

Freedom of Information Policy



Signed:

Date:

Review Date:

Our full title and address for sending requests for any documents is:

**St. Mary's Church in Wales V. A. School,
Park Street,
Ruabon,
Wrexham.
LL14 6LE.**

The person responsible for maintenance of this scheme is:

Mrs N Booth.

1. Introduction: what a publication scheme is and why it has been developed

One of the aims of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (which is referred to as FOIA in the rest of this document) is that public authorities, including all maintained schools, should be clear and proactive about the information they will make public.

To do this we must produce a publication scheme, setting 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 on payment.*

The scheme covers information already published and information which is to be published in the future. All information in our publication scheme is available in paper form.

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.

2. 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 known as 'classes'. These are contained in section 5 of this scheme.

The classes of information that we undertake to make available are organised into four broad topic areas:

- ***School Prospectus*** - information published in the school prospectus.
- ***Governors' Documents*** - information published in the Governors' Annual Report and in other governing body documents.
- ***Pupils & Curriculum*** - information about policies that relate to pupils and the school curriculum.
- ***School Policies*** - information about policies that relate to the school in general.

3. How to request information

You can request a copy of the information you want from the contact detailed below.

If the information you're looking for isn't available via the scheme you can still ask if we have it. You can contact the school by telephone, fax, email or letter.

Email: mailbox@stmarys-ruabon-pri-wrexham.sch.uk

Tel: **01978 820979**

Fax: **01978 821782**

Contact Address: ***St. Mary's Church in Wales V. A. School,
Park Street,
Ruabon,
Wrexham.
LL14 6LE.***

To help us process your request quickly, please clearly mark any correspondence "**PUBLICATIONS SCHEME REQUEST**" (in **bold CAPITALS**).

4. Paying for information

Single copies of information covered by this publication are provided free unless stated otherwise. If your request means that we have to do a lot of photocopying or printing, or pay a large postage charge, or is for a priced item such as some printed publications we will let you know the cost before fulfilling your request.

5. Classes of Information Currently Published

School Prospectus - this section sets out information published in the school prospectus.

Class	Description
School Prospectus	<p>The statutory contents of the school prospectus are as follows, (other items may be included at the school's discretion):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the name, address and telephone number of the school, and the type of school. • the names of the headteacher and chair of governors. • information about admissions. • a statement of the school's ethos and values. • details of any affiliations with a particular religion or religious denomination, the religious education provided, parents' right to withdraw their child from religious education and collective worship and the alternative provision for those pupils. • information about the school's policy on providing for pupils with special educational needs. • number of pupils on roll and rates of pupils' authorised and unauthorised absences. • National Curriculum assessment results for appropriate Key Stages, with national summary figures. • Use of the Welsh Language.

Governors' Annual Report and other information relating to the governing body - this section sets out information published in the Governors Annual Report and in other Governing Body documents.

Class	Description
Governors' Annual Report	<p>The statutory contents of the governors' annual report to parents are as follows, (other items may be included at the school's discretion):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • details of the governing body membership, including name and address of chair and clerk. • a statement on progress in implementing the action plan drawn up following an inspection. • a financial statement, including gifts made to the school and amounts paid to governors for expenses. • information about school security. • information about the implementation of the governing body's policy on pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and any changes to the policy during the last year. • a description of the arrangements for the admission of pupils with disabilities; details of steps to prevent disabled pupils being treated less favourably than other pupils; and details of existing facilities to assist access to the school by pupils with disabilities. • the accessibility plan covering future policies for increasing access by those with disabilities to the school (<i>from April 2004</i>). • how teachers' professional development impacts on teaching and learning. • number of pupils on roll and rates of pupils' authorised and unauthorised absence. • the school's targets for Key Stage 2 assessments. • National Curriculum assessment results for appropriate Key Stages, with national summary figures.
Instrument of Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The name of the school. • The category of the school. • The name of the governing body. • The manner in which the governing body is constituted. • The name of any person entitled to appoint any category of governor. • Details of any trust. • If the school has a religious character, a description of the ethos of the school. • The date the instrument takes effect.
Minutes ⁽¹⁾ of meeting of the Governing Body and its committees	Minutes from governors board and committee meetings

Pupils & Curriculum Policies - this section gives access to information about policies that relate to pupils and the school curriculum.

Class	Description
Home - school agreement	Written statement of the school's aims and values, the school's responsibilities, the parental responsibilities and the school's expectations of its pupils for example homework arrangements.
Curriculum Policy	Statement on following the policy for national curriculum subjects, including any syllabus followed by pupils at the school.
Sex Education Policy	Written statement of policy with regard to sex education.
Collective Worship	Statement of arrangements for the required daily act of collective worship.
Pupil Discipline	Written statement of general principles on behaviour and discipline including any anti bullying policy as appropriate.

School Policies - This section gives access to information about policies that relate to the school in general.

Class	Description
Reports of School Inspections under Sections 10 and 23 of the School Inspections Act 1996	Report of an inspection of the school and the summary of the report.
Post Inspection action plan	A plan setting out the actions required following an Estyn inspection.
Charging and remissions policies	A statement of the school's policy with respect to charges and remissions for any optional extra or board and lodging of which charges are permitted, for example music tuition, trips.
School session times	Details of school session and dates of school terms and holidays.
Special Education Needs	Information about the school's policy on providing for pupils with special educational needs.
Accessibility Plans	Written plan of improvements to access for pupils with disabilities (<i>from April 2004</i>).
Health and Safety Policy	Written statement of general policy with respect to health and safety at work of employees (and others) and the organisation and arrangements for carrying out the policy.
Child Protection Policy	Statement of general principles on Child Protection arrangements (<i>from March 2004</i>).
Complaints procedure	Statement of procedures for dealing with complaints.

Staff Appraisal	Statement of procedures adopted by the governing body relating to staff appraisal.
Staff Conduct, Discipline and Grievance	Statement of procedure for regulating conduct and discipline of school staff and procedures by which staff may seek redress for grievance.

6. Feedback and Complaints

We welcome any comments or suggestions you may have about the scheme. If you want to make any comments about this publication scheme or if you require further assistance or need to make a complaint then initially this should be addressed to

Mrs N Booth
St. Mary's Church in Wales V. A. School,
Park Street,
Ruabon,
Wrexham.
LL14 6LE.

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 Commissioner's Office. This is the organisation that ensures compliance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and that deals with formal complaints. They can be contacted at:

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

Or

Enquiry/Information Line: 01625 545 745
E-mail: publications@ic-foi.demon.co.uk

^[1] Some information might be confidential or otherwise exempt from the publication by law - we cannot therefore publish this

Section 4: Explanatory Notes

1. The Freedom of Information (Fol) Act 2000

1.1 The Fol Act received Royal Assent on 30 November 2000. The primary object of the legislation is to confer a right on individuals to obtain disclosure of information held by public bodies, including schools, rather than leaving them to confer access to the information they hold as a favour. This is achieved in two ways:

- *Publication schemes* - by imposing on public authorities a positive duty to make information available through the publication of schemes setting out what information they hold and how/where the information is available to an interested individual.
- *Access rights* - by giving the individual who makes a request for information the right to be told whether the body holds such information, and if it does, the right to have that information communicated to him. This individual right of access to information will be brought into force for all public authorities (including schools) in January 2005.

2. Model Publication Schemes

2.1 The Information Commissioner has power to approve 'model' publication schemes for particular classes of public authority, including schools.

2.2 A model publication scheme has been approved by the Information Commissioner for the governing bodies of maintained schools. These are designed for primary and secondary schools. A separate model scheme is being developed for maintained nursery schools.

2.3 A publication scheme is essentially a guide to information that a public body commits to make available to the public and states how it can be accessed (eg paper, online) and whether it is available free or at a charge.

2.4 These notes are aimed to help you and will explain the steps you need to take in order to adopt the scheme. Having adopted the model scheme your school will then be obliged to publish the information set out in it.

2.5 The model scheme was developed jointly by Welsh Assembly Government, the Department for Education and Skills and the Information Commissioner's Office.

2.6 Is the model publication scheme appropriate for your school? The Freedom of Information Act 2000 defines the public authorities that are covered by the Act and so are required to adopt and maintain a publication scheme. All maintained schools (within the meaning of Section 20(1) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998) are covered by the Act and by adopting the model scheme you will meet the requirements of the Act. However, if you wish to, you may submit a 'bespoke' scheme for approval by the

Information Commissioner which better caters for your school's individual circumstances. If you decide you would prefer to submit a bespoke scheme please see Section 8 (Further Help and Assistance) of these explanatory notes.

3. The Model Publication Scheme for Schools

3.1 The model publication scheme has been developed in a way that should allow a school to simply insert its own details into the appropriate places as indicated by the bold text in capital letters contained in square brackets.

3.2 To adopt the model and comply with the FoI requirements, the steps you need to take are:

- Adoption of the model scheme by the governing body.
- Enter your school and contact details in the model, removing/including any reference to your website and indicate if a charge is to be made for any documentation.
- Publish the scheme - see Section 5 (How should the information be made available?) of these explanatory notes.
- Make the information included in the publication scheme available on request - you may want to review your record management system to help respond to any request.

3.3 It is open to schools to choose not to adopt the model publication scheme and to produce a bespoke scheme if they so wish. Any bespoke schemes require the express approval of the Information Commissioner (see Section 8.3 for information on producing a bespoke scheme). Schools may not make any changes or adaptations to the model scheme (except in relation to the inserts indicated in brackets for completion by schools) without submitting the revised scheme to the Information Commissioner for express approval.

4. The Categories of Information.

4.1 The categories of information ('classes') are contained in Section 5 of the model scheme. Schools must include details of what format the information will be published in, how the information can be obtained and whether it will be provided free of charge or for a fee.

4.2 What will adopting the model publication scheme commit a school to do? Simply completing a copy of the model scheme does not in itself fulfil a school's obligation under the Act in relation to publication schemes. A school has to make its publication scheme available and publish information in accordance with that scheme. By adopting the model scheme, your school is committing itself to publishing the information described. As new information is produced which falls within a class definition, it should be prepared for publication and made available.

4.3 Schools are the last public authority in the rolling programme and are required to have a publication scheme in place by 29 February 2004, except for maintained nursery schools which have until 30 June 2004 to comply. The Welsh Assembly Government intends to issue further guidance to schools covering how to respond to requests for information not set out in your publication scheme from January 2005.

5. How should the information be made available?

5.1 The model publication scheme provides scope for a school to publish information in a variety of ways. It is expected that unless you state otherwise the information will be in the form of paper. However schools may wish to make information available on their website and the model scheme contains optional text in square brackets for this purpose.

5.2 Where information is available on a website the Information Commissioner will still expect hard copies to be made available on request as not everyone has access to the internet.

5.3 There is no express requirement in the Freedom of Information Act for public bodies to make information available in any language other than that in which the document was created. However, given the proactive nature of the legislative requirements, the Information Commissioner is likely to regard with disfavour any school that has refused a reasonable request to provide a translation of any information requested under its publication scheme. Schools must in any case comply with Welsh Language Scheme requirements.

5.4 The Freedom of Information Act aims to develop a culture of openness amongst public authorities. Schools should raise awareness of the existence and contents of the publication scheme, among the general public and parents in particular. You can do this through the Governors' Annual Report, through a paragraph in your newsletter and on your website if you have one. You may find the following paragraph helpful in meeting the requirements of the FOIA.

"The Freedom of Information Act requires publicly funded bodies, including schools, to be clear about the information they publish. We have produced a publication scheme setting out all the information we publish on a regular basis and where to find it. Ask the school office to let you see the publication scheme or provide you with a copy free of charge."

6. Fees

6.1 It is expected that all items will be made available free or in line with existing charging policy. If a school is making available a priced item such as printed publications, videos and bound information then a charge may be levied for that item. If the request requires a lot of photocopying or large postage costs a school will need to make clear to enquirers that there could be a handling charge in line with any existing policy on charging.

7. Time for Compliance with Requests for Information under the Publication Scheme

7.1 There is no timescale set in the Freedom of Information legislation for public authorities to respond to requests for information via a Publication Scheme. However, as all the classes of information listed in a Publication Scheme should be routinely available, the Information Commissioner expects such requests to be dealt with promptly.

8. The Duration of the Model Scheme

8.1 All publication schemes, including model schemes, will be approved for a specified period; this will initially be for a period of 4 years ending on 29 February 2008. If you submit your own publication scheme the Information Commissioner will advise you whether yours has been accepted and confirm the date on which it will expire.

8.2 it is expected that the Information Commissioner will contact schools approximately 5 months prior to the expiry date of publication schemes in order to clarify the arrangements for the preparation of new schemes.

9. Further Help and Assistance

9.1 For further information about the way in which this model scheme was developed, or its contents please contact:

Mrs Lyn Summers
Schools Management Division
Department for Training and Education
Welsh Assembly Government
Crown Building
Cathays Park
CARDIFF CF10 3NQ

Tel 029 20825959

E-mail Lyn.Summers@wales.gsi.gov.uk

or the Information Commissioner's Office (contact details below).

8.2 Queries about the submission process and subsequent operation of the publication scheme once adopted should be addressed to the FOI team at the Information Commissioner's Office (contact details below).

8.3 To submit a bespoke scheme you should follow the procedure detailed in the Commissioner's booklet: *Publication Schemes - Approval Documentation*. This booklet is available from:

Information Commissioner
Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
WILMSLOW
Cheshire SK9 5AF

Enquiry/Information Line: 01625 545 745

E-mail: publications@ic-foi.demon.co.uk

Website: www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk