



## St Laurence School Policy on Freedom of Information Act

### Introduction

The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000 came into full effect on 1 January 2005. From that date schools and employees have new responsibilities.

The FOIA creates a general right for any person to be told whether a public authority (including schools) holds information that they specify and, if so, to be given a copy of it within 20 working days.

### Scope

The Act is fully retrospective, so that any past records which the Academy holds are covered by the Act. A Retention Schedule has been produced by the Records Management Society of Great Britain to guide schools on how long they should keep school records. It is an offence to wilfully conceal, to damage or destroy information in order to avoid responding to an enquiry, so it is important that no records that are the subject of an enquiry are amended or destroyed.

Requests must be made in writing, (including email), and should include the enquirers name and correspondence address, and state what information they require. They do not have to mention the Act, nor do they have to say why they want the information. There is a duty to respond to all requests, telling the enquirer whether or not the information is held, and supplying any information that is held, except where exemptions apply. There is no need to collect data in specific response to an FOI enquiry. There is a time limit of 20 days excluding school holidays for responding to the request.

Further information is available from the Department for Education.

### Aims

In response to requests for information we will:

- Confirm whether the information is held and can be provided
- Supply the information within 20 working days, or give reasons for refusal

There are circumstances when the school is not obliged to provide information. There are four reasons for not complying with a request for information:

- One or more of the exemptions (see the FOIA for details) apply. These exemptions are intended to protect sensitive or confidential information
- The information is not held
- The cost threshold is reached (See the FOIA Publication Scheme for charges which may apply)
- The request is considered vexatious

### Procedure

Requests under FOIA can be addressed to anyone in the Academy. However, any requests for information received under the FOIA should be forwarded to the Director of Finance and Operations (DFO).

The lists of documents that are available by request are listed in the School's Publication Scheme. Documents are retained for the appropriate periods stated in the retention guidelines for schools provided by the Records Management Society and which is available from the DFO.

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