



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION POLICY

REVIEWED OCTOBER 2020

REVIEW DATE OCTOBER 2023

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION POLICY

General

The governing body are aware that the school has a legal duty to supply certain information to enquirers.

The school will comply with any Freedom of Information guidance issued.

The school's policy is that:

- an enquirer must be informed whether the school holds that information or not, and if it does it must supply the information;
- the information must be supplied within 20 days of the request;
- the information can include personal or non-personal information, but no information relating to named individuals will be released;
- other information that the Head considers to be of a sensitive nature may also be withheld. In so deciding the Head will consider whether it should be released in the public interest if in withholding the information is greater than the public interest in releasing it;
- the Head will administer the school's process for providing information. In so doing the Head will take into account the Code of Practice, and any guidance from the local authority;

Responsibilities

The Head has overall responsibility to the governing body for ensuring that the policy is implemented and that the management process is maintained.

The school's Finance Director is responsible to the Head for the day-to-day management of the policy.

The School's Process

On receipt of a request in writing for information the Head will:

- decide whether the request is a request under Data Protection Act, Environmental Information Regulations or Freedom Of Information Act;
- decide whether the school holds the information or whether the request should be transferred to another body if the information is held by them;
- provide the information if it has already been made public;
- inform the enquirer if the information is not held;
- consider whether a third party's interests might be affected by disclosure and if so consult them;
- consider whether any exemptions apply and whether they are absolute or qualified;
- carry out a public interest test to decide if applying the qualified exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information;
- decide whether the estimated cost of complying with the request will exceed the appropriate limit (£450 with a maximum of £50 per individual educational record);
- if a request is made for a document that contains exempt personal information ensure that the personal information is removed by applying the redaction procedure; and
- consider whether the request is vexatious or repeated;

The school recognises its duty to provide advice and assistance to anyone requesting information.

Reasons for not Complying with a Request

The school accepts that according to the legislation there are only four reasons for not complying with a valid request for information under FOI:

- The information is not held;
- The cost threshold is reached (the threshold has yet to be decided but is likely to be in the region of £500);
- The request is considered vexatious or repeated, or
- One or more of the exemptions apply.

The school also recognises that the exemptions provided by the FOIA are:

- Information accessible by other means;
- Personal information;
A request for personal information is covered by the Data Protection Act (DPA) 1998. Individuals may continue to make a "subject access request" under the DPA – these are where the enquirer asks to see what personal information the school holds about themselves;
- environmental information;
where information is covered by the Environmental Information Regulations 1992.

Complaints

Expressions of dissatisfaction will be handled through the school's existing complaints procedure.

Information to be provided

The governors have decided that:

- All published information by the school will be made available;
- All unpublished information (including any advice or memoranda) will be made available on request, except where:
 - The names of individual people can be identified in the documents;
 - The Head considers that the document(s) contain sensitive material in the meaning of the Act and as explained in the Code of Practice; and
 - Where the school intends to publish it in due course.

Advertising the Service

The school will advertise its policy on freedom of information on the school's website.

Charging

The governors have resolved not to charge for the service.

(N.B. It is possible to levy a charge in accordance with FOIA regulations. If a charge is made, the school must give written notice to the person, before supplying the information requested. The charge has been fixed for Education Records at a maximum of £50. A maximum hourly rate is chargeable at £25 per hour).

Training

Staff involved in the storage and management of the service will receive appropriate training.

Monitoring and Review

The Head will monitor the policy in liaison with the Finance Director and will report annually to the governing body on the progress of the policy.

The Head will provide information about enquiries in regular reports to the governors.



ANNEXE 1

PUBLICATION SCHEME ON INFORMATION AVAILABLE UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000

The Governing Body is responsible for maintenance of this scheme:

1. Introduction: What a Publication Scheme is, and why it has been developed

One of the aims of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) 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 on our website: www.thomasaveling.co.uk or 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. School Aims and Objectives

- Encouraging excellence and raising aspirations so that all students experience and celebrate personal achievement in all aspects of school life.
- Promoting in our students self-discipline, self-esteem and an enjoyment of learning in a well ordered environment.
- Being a caring community, sensitive to the welfare and development of its students and staff.
- Actively promoting equal opportunities for all and helping students to develop awareness, respect and tolerance for the religious, cultural and moral values of others.
- Developing the school as an integral part of the local community and emphasising the partnership between school and family.
- Equipping our students with the knowledge and skills necessary to participate effectively in a rapidly changing world.

This Publication Scheme is a means of showing how we are pursuing these Aims.

3. 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 6 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 and other information related to the school – information about policies that relate to the school in general.

4. How to request information

If you require a paper version of any of the documents within the scheme, please contact the school by telephone, e-mail, fax or letter. Contact details for The Thomas Aveling School are set out below:

E-Mail: office@thomasaveling.co.uk
Website: www.thomasaveling.co.uk
Telephone: 01634-844809
Fax: 01634-818385
Contact Address: Arethusa Road ROCHESTER Kent ME1 2UW

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

If the information you are looking for is not available via the scheme and is not on our website, you can still contact the school to ask if we have it.

5. Paying for Information

Information published on our website is free, although you may incur costs from your Internet Service Provider. If you don't have Internet access. You can access our website using a local library or internet café.

Single copies of information covered by this publication are provided free, unless stated otherwise in Section 6. 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 or videos, we will let you know the cost before fulfilling your request. Where there is a charge, this will be indicated by a £ sign in the description box.

6. Classes of Information currently published

School Prospectus – this section sets out information published in the school prospectus:

Class	Description
School Prospectus	Key information, including pupil premium information, will be published on the school's website
Instruments of Government	The Thomas Aveling School Instruments of Government is available for inspection upon request.
Minutes* of Meeting of the Governing Body and its committees	Agreed minutes of the Governing Body and its committees (<i>current and last full academic school year</i>)
	* NB: some information might be confidential or otherwise exempt from the publication by law – we cannot therefore publish

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

Class	Description
Home-School Agreement	Statement of the school's aims and values, the school's responsibilities, the parental responsibilities and the school's expectations of its pupils, eg. homework arrangements
Sex Education Policy	Statement of policy with regard to sex and relationship education
Special educational Needs Policy	Information about the school's policy on providing for pupils with special educational needs
Accessibility Plans, including Disability Inclusion Policy	Now part of the School's Equality Policy Plan for increasing participation of disabled pupils in the school's curriculum, improving the accessibility of the physical environment and improving delivery of information to disabled pupils.
Race Equality Policy	Now part of the School's Equality Policy Statement of policy for promoting race equality
Collective Worship	Statement of arrangements for the required daily act of collective worship
Careers Education Policy	Statement of the programmes of careers education provided for Key 4
Child Protection Policy	Statement of policy for safeguarding and promoting welfare of pupils at the school (<i>from March 2004</i>)
Pupil Discipline	Statement of general principles on behaviour and discipline and of measures taken by the Headteacher to prevent bullying (also set out in schools 'Anti-Bullying Policy'.

School Policies and other information related to the school – This section gives access to information about policies that relate to the school in general.

Class	Description
Published reports of OFSTED referring expressly to the school	Published report of the last inspection of the school and the summary of the report.
Charging & Remissions Policy	A statement of the school's policy with respect to charges and remissions for any optional extra or board and lodging for which charges are permitted, for example school publications, music tuition, trips
School session times and term dates	Details of school session and dates of school terms and holidays, as published on the school website
Health & Safety Policy and risk assessment	Statement of general policy with respect of Health and Safety at work of employees (and others) and the organisation and arrangements for carrying out the policy
Concerns & Complaints Procedure	Policy on Trust Website and Procedures on School Website
Staff Conduct, Discipline and Grievance	
Curriculum circulars and statutory instruments	Any statutory instruments, departmental circulars and administrative memoranda sent by the Department of Education and Skills to the Headteacher or Governing Body relating to the curriculum are available for inspection upon request.
Annex A – Other Documents	Annex A provides a list of other documents that are held by the school and are available on request

Freedom of Information Publication Scheme

Annex A – Further Documents held by the School and available by request

Name of Document	Description
Admissions	Policy
Assessment	Policy
Attendance Targets	Published in our School Improvement Plan and available upon request.
Attendance	Policy
Charging & Remissions	Policy
Citizenship/PSHE	Policy
Drugs Education	Policy
EMA/Bursary	Policy
Marking	Policy
Anti-Bullying	Policy
Register of Business interests of Headteacher & Governors	Held by the Clerk to the Governors and available upon request.
Use of Video/Photographs	Policy
Academic Mentoring	Policy
Discipline & Behaviour Policy	Policy
Homework	Policy
ICT	Policy
Library/LRC	Policy
Numeracy	Policy
Literacy	Policy

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