

# Ellesmere Port Catholic High School

## Freedom of Information Policy

### Status

Statutory

### Background

Ellesmere Port Catholic High School is committed to complying with and implementing the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act (2000) and related legislation. This provides a general entitlement to any person to be able to access information held by school, subject to exemptions and conditions laid down by law.

### Scope

This policy applies to all information held by Ellesmere Port Catholic High School regardless of how it was created or received. It applies irrespective of the media on which the information is stored and whether the information is recorded on paper or held electronically. The Act's powers are fully retrospective and thus information is accessible no matter how old it may be. Similarly, information in draft form will also be accessible under the Act.

It should be noted that access to personal information (that is information from which a living individual can be identified) is governed under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Requests for access to such information will be treated as Subject Access Request in line with the requirements of this legislation.

### Dealing with Requests including timescales

Ellesmere Port Catholic High School will offer advice and assistance to anybody wishing to make a request for information. We are committed to dealing with requests within statutory guidelines, which means that a response will be made no more than 20 school days from the date of request and earlier if possible. This will be extended in specific circumstances on legal advice in connection with the public interest test. However, school is committed to providing a prompt service and every attempt will be made to provide the information earlier than the expiry of the 20 school day period. Repeated or vexatious requests for information will be refused. School will claim exemptions as appropriate whilst maintaining a commitment to openness, scrutiny and the public interest. School will put in place an appropriate procedure for measuring the public interest when considering a qualified (also known as "non-absolute") exemption which requires such a test.

Any request in writing will be considered a Freedom of Information request including those received by email and fax. There is no need for requests to indicate that they are made under the Act and all requests will be dealt with under this policy.

## **Charging**

The school will only charge a fee to cover the expenses actually incurred in providing the information such as photocopying and postage. In this instance, the school will issue a fees notice advising the requester of the amount it will charge and how they can pay.

The school will issue a fees notice within the 20 school day period for responding to the request and will do this as soon as possible. The 20 school day period for providing the information will not include the period beginning with when the school gives the requester the fees notice and ending on the day on which it received the fee.

School reserves the right to refuse requests where the cost of locating, retrieving and editing (where necessary) the information would exceed the statutory maximum (currently £450).

Ellesmere Port Catholic High School recognises that requests for environmental information may be made over the telephone and that different exemptions apply.

## **Relationship with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)**

Ellesmere Port Catholic High School is under a legal duty to protect personal data under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). We will carefully consider our responsibilities under this Act before releasing personal information about living individuals, including current and former employees and pupils.

## **Responsibilities**

Ellesmere Port Catholic High School has a responsibility to make information available in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act. Responsibility for compliance with this and related policies will rest with the Governing Body who will delegate those responsibilities to the Head Teacher. Complaints regarding the use of this policy should be directed to the Governing Body.

All school staff have a responsibility to ensure that any request for information they receive is dealt with under the Act and in compliance with this policy. They are also responsible for good information handling practice and for implementing records management policies and procedures as appropriate to their post.

## **Contact Details**

For advice and assistance please contact the school on 0151 355 2373 or email [admin@email.epchs.co.uk](mailto:admin@email.epchs.co.uk)

Further advice and information about the Freedom of Information Act, including full details of exemptions and advice on the public interest test, is available from the Information Commissioner's website at [www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk](http://www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk)

Signed on behalf of Governing Body (Chair)

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized, cursive letter 'Z' or similar character, positioned to the right of the text 'Signed on behalf of Governing Body (Chair)'. The signature is contained within a light grey rectangular box.

Date: October 2018

Lead of Review: Business Manager

Governor Committee: Leadership & Management

Date for Review: July 2019