Stone Church of England Combined School

Freedom of Information Policy &

Publication Scheme

2026

Freedom of Information Policy and Publication Scheme - Schools

Policy Reference: FOI-001
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Review Date: August 2026
Approved By: Governing Body / Board of Trustees
Policy Owner: Headteacher
Applicable To: All staff, governors/trustees, volunteers and contractors

This version is suitable for:

- Primary Schools
- Secondary Schools
- All-through Schools
- Academy Schools
- Maintained Schools

1. Policy Statement

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) provides a general right of access to information held by public authorities and is intended to promote greater openness, transparency and accountability in the use of public resources and the delivery of public services. Schools, academies and academy trusts are required to comply with the provisions of the Act and to make information available to the public unless a lawful exemption applies.

Stone Church of England Combined School recognises that openness is an essential part of maintaining public confidence and trust in education services. The school is committed to creating a culture of transparency in which stakeholders, including parents, pupils, staff, governors, regulators and members of the wider community, have access to information about how the school operates, makes decisions and uses public funds.

The school will comply with the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR), the Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations where applicable, and relevant guidance issued by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

The school will seek to:

- Respond to requests for information openly, promptly and professionally.
- Promote transparency regarding governance, financial management and educational performance.
- Make information available proactively wherever possible through its Publication Scheme and website.

- Support public understanding of the school's objectives, activities and decision-making processes.
- Balance the public's right to access information with the need to protect personal data, confidential information and information subject to legal exemptions.
- Ensure information is accurate, accessible, timely and presented in a format that is understandable to the intended audience.
- Encourage effective record keeping and information management practices that support compliance with statutory obligations.
- Foster a culture in which information is regarded as a valuable public asset that should be made available unless there is a lawful reason for withholding it.

The school acknowledges that disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act is effectively disclosure to the wider public. Any information released in response to a request may therefore enter the public domain and may be shared further by the recipient.

The school will ensure that all staff understand their responsibilities under the Freedom of Information Act and will provide guidance, training and support where necessary. Compliance with this policy forms part of the school's wider framework for information governance, accountability and public trust.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the schools:

- Data Protection Policy
- Records Management Policy
- Records Retention Schedule
- Information Security Policy
- Complaints Procedure
- Publication Scheme
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policies

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Members of the public requesting information.
- All recorded information held by the school.
- Information held on behalf of the school by third parties.
- Information held electronically and in paper form.

This policy does not apply to requests for an individual's own personal data. Such requests will be handled as Subject Access Requests under UK data protection legislation.

3. Objectives

The school aims to:

- Promote openness and accountability.
- Ensure compliance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000.
- Provide a clear process for requesting information.
- Publish information proactively wherever possible.
- Reduce the need for individual requests by routinely making information available through the Publication Scheme.
- Support public understanding of the school's activities, performance and use of public funds.

4. Publication Scheme

4.1 What is a Publication Scheme?

The Publication Scheme is a commitment by the school to make information routinely available to the public without the need for a specific Freedom of Information request. It describes the classes of information that are published, how the information can be accessed, whether any charges apply, and the formats in which information is available.

The Publication Scheme forms a key part of the school's commitment to openness, transparency and accountability. By proactively publishing information, the school seeks to reduce the need for formal information requests, improve accessibility, and provide stakeholders with a clearer understanding of the school's activities and performance.

Stone Church of England Combined School has adopted the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) Model Publication Scheme and maintains a Guide to Information consistent with the ICO Definition Document applicable to its education sector.

The Publication Scheme aims to:

- Improve public access to information.
- Promote openness and accountability.
- Support informed engagement with parents and stakeholders.
- Reduce administrative burdens associated with routine requests.
- Demonstrate compliance with legal obligations relating to information access.
- Encourage greater understanding of how decisions are made and resources are used.

Information covered by the Publication Scheme will normally be accessible through:

- The school website.
- Printed publications.
- Electronic documents.
- Publicly available reports.
- Inspection by appointment at the school where appropriate.
- Copies supplied upon request.

The school will review the content of the Publication Scheme regularly to ensure information remains current, accurate, relevant and compliant with legislative requirements.

4.2 Principles of Publication

The school is committed to publishing information in accordance with the following principles:

Openness

Information will be made available unless there is a lawful reason for withholding it. The school will seek to adopt a presumption in favour of disclosure wherever possible.

Accessibility

Published information should be easy to locate, understand and access. Information will be provided in alternative formats where reasonably practicable and where this does not place a disproportionate burden on the school.

Accuracy

The school will take reasonable steps to ensure published information is accurate, complete and up to date at the time of publication.

Timeliness

Information will be updated regularly and published as soon as practicable following significant changes.

Consistency

Published information will be presented in a consistent manner to assist users in locating and understanding information.

Value for Money

The school will seek to minimise costs associated with providing information whilst ensuring compliance with its statutory obligations.

4.3 Accessibility of Information

The school recognises its duties under equality legislation and will seek to make information accessible to all members of the community.

Were reasonably practicable, information may be provided in alternative formats including:

- Large print.
- Accessible electronic formats.
- Plain English summaries.
- Alternative file formats where available.

Requests for accessible formats will be considered on an individual basis and accommodated wherever possible.

4.4 Review and Maintenance of Published Information

The Headteacher, supported by relevant senior leaders and administrative staff, will oversee the maintenance and review of the Publication Scheme.

Reviews will consider:

- Whether information remains accurate.
- Whether published information continues to be relevant.
- Whether additional information should be proactively published.
- Whether links and website content remain accessible.
- Any changes in legislation, guidance or best practice.

Departments and information owners may be required to review information periodically to ensure publication requirements continue to be met.

5. Classes of Information

The school publishes information within seven broad classes established by the Information Commissioner's Office Model Publication Scheme. These classes cover the key information that stakeholders are likely to require in order to understand how the school operates, spends public money, makes decisions and delivers educational services.

The information listed within each class provides examples and is not exhaustive. Additional information may be published where considered appropriate or where there is a strong public interest in making such information available.

The school reserves the right not to publish certain information where:

- Publication is prohibited by legislation.
- Information contains personal data.
- Disclosure would breach confidentiality obligations.
- Disclosure would prejudice commercial interests.
- A Freedom of Information exemption applies.
- An Environmental Information Regulation exception applies.
- The information is no longer held.
- Retrieval would involve disproportionate effort or cost.

Where information cannot be published in full, the school may provide redacted versions where lawful and appropriate.

Class 1: Who We Are and What We Do (Expanded)

This class provides information about the organisational structure, governance arrangements, leadership and operational framework of the school.

The purpose of this information is to help the public understand who is responsible for the school's management and governance, how leadership responsibilities are allocated and how stakeholders may contact relevant individuals or departments.

Information may include:

- School prospectus
- School contact details
- Headteacher details
- Governing Body information
- Governor attendance records
- Instrument of Government
- Academy Articles of Association (where applicable)
- School session times
- Term dates
- Curriculum information
- SEND information report
- Equality objectives
- Admissions arrangements
- Ofsted information
- School staffing structure

Class 2: What We Spend and How We Spend It

Published information may include:

- Annual budget
- Annual accounts
- Financial statements
- Audit reports
- Procurement arrangements
- Contracts
- Capital funding
- Pupil Premium information
- PE and Sports Premium reports
- Senior staff salaries in salary bands
- Governor expenses
- Staff expenses and allowances
- Financial benchmarking

Class 3: What Our Priorities Are and How We Are Doing

Published information may include:

- School Development Plan (summary)
- Ofsted reports
- School performance measures
- KS2, KS4 and KS5 outcomes
- Attendance statistics
- Behaviour statistics
- Pupil destination information
- Equality reports
- Strategic objectives

Class 4: How We Make Decisions

Information may include:

- Governing Body agendas
- Approved minutes
- Committee minutes
- Admissions consultations
- Parent consultations
- Strategic plans
- Governance reviews

Where meeting papers contain exempt, confidential or personal information, such information will be removed before publication or disclosure.

Class 5: Policies and Procedures

Information may include:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Complaints Procedure
- Data Protection Policy
- FOI Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Attendance Policy
- SEND Policy
- Equality Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

Class 6: Lists and Registers

Information may include:

- Governors' Register of Interests
- Asset Register
- Information Asset Register
- Disclosure Log
- Policy Register
- Records Retention Schedule
- Statutory Notices

Certain registers may be withheld or partially redacted where disclosure could compromise security, confidentiality, safeguarding arrangements or data protection requirements.

Class 7: Services We Offer

Information may include:

- Curriculum delivery
- School meals
- Breakfast clubs
- After-school clubs
- Educational visits
- SEND support
- Careers guidance
- School transport information
- Community lettings
- Parent support services

6. Requesting Information

Information available through the Publication Scheme should normally be accessed through the school website.

If a paper copy or alternative format is required, requests should be submitted to:

Stone Church of England Combined School
Address: Oxford Road, Stone, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire
Postcode: HP17 8PD
Telephone: 01296 748340
Email: office@stone.bucks.sch.uk
Website: www.stone.bucks.sch.uk

Requests should clearly state:

- The information required;
- The applicant's name;
- A postal address or email address for correspondence.

7. Freedom of Information Requests

Where information is not available through the Publication Scheme, a Freedom of Information request may be made.

FOI requests must:

- Be made in writing;
- Include the requester's name;
- Include contact details for the response;
- Clearly describe the information requested.

The school will respond in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

For schools, requests will normally be responded to within:

20 school days or 60 working days, whichever is shorter.

Where clarification is required, the statutory timescale may be paused until clarification is received.

8. Environmental Information Requests

Requests relating to environmental matters may fall under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR) rather than FOIA.

Examples may include information relating to:

- Land use;
- Buildings;
- Energy usage;
- Waste management;
- Environmental impact.

Such requests will be handled in accordance with EIR requirements.

9. Datasets and Re-use of Information

Where information disclosed under FOIA constitutes a dataset, the school will:

- Provide the information in an electronic format capable of re-use where reasonably practicable;
- Publish released datasets through the Publication Scheme where appropriate;
- Publish updated versions of datasets where required;
- Make datasets available for re-use under an appropriate licence where copyright provisions permit.

The school will normally make datasets available under the Open Government Licence where applicable.

Examples of datasets may include:

- Spending data;
- Asset registers;
- Statistical information;
- Performance data;
- Other structured information held electronically.

10. Information Exempt from Disclosure

The Freedom of Information Act contains several exemptions that may permit the school to withhold information.

Examples include:

- Personal information;
- Information intended for future publication;
- Commercially sensitive information;
- Information affecting law enforcement;
- Legally privileged information;
- Health and safety-related information.

Where information is withheld, the school will explain the exemption relied upon unless doing so would itself disclose exempt information.

Where only part of a document is exempt, the remaining information will normally be disclosed.

11. Charges

Information published on the school website is normally available free of charge.

The school may charge for:

- Photocopying;
- Printing;
- Postage and packaging;

- Large-scale reproduction costs;
- Information provided under a statutory charging regime.

Any charge will be communicated before information is provided.

Schedule of Charges

Service	Charge Basis
Photocopying (black and white)	£25.00 per hour
Photocopying (colour)	£30.00 per hour
Printing	£8.00 per page
Postage	£8.00
Large format reproduction	£25.00
Statutory fee	£25.00 per hour

12. Complaints

If an applicant is dissatisfied with how their request has been handled, they may request an internal review.

Requests for an internal review should be submitted within 40 working days of receiving the response.

Internal Review Contact:

Headteacher
Stone Church of England Combined School
Oxford Road, Stone, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, HP17 8PD
office@stone.bucks.sch.uk

The school will aim to complete internal reviews within 20 working days.

13. Information Commissioner's Office

If the applicant remains dissatisfied following an internal review, they may complain to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House

Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Website: https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/

14. Responsibilities

Governing Body / Trustees

Responsible for:

- Ensuring compliance with FOIA.
- Approving this policy.
- Monitoring its implementation.

Headteacher

Responsible for:

- Day-to-day compliance.
- Managing FOI requests.
- Ensuring publication scheme requirements are met.

Staff

Responsible for:

- Assisting with information retrieval.
- Managing records appropriately.
- Following relevant retention and information management procedures.

15. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if:

- There are changes to legislation;
- ICO guidance changes;
- Operational changes require revision.

Policy Approval

Headteacher

Name: ……..

Signature: ……..

Date: ……..

Chair of Governors / Chair of Trustees

Name: ……..

Signature: ……..

Date: ……..