



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION POLICY

Approved by: Date:	Governors February 2017
Review Date:	February 2019

1. CONTEXT

- 1.1. This policy covers all employees of Ossett Academy
- 1.2. This policy applies to all Freedom of Information requests and procedures at Ossett Academy & 6th Form College and does not cover information held by any other organisation

2. REFERENCES

- 2.1. Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Available from the Information Commissioners Office (www.ico.org.uk)
- 2.2. Data Protection Act 1998 - Available from the Information Commissioners Office (www.ico.org.uk)
- 2.3. Data Protection Policy – Available from Ossett Academy’s website (www.ossettacademy.co.uk)
- 2.4. Data Retention Schedule – Available from Ossett Academy on request
- 2.5. Environmental Information Regulations 1992 – Available from the Information Commissioners Office (www.ico.org.uk)

3. POLICY AIMS

- 3.1. To ensure compliance with all legal duties implied under the Freedom of Information Act 2000
- 3.2. To ensure staff are sufficiently trained and are aware of their responsibilities and limitations when providing a response to a Freedom of Information Request
- 3.3. To promote the transparency of information where possible

4. VALID REQUESTS

- 4.1. A valid freedom of information request will:
 - 4.1.1. be in writing, including email or fax
 - 4.1.2. state the enquirer’s name and correspondence/email address
 - 4.1.3. describe specifically the information requested
 - 4.1.4. not be covered by one of the other pieces of legislation

5. POLICY STATEMENT

- 5.1. Ossett Academy will perform it’s legal obligation to make freely available information it holds. There are exceptions to this which include, but not limited to:
 - 5.1.1. If the information requested is personal, in which case a Subject Access Request procedure is followed
 - 5.1.2. If the information is deemed “not in the public interest”
 - 5.1.3. If the cost to supply the information exceeds £450
 - 5.1.4. If the information is not held
 - 5.1.5. If the Freedom of Information Request does not provide a distinct description to identify the information being requested

- 5.1.6. If the request is considered vexatious or repeated
- 5.1.7. If the information would form information restricted by the Environmental Information Regulations 1992
- 5.1.8. If the information is accessible via other means, i.e. publicly available at no cost on a website
- 5.2. Ossett Academy will proactively make available these categories of information as defined under the Information Commissioner's Model Publication Scheme for Academies:
 - 5.2.1. Who we are and what we do
 - 5.2.2. What we spend and how we spend it
 - 5.2.3. What our priorities are and how we are doing
 - 5.2.4. How we make decisions
 - 5.2.5. Our policies and procedures
 - 5.2.6. Lists and registers
 - 5.2.7. The services we offer
- 5.3. Ossett Academy will respond to any person equally when a Freedom of Information Request is submitted
- 5.4. Freedom of Information Requests must be authorised by the Principal, or designate, before actions are taken to collate the information
- 5.5. If Ossett Academy does not hold the information, a reasonable search will be made to find the information requested
- 5.6. Ossett Academy will not wilfully conceal, damage or destroy information in order to avoid answering an enquiry or appeal
- 5.7. Information will not be retrieved from other organisations in order to fulfil a Freedom of Information Request

6. COSTS AND CHARGES

- 6.1. The purpose of the Freedom of Information Act is to make the maximum amount of information available at minimum cost to the public. Charges may be made for requests relating to:
 - 6.1.1. Photocopying and stationery
 - 6.1.2. Postage and packaging
 - 6.1.3. Costs incurred as a result of viewing information
- 6.2. Charges will not be made for information accessed from Ossett Academy & 6th Form's websites
- 6.3. Any applicable charges will be issued prior to the Freedom of Information Request being performed, with payment due prior to the information being issued.

7. DATA RETENTION

7.1. Freedom of Information requests will be saved for at least 5 years but not longer than defined in the Data Retention Schedule

8. APPEALS PROCESS

8.1. If the Freedom of Information Request is declined, a charge incurred is deemed excessive or if the applicant is not satisfied with the information provided, they have the right to request for the decision to be reviewed internally.

8.2. When appealing:

8.2.1. The appeal will be completed by an employee who was not involved in the initial Freedom of Information Request

8.2.2. The applicant may be contacted to clarify information regarding the request

8.2.3. The appeal reviewer may contact external legal representatives to clarify the validity of the request

8.2.4. If the response to the Freedom of Information Request was not responded within the statutory 20 school days period, the request may still be pending completion and thus a notification letter/email will be sent to advise of the progress

8.3. Requests for appeals will be responded to within 20 school days. Some appeals may take longer in complex situations or where external sources are consulted in which case the requester will be informed of the delay.

8.4. An appeal will result in the original decision being overturned, adjusted or upheld. The requester will be informed in writing.

9. COMPLAINTS

9.1. If, after appeal, the requester is still not satisfied with the outcome, they may complain in writing to the Information Commissioner's Office. If considered valid, this will form part of an external review.



10. OWNERSHIP AND DELEGATION

10.1. The Principal is accountable for ensuring that the Freedom of Information Act is adhered to.

10.2. The Principal may designate the responsibility and day to day handling of the Freedom of Information Act to a specific employee or group of employees.

11. REVIEW

11.1. The policy will be reviewed every 2 years (or earlier if deemed necessary).

Signature: Principal	
Signature: Chair of Governors	
Date:	February 2017