would be disclosed to anyone else who asked. In other words, consideration should be taken to the sharing of information under the Act as if it were being released to the world at large.

Aims and Objectives

Our aims through freedom of information are to:

- Produce and publish the methods by which the specific information is made routinely available so that it can be easily identified and accessed by members of the public
- To review and update on a regular basis the information made available
- To produce a schedule of any fees charged for access to information which is made proactively available

To do this, a publication scheme has been produced (attached) and sets out:

- The classes of information which we publish or intend to publish;
- The manner in which the information will be published; and
- Whether the information is available free of charge or payment is required.

All information in our publication scheme is either on our school website to download and/or print or is available in paper form on request from the school office.

Exemptions

Some information which we hold may not be made public, for example personal information. This publication scheme conforms to the model scheme for schools approved by the Information Commissioner under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Categories of information published

The publication scheme guides you to information which we currently publish (or have recently published) or which we will publish in the future. This is split into categories of information:

- School organisational information, structures, location and contacts - information published on school website
- School profile and other information relating to the governing body – information published on the school website and in other governing body documents
- Pupils and curriculum – information about policies that relate to pupils and the school curriculum
- School policies and other information related to the school – information about policies that relate to the school in general

How to request information

If you require a paper version of any of the documents within the scheme, please visit our school website:

Alternatively, you can contact the school office by:

- Telephone: 01234 740202
- Email: office@hcschool.org.uk
- Letter: Houghton Conquest Lower School, High Street, Houghton Conquest, Bedfordshire, MK45 3LL

Paying for information

Information is provided freely on our school website. If your request is for paper copies of any information, there will be an administrative charge to cover any costs incurred to provide this. This cost will be explained by the school at the time of request. Any costs incurred by a request should be paid in full at the time of the information being made available. Where there will be a charge you will see a £ in the box in the publication scheme below. For standard A4 printed documents the cost will be 10p per page. The cost might be more for other items; for example, video or book formats.

Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher, staff and Governors.

Attached: Freedom of Information Publication Scheme

Freedom of Information Publications Scheme

Information to be published. This includes datasets where applicable – please see “How to complete the Guide to Information”.	How the information can be obtained	Cost
Class 1 - Who we are and what we do (This will be current information only)		
Who's who in the school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Website (<i>Our School/Staff</i>) Photographs/names in Reception 	£
Who's who on the governing body / board of governors and the basis of their appointment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Website (<i>Our School/Governors</i>) 	£
Instrument of Government / Articles of Association	On request from School Office	£
Contact details for the Head teacher and for the governing body, via the school (named contacts where possible).	<p>Miss C McCarthy Headteacher Houghton Conquest Lower School High Street Houghton Conquest Bedfordshire MK45 3LL</p> <p>Ms J Gibson Clerk to Governors C/O Houghton Conquest Lower School High Street Houghton Conquest Bedfordshire MK45 3LL</p>	
Staffing structure	Website	£
School session times and term dates	Website (<i>parents/term dates</i>)	£
Address of school and contact details, including email address.	Website (and see above)	£
Class 2 – What we spend and how we spend it (Financial information relating to projected and actual income and expenditure, procurement, contracts and financial audit) Current and previous financial year as a minimum		
Financial Information	Website - https://www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk/	£
Pay policy	Request Hard Copy	£

Class 3 – What our priorities are and how we are doing (Strategies and plans, performance indicators, audits, inspections and reviews) Current information as a minimum		
The latest Ofsted / Estyn / Education and Training Inspectorate report - Summary - Full report	Website	
Post-inspection action plan	Request Hard Copy	£
Performance data or a direct link to it	Website (<i>About Us/Ofsted Reports</i>)	
The school's future plans; for example, proposals for and any consultation on the future of the school, such as a change in status	Website Newsletter and new items (on website)	
Safeguarding and child protection	Website (<i>About Us/Policies</i>)	
Class 4 – How we make decisions (Decision making processes and records of decisions) Current and previous three years as a minimum		
Admissions policy/decisions (not individual admission decisions) – where applicable	Website (<i>Our School/Policies</i>)	
Agendas and minutes of meetings of the governing body and its committees. (NB this will exclude information that is properly regarded as private to the meetings).	Request Hard Copy	£
Class 5 – Our policies and procedures (Current written protocols, policies and procedures for delivering our services and responsibilities)		
Charging regimes and policies.	Website (<i>Our School/Policies</i>)	
Class 6 – Lists and Registers Currently maintained lists and registers only (this does not include the attendance register). (hard copy or website; some information may only be available by inspection)		
Asset register	Request Hard Copy	£
Any information the school is currently legally required to hold in publicly available registers	Request Hard Copy	£

Class 7 – The services we offer

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

Current information only

(hard copy or website; some information may only be available by inspection)

Extra-curricular activities	Website (<i>Children/School Clubs</i>)	
Out of school clubs	Website (<i>Children/School Clubs</i>)	
Breakfast and After School club	Website (<i>Children/School Clubs</i>)	

Freedom of Information

SCHEDULE OF CHARGES

This describes how the charges have been arrived at and is published as part of the guide.

TYPE OF CHARGE	DESCRIPTION	BASIS OF CHARGE
Disbursement cost	Photocopying/printing @ ..p per sheet (black & white)	Actual cost *
	Photocopying/printing @ ..p per sheet (colour)	Actual cost*
	Postage	Actual cost of Royal Mail standard 2 nd class

* the actual cost incurred by the school