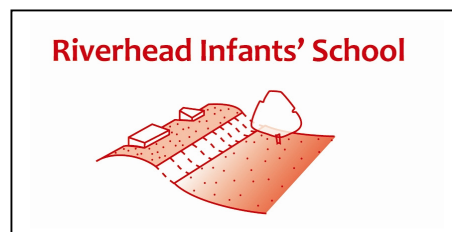


# Riverhead Infants' School

## Access to Information Policy



Agreed by the Board of Governors

Signed:  Chair of Governors

Signed:  Headteacher

Date: October 2011

Next Review Date: October 2016

# Policy on Access to Information

## 1 Aims and objectives

1.1 The aims and objectives of access to information are:

- to provide transparency and openness about the way in which the school, as a public body, operates and makes decisions;
- to protect information which would be prejudicial to children if it were made public;
- to provide clarity to interested parties on what information would not be made available and how available information can be accessed.

Any request for information should be made to the relevant member of staff at the school. Information will be provided immediately as far as possible. If the class teacher or reception staff are unable to provide the information requested, the Headteacher should be approached who will provide or find out the information, if possible.

## 2 Information

2.1 We understand information to include all aspects of the way in which the school operates. We expect to provide information on day-to-day activities and the workings of the school as a matter of course, however information on individual children will not be made available. We will consider all requests for information on any aspect of the school's operation, with a view to providing the information requested, only withholding it in certain circumstances as noted below in Appendix A.

## 3 Provision of Information under the Freedom of Information Act (2000)

3.1 The principle relevant legislation is the Freedom of Information Act (2000) (FOIA), which the school supports. Information available under the FOIA in principle, includes all correspondence or other documentation within the school and between individuals or organisations and the school. As a consequence, all correspondence with the school from any source, is included in this regime. In addition, all correspondence between the school and its governors, or between governors is considered included, as does any correspondence between the PTA and the school. The school cannot guarantee to uphold confidentiality if a correspondent with the school marks their correspondence "Confidential". The provisions of the Act will be reviewed and the correspondence considered against the criteria of the Act.

3.2 In the event that an applicant makes a formal request under the FOIA, we will consider the request and respond within 20 working days of receipt. All requests for information under the FOIA should be made in writing to the Headteacher. The request must state clearly what information is required, the name of the person making the request and an address for correspondence. Requests in writing include by letter, fax or e-mail. The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that requests are answered within the designated time.

- 3.3 Certain types of information will not be made available under an FOIA request; reasons will be given when a request is denied. A list of the most commonly applicable exemptions is included in Appendix A.
- 3.4 The school will not normally make a charge for information. In the event that the school suffers a cost in making available the information, it will consider making a charge for reimbursement of those costs.
- 3.4 Information provided in confidence by third parties to the school may not be classified as in confidence under the FOIA. In some circumstances, the information would have to be made public. This includes confidentiality clauses in contracts, which will be considered on their individual merits under the FOIA.

#### **4 Withheld information**

- 4.1 An applicant who is not satisfied with the reason given for withholding information should contact the Chair of Governors to have the decision reviewed. The Chair of Governors will review the application of the exemptions and the decision not to release the information and come to a decision on whether to uphold or overturn the decision.
- 4.2 In the event that the Chair of Governors agrees to uphold the decision not to release the information and the applicant is still not satisfied, the applicant can apply to the Information Commission on whether the school as acted in accordance with the FOIA. The Information Commission is an independent body, which determines whether or not a public body has complied with its obligations under the Act and within the codes of practice.

#### **5 Monitoring and review**

- 5.1 Monitoring the policy and practice of making information accessible is the role of the governors. Any applications for information made under the FOIA and the response given, will be notified to the governors through the Headteacher's report.
- 5.2 This policy will be reviewed at least every five years.

**Exemptions to the provision of Information include, but are not limited to:**

1. Information which is reasonably accessible by another means (eg on the web site);
2. Information intended for future publication;
3. Law enforcement;
4. Prejudicial to the effective conduct of public affairs;
5. Health & safety;
6. Personal information, whether regarding the person or child of the person making the request (addressed under data protection) or regarding a third party;
7. Information provided in confidence;
8. Legal professional privilege;
9. Commercial information;
10. Information that is prohibited from disclosure by law.