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Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College Freedom of Information Policy

Accepted by: Board of the College Corporation
Approving Body: Board of the College Corporation
Committee: Board of the College Corporation
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FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

Introduction

The Freedom of Information Act (2000) requires publicly funded organisations to adopt and maintain a Publication Scheme. This requirement applies to Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College.

Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College's Publication Scheme under the Act follows guidance for the new model publication scheme, issued by the Information Commissioner's Office (version 1.2 - 23/10/2015). The document is a "living document" and is thus continually subject to change.

The purpose of the scheme is to let everyone know what information will be automatically, or routinely, published and/or made available by the College.

The College will make every effort to follow the spirit, as well as the legal requirements of the Freedom of Information Act.

The College will:

- Look to provide as much information as possible on a routine basis.
- Not normally publish information on a regular basis if it is impractical or resource-intensive to prepare such material for routine release.

Classes and Publication Scheme Structure

The structure of the publication scheme follows the seven classes on information specified in the Model Publication scheme for Further Education, as provided by the Information Commissioner.

These classes are:

1. Who we are and what we do.

Organisational information, locations and contacts, constitutional and legal governance.



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2. What we spend and how we spend it.

Financial information relating to projected and actual income and expenditure, tendering, procurement and contracts.

3. What our priorities are and how we are doing.

Strategy and performance information, plans, assessments, inspections and reviews.

4. How we make decisions.

Policy proposals and decisions. Decision making processes, internal criteria and procedures, consultations.

5. Our policies and procedures.

Current written protocols for delivering our functions and responsibilities.

6. Lists and registers.

Information held in registers required by law and other lists and registers relating to the functions of the authority.

7. The services we offer.

Advice and guidance, booklets and leaflets, transactions and media releases. A description of the services offered.

The classes of information will not generally include:

- Information the disclosure of which is prevented by law, or exempt under the Freedom of Information Act, or is otherwise properly considered to be protected from disclosure.
- Information in draft form.
- Information that is no longer readily available as it is contained in files that have been placed in archive storage, or is difficult to access for similar reasons.

Overview of the Operation of the FOIA in the College

Details for each class of information included in the publication scheme are provided. This includes classes of information, associated descriptions of information, where the information may be obtained, and any fee that may be applicable.

The description of information listed within each class may also refer to any exemptions, i.e. information that might fall within the broad definition that will not be routinely published. The information held under each class may, over time, be varied.



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Information available by virtue of the Publication Scheme

Where it is within the College's capacity, information will be provided on its website. Where it is impracticable to make information available on the website, a request may be made for information in an alternative format. In addition, some information may only be open to inspection or available by post or in person. All requests to receive information by post should be made via the designated senior manager using the contact details provided below. An appointment to view the information will be arranged within a reasonable timescale.

Availability of the Publication Scheme

This Publication Scheme is available on the College website and in hard copy, by request, from the College.

Responsibility for the Scheme and day to day assistance

The College has designated a member of the Senior Management Group (SMG) to be responsible for this Scheme at the College.

The College has a duty to provide advice, assistance and guidance as far as it would be reasonable to expect the College to do so. Members of the public who need assistance in formulating these requests may also contact the designated senior manager.

The Designated senior manager can be contacted via:

Email: ge@qeliz.ac.uk

Tel: 01325 461315



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Appropriate assistance might include:

advising the person that another person or agency might be able to assist them

- providing an outline of the different kinds of information held by the College which might meet the terms of the request
- providing a general response to the request, setting out options for further information which could be provided on request

This is not an exhaustive list and we will be flexible in offering advice and assistance that is most appropriate to the circumstances of the applicant.

It should be noted that where information is being requested which appears to be part of an organised campaign, the College is not required to comply with a number of related requests by virtue of the Act and Regulations where the cumulative cost of compliance would exceed the appropriate limit, i.e. the cost threshold prescribed in the Regulations. In those circumstances the College will consider whether the information could be disclosed in another more effective manner, for example, via the College's website. The College is not obliged to respond to vexatious or repeated requests.

Requests for information sent to the Information Governance Controller:

Requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act:

- Must be in writing (including via email)
- Must include name and address of applicant
- Must describe information requested

Complaints

Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College has a complaints policy and procedures available on the College website. This may be used by any person who considers that the College is not complying with the Publication Scheme. The opportunity to complain to the College does not limit any rights people have to complain to the Freedom of Information Commissioner.

Charges

Requests for information not available on the College website will attract a charge for actual disbursements incurred such as:

- photocopying
- postage and packaging
- the costs directly incurred as a result of viewing information

A minimum charge of £10 to cover these costs will usually apply.



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Charges may also be made for information provided under this scheme where they are legally authorised, they are in all the circumstances, including the general principles of the right of access to information held by public authorities, justified and are in accordance with a published schedule or schedules of fees which is readily available to the public. Charges may also be made for making datasets (or parts of datasets) that are relevant copyright works available for re-use. These charges will be in accordance with the terms of the Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2015, where they apply, or with regulations made under section 11B of the Freedom of Information Act, or with other statutory powers of the public authority.

If a charge is to be made, confirmation of the payment due will be given before the information is provided. Payment may be requested prior to provision of the information.

Requesting Information

We aim to respond in relation to specific requests for information within 20 working days. Each request will be treated on its own merits and a time estimate will be given by which we expect to respond. In certain circumstances it may not be possible to deal with an application in full within the 20 working days.

Exemptions

There will be occasions when the College will not be able to supply all the information requested in accordance as follows:

- The information is not held.
- The information is exempt under of the FOIA's exemptions, or its release is prohibited under another statute.
- The information is readily and publicly available from an external website to which we have already provided a direct link.
- The information is archived, out of date or otherwise inaccessible.
- It would be impractical or resource-intensive to prepare the material for the release.

On such occasions the College will always state the reasons why the information has been withheld.

Contact

The College can be contacted via:

Email: qe@qeliz.ac.uk

Tel: 01325 461315



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This Publication Scheme and the documents to which it refers are available in English. If people have difficulty with access, require large print or otherwise require particular assistance, they are invited to contact the designated senior manager. Obligations under disability and discrimination legislation and any other legislation to provide information in other forms and formats will be adhered to when providing information in accordance with this scheme.

Further Information

For more information regarding the Freedom of Information Act, it's guiding principles, and exemptions, please see the Information Commissioner's Office Guide to Freedom of Information: <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/foi-eir-and-access-to-information/guide-to-freedom-of-information/>

Based on information from:

<https://ico.org.uk/media/for-organisations/documents/definition-documents-2021/4018868/dd-colleges-of-further-education-20211029.pdf>

Freedom of Information Act 2000: Definition document for colleges of further education Colleges of Further Education

Version 4.0

20211029

Location of FOI Definition Document for Colleges of Further Education - England:

<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/foi-eir-and-access-to-information/guide-to-freedom-of-information/publication-scheme/definition-documents/>

Location of Model Publication Scheme:

<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/foi-eir-and-access-to-information/guide-to-freedom-of-information/publication-scheme/>