



## **Moorside Junior School**

### **Information Policy and Publication Scheme**

#### **Introduction**

This policy will help our school to comply with the guidance and Codes of Practice issued under the Data Protection Act (DPA), Environmental Regulations (EIR) and Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). It will address dealing with requests for information, records management, security and access to information and use of Email and Internet.

The Policy sets out how the school will comply with the Acts.

- ♦ it follows the Codes of Practice under DPA, EIR & FOIA.
- ♦ it follows the best practice recommended by the Information Commissioner.
- ♦ it incorporates the recommendations of the Public Records Office on record management.
- ♦ it makes provision for adopting the NYCC School Record Retention and Destruction schedule.
- ♦ the Policy refers to the school's Publication Scheme, how it works and how it can be accessed.

#### **What is information?**

Information means any record the school holds in any form. This includes documents, plans, and all other types of recorded information and personal information.

Individuals can ask for any records the school holds and, under current legislation the information must be provided, unless an exemption is applied or the enquirer, having been notified of the charges applicable, does not pay.

#### **Making Information Available**

The school, as a public body, is open and accountable and will make information available in line with the Data Protection Act, Environmental Regulations and Freedom of Information Act and will only apply exemptions when absolutely necessary. If an exemption applies individuals will be advised they cannot have the information they have requested and, where appropriate, given the reason why information is being withheld.

The school will make all information that it holds available unless an exemption is applied or, in respect of FOIA, the cost of supplying the information exceeds the regulatory cost threshold (currently £450), or the enquirer, having been notified of the charges applicable, does not pay.

The school already makes most reports, minutes and reasons for decisions available to the public on request, which complies with the spirit of the legislation to promote openness and accountability.

Personal Data will be collected, stored, used and disclosed with due regard to the requirements of the Data Protection principles. Requests for personal data will be dealt with under the terms of the Data Protection Act.

Requests for environmental information will be dealt with in accordance with Environmental Information Regulations.

All other request for information will be dealt with under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act.

Staff will be provided with training on access to information regimes.

A Publication Scheme will be maintained, in line with the FOIA, and will list the information the school makes readily available, it will advise how it can be obtained and whether any charges apply. The Publication Scheme will be updated as and when appropriate and will be subject to an annual review by the Governing Body.

## **Responsibility**

The Chair of Governors and the Headteacher will jointly consider all requests where a public interest test is applied, or where there is any doubt on whether or not an exemption should be applied. In applying the public interest test they will:

- ♦ Document clearly the benefits from both disclosing and withholding the requested information; and
- ♦ Where necessary seek guidance on case law in deciding where the balance lies.

Reasons for disclosing/not disclosing the information will be reported to the next governing body meeting.

The day-to-day responsibility for implementation of the school's governing body's Information Policy and the provision of advice, guidance, publicity and interpretation of the policy is delegated to the headteacher.

The Headteacher will be a single point of reference and will:-

- ♦ Oversee all requests for information;
- ♦ Ensure systems are in place to deal with requests and to co-ordinate/update the Publication Scheme.
- ♦ Consider what information, training and guidance staff may need.
- ♦ Be responsible for maintaining a log of all request received and for ensuring they are responded to within the prescribed timescales.
- ♦ Ensure a record of refusals and reasons for refusals is kept, allowing the governing body to review the school Information Policy on an annual basis.
- ♦ Take a view on possibly sensitive areas.

## **How the school manage requests for information**

- ♦ The school will provide reasonable advice and assistance to individuals if they need help in putting a request for information together;
- ♦ Requests will be acknowledged within one school day.
- ♦ If there is any doubt on the scope of information requested clarification will be sought from the applicant.
- ♦ Requests will be responded to within the prescribed timescales.
- ♦ In some cases the disclosure of information may affect the rights of a third party. In such circumstances the school will ensure that disclosure of such information will be in line with FOI, DP and EIR legislation.
- ♦ Where the school receives a request to be dealt with under FOIA and some or all of the information is not held by the school and it is believed that another public authority may hold that information, then the school will ask the applicant if they wish the request to be transferred to the other authority once the information, held by the school has been disclosed. If the school is unable to facilitate the transfer of the request for information to another authority then, where possible, the applicant will be offered advice to enable him/her to pursue the request.
- ♦ The school will comply with its obligations on requests transferred by another public body in the same manner it would, had the request been received directly by the school.

## **Charging for providing information**

The school may, in some circumstances, charge an individual for releasing information in accordance with regulations. Charging for supplying information will be in line with current regulations.

- ♦ **FOI & EIR** requests the school will use the North Yorkshire County Council Charging Policy (a copy of which can be located in the NYCC Schools Information Governance Manual Section B, Appendix

4). Once the individual has been notified that a fee is payable if this not received, within 3 months of the notification, the request will be deemed to have lapsed.

- ♦ **DP** - charges will be made in line with current regulations.

If a charge applies, written notice will be given to the applicant and payment must be received before supplying the information requested.

### **Monitoring & Evaluation**

The headteacher will be responsible for periodically monitoring requests received and action taken to ensure that the school is complying with it information legislation and report annually to the school's Governing Body.

### **Complaints**

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

### **Records Management/Security & Control of Information**

The school recognises that the efficient management of its records and information is necessary to comply with its legal and regulatory obligations and to contribute to the effective overall management of the school.

- ♦ The school will ensure that records are managed in line with the guidance in the NYCC Schools' Information Governance Manual.
- ♦ Protocols will be in place to ensure the school knows what information is held and by whom.
- ♦ The school will use the North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) Schools' Record Retention and Destruction Schedule (RRDS) and will ensure records are retained for the appropriate period and no longer, unless there are special reasons for doing so. (A copy of the NYCC RRDS can be located in the NYCC Schools' Information Governance Manual Section B, Appendix 3). The school will ensure that NYCC is informed of any new records created or of records held by the school which do not appear in the RRDS.
- ♦ The school will ensure that records are held safely and securely, with access restricted where appropriate, and in line with the guidelines on security and access in the NYCC Schools' Information Governance Manual.
- ♦ The school will ensure that use of Email is properly controlled in line with the guidance in the NYCC Schools' Information Governance Manual.
- ♦ The school will ensure that use of the Internet is properly controlled in line with the guidance in the NYCC Schools' Information Governance Manual.
- ♦ The school will periodically review and monitor its records management systems to ensure, standards, procedures, guidelines and security measures are in place and that records are held no longer than necessary.

### **Training**

The school will ensure that appropriate guidance and training is given to the relevant staff, governors and other authorised school users on handling requests, records management, security and access to information, using Emails and the Internet.

### **Copyright**

When providing information, the school will ensure that there is no infringement of copyright legislation.

### **General**

Any user who contravenes this guidance will be dealt with appropriately. This may include disciplinary action and/or informing the Police where appropriate.

Standard costs to be used in the calculation of fees for requests under the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) 2004

Staff time	£25.00 per hour
Photocopying Costs	10p per copy
Printing Costs	10p per copy
Postage Costs	1 <sup>st</sup> class at cost or original estimate, whichever is lesser
Other items such as relevant translation	At cost or original estimate, whichever is lesser

### **NYCC CHARGING REGIME FOI and EIR**

Fee is less than £5.00	No charge will be made
Cost of fee between £5.00 and £450.00	If the cost to service a request is estimated at between £5.00 and £450.00 (approximately 17 staff hours plus £25 disbursements) then a charge for non-staff costs as above will be made
Cost of fee is over £450.00 (*)	If the cost to service a request is estimated to cost in excess of £450.00 (more than 17 staff hours plus £25 disbursements) then the full cost, including staff time at the above rate, will need to be charged
Aggregation of Requests (**)	If two or more requests are received within 60 consecutive working days, for the same or similar information either from the same person or different persons who appear to be acting as part of a campaign, then the charges will be aggregated. Once the cost exceeds £450.00 then the full costs, including staff time, will need to be charged
Mixed Requests	If a request is received in which the information is covered by more than one access to information regime then, for the purposes of calculating fees, it is necessary to separate out the constituent parts of the request to determine what fee may be charged. The above charging regime is applicable to the FOI element.

### **\* Where the fee is calculated at over £450.00 FOI only**

Section 16(1) requires the County Council to provide advice and assistance, "so far as it would be reasonable to expect the authority to do so, to persons who propose to make, or have made, requests for information"	Stage 1 – If the request is particularly wide-ranging, and therefore likely to be expensive to answer, the County Council must discuss this with the applicant to see if the question could be refined to a more manageable level, or resubmitted in part, to bring it below the £450 limit.
	Stage 2 – If after providing advice and assistance, as required under Section 16, the request is still over the appropriate limit the County Council can <b>either</b> turn the request down or answer the request and charge a fee.
	<b>Or</b> where the County Council decides to provide the information and charge a fee, and does not have other powers to do so, the County Council can charge on the basis of the costs outlined above, as well as the cost of informing the applicant whether the information is held and communicating the information to the applicant.

Where the fee is calculated at over £450 for a request for information under EIR the school will make a reasonable charge for the information.