

Freedom of Information Publication Policy



OWNED BY:	VP Curriculum & Quality					
DATE OF LAST REVIEW	October 2024					
PLANNED NEXT REVIEW:	October 2027					
APPROVAL:	October 2024					
APPLIES TO:	Staff	✓	Student	✓	Public	✓

1. Introduction

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI) gives rights of public access to information held by public authorities. Adopting a publication scheme is a requirement of Section 19 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The purpose of the Act is to promote greater openness by public authorities, which includes Sixth Form Colleges.

This policy details the process, timescales and costs related to FOI requests.

All requests for information must be processed through the Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality.

2. Legal Requirement

Adopting a publication scheme is a requirement of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. This Act promotes greater openness and accountability across the public sector by requiring all 'public authorities' to make information available proactively, through a publication scheme.

A publication scheme is a document, which describes the information a public authority publishes, or intends to publish. In this context, 'publish' means to make information available, routinely.

Public authorities are defined in the Act and include universities, further education and sixth form colleges.

3. Requests for Information

A request for information from the College can be made in writing or via e-mail to all main client-interface points, receptions, student services, faculty offices, the Clerk to the Corporation or the Office of the Principal; but the most effective route will be to email quality.officer@cirencester.ac.uk. The request must include an address for correspondence. This need not be the person's residential or work address – it can be any address to which you can write to them, including a postal or email address. The form in **Appendix 1** must be completed and the request must describe the specific information required.

The College must respond to all legitimate requests within a period of not more than twenty working college days, the first day being the day of the receipt of the request or, if that day is not a working day, the first working day thereafter. The Act only covers recorded information we hold.

The College will provide all reasonable assistance and advice to those requesting information, wishing to request information or considering making a request for information, in order to ensure they receive the most appropriate information and documentation.

Requests for information arising from the Data Protection Act will be considered within the terms of that act also.

Anyone has a right to request information of the College. In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act the College reserves the right to determine the authenticity of a request and of the person making it.

Information held by the College that is not published under this scheme can be requested in writing, when its provision will be considered in accordance with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act.

4. Refusing a Request

An entire request will be refused under the following circumstances:

- It would cost too much or take too much staff time to deal with the request.
- The request is vexatious.
- The request repeats a previous request from the same person.
- If it conflicts with the Colleges commercial interests.
- If the request would result in personal information being provided.

In addition, the Freedom of Information Act contains a number of exemptions that allow the withholding information from a requester. In some cases it allows the refusal, confirmation or denial whether the information is held.

Other exemptions are based on the harm that would arise or would be likely arise from disclosure, for example, if disclosure would be likely to prejudice a criminal investigation or prejudice someone's commercial interests.

We will not release detailed information about our infrastructure and what IT security systems we have in place, the suppliers and versions of our IT security, the frequency at which we update and amend our security, details of vulnerabilities and what we have done to strengthen those.

There is also an exemption for personal data if releasing it would be contrary to the UK General Data Protection Regulation (the UK GDPR) or the Data Protection Act 2018 (the DPA2018). If the revealing of non-personal information enables the identification of any individual within the College, this information will be withheld.

The College will refuse a request if the cost of providing the information is over £450 or if the information is otherwise legally exempt from disclosure. You will be asked if you want to proceed with a request before work is done that will attract a charge.

5. Charges and Payments

The College may charge for the provision of information but aims to make the maximum amount of information readily available at minimum inconvenience and cost to the public.

Charges for routinely published material will be justified and transparent and kept to a minimum. They will only cover actual disbursements incurred such as photocopying, postage and packing, and costs directly incurred as a result of viewing information. Those requesting information are advised of the charge at the outset, or as soon as they can be quantified in advance of production.

Material which is provided and accessed on the College's public website shall be provided free of charge.

Because of the costs involved in locating or copying what you need, Cirencester College retains the right granted under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to charge fees where necessary and these will be in accordance with the Act and any other relevant legislation. Where compilation of data is in our view particularly onerous it will be our intention to charge an additional sum of £25 per person hour to cover locating documents, copying and postage (up to a maximum of £450 as defined within the Act).

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

If no payment is forthcoming within the twenty working college days period, the response time may be suspended. If no further request or contact is forthcoming from the original requester of information within three months of the original or a subsequent request, the College shall have the right to assume the request is no longer active.

6. Complaints and Appeals

Complaints about the College's conduct under the Act must be made by the customer to the College in the first instance.

If the complaint is not resolved with the College, the customer has the right to appeal to the Information Commissioner who will decide whether the request has been handled correctly and issue a Decision Notice or an Enforcement Notice accordingly.

Both parties have the right of appeal to an Information Tribunal.

7. Status of the Policy

This policy does not form part of the contract of employment but it is a condition of employment that staff will comply with the rules and policies made by the College. Any failure to follow the policy can therefore result in disciplinary proceedings. In certain serious circumstances such as (but not exclusively) unauthorised disclosure of information, this may constitute gross misconduct and could result in dismissal.

Any member of staff who considers that the policy has not been followed in respect of personal data about themselves should raise the matter with the Data Protection Officer initially. If the matter is not resolved it should be raised as a formal grievance.

8. Responsibilities of Staff

All staff are responsible for:

- Forwarding any formal FoI requests to the FoI Office in good time so that a response can be provided within the timescales detailed.
- Not responding to the requestor; it is important that all requests are dealt with in a consistent manner and this is the responsibility of the FoI Officer.

9. Data Protection

When managing an employee's personal data information will be collected in accordance with the College's data protection policy. Data collected is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of information relating to this policy. Inappropriate access or disclosure of employee data constitutes a data breach and should be reported in accordance with the organisation's data protection policy immediately. It may also constitute a disciplinary offence, which will be dealt with under the College's disciplinary procedure. For further information please read the College's Data Protection Policy. The Data Protection Lead is the VP Curriculum & Quality.


10. Equality

As with all College Policies and Procedures due care has been taken to ensure that this policy is appropriate to all employees regardless of gender, age, race, marital status, maternity, ethnicity, disability, gender identity, sexual orientation or religion/faith.

The policy will be applied fairly and consistently whilst upholding the College's commitment to providing equality to all.

If any employee feels that this policy does not meet this aim please contact the College's Head of of Human Resources

Appendix 1

 <p>cirencester college a beacon college</p>	<p align="center">The Freedom of Information Act 2000</p> <p align="center">Access Request Form</p>
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Please read the College Freedom of Information (FOI) policy before completing this form.

This form must be completed to enable the College to provide a quick and accurate response to your request.

Part A - Your Details

Title	
Surname	
Forename(s)	
Address	
Contact Telephone number(s)	
Contact e-mail address	
Description of your request (What data do you want exactly?) Please provide a full description of the information you would like the College to provide so that we can process your request promptly and efficiently.	
Date of request	
Official use: date request received	

Please note that the information you have requested may be subject to a fee. We will advise you of any charge and process your request on receipt of payment.

Written requests should be sent to:

Freedom of Information Access Request

Data Protection Lead

Cirencester College

Stroud Road Cirencester

GL7 1XA

Telephone: 01285 640994

The information you provide on this form will be used to process your request. Summary information may be retained for statistical or audit purposes. By providing this information you consent to Cirencester College storing your information for these purposes and processing your data in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

Please sign and date below

Signed:

Date: