



Maria Fidelis
Catholic School FCJ

Freedom of Information/Environmental Regulations Policy	
Committee	Finance, Premises and Staffing
Author	Camden Model Policy and Key for School Leaders
Approved By Governing Body	23 rd June 2025
Frequency of Review	1 year
Next review Date	Summer 2026

The FCJ Schools' Vision

Our vision is that FCJ schools are communities of personal and academic excellence.

Strong in companionship, the unique giftedness of every person in these faith communities is recognised, nourished and celebrated.

Our hope and expectation is that, through God's grace working in us all, each young person grows into their best self, with zest for life and the generosity and confidence to use their talents and gifts in the service of others.

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure Maria Fidelis Catholic School complies with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIRs).

2. Background

The FOIA provides the public with a statutory right of access to recorded information held by the School, subject to certain exemptions, within 20 school days. The Act is fully retrospective and applies to all information that falls within the scope of the Act. Section 19 of the Act also obliges the School to make information pro-actively available in the form of an approved 'publication scheme'.

In addition, individuals currently have a statutory right of access to their own personal data under the Data Protection Act. Individuals access rights to personal data are extended by the FOIA through amendments to the access provisions of the Data Protection Act.

The Environmental Information Regulation (EIR) provides a statutory right of access to 'environmental information', as defined in these Regulations. The EIR are also fully retrospective.

The Information Commissioner enforces these three information regimes. Each regime contains certain categories of exempt information, where information can be withheld.

Any decision to withhold information under an exemption can be referred by the applicant to the Information Commissioner, who can overturn any decision to withhold information. For the purposes of this policy, the 'public' is defined as any individual or organisation anywhere in the world and an 'information request' refers to any request for recorded information made under the FOIA, EIR or DPA.

3. Policy Statement

3.1 We will ensure that:

- We take a proactive and positive approach towards information rights.
- We will publish a significant amount of routinely published information about the school on our website, which is our Publication Scheme.
- We will deal with requests informally as 'business as usual' where possible.
- We will deal with formal requests under FOIA or EIRs within the statutory timescales, apply exemptions or exceptions properly, consider the public interest test where relevant, and always have a presumption in favour of disclosure.
- We undertake Internal Reviews within the required timescales, and they will be carried out by someone other than the case holder.
- We will meet our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and any other legislation to provide information in other forms and formats.

This policy does not cover personal written communications (such as personal e-mails sent by staff). The School's Data Protection Policy establishes the standards regarding the use of 'personal data' (as defined in the DPA and General Data Protection Regulation). These requests are exempt for the FOI under section 40 and shall be processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA).

4. Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Environmental Information Regulations 2004 Requests

- 4.1 The FOIA and EIRs apply to requests for recorded information held by the school which cannot be answered as a 'business as usual' request. We will answer requests quickly and informally as 'business as usual' where possible.
- 4.2 Anyone can make a request for recorded information. FOI Requests must be made in writing such as by email or post, although EIR request can be made verbally (a form is available on the website – see Appendix A). The requester must give their name and an address to correspond with them, this can be email or post. Requesters do not have to explain why they are making a request or justify their request.
- 4.3 Whilst a request can be in the form of a question, rather than a request for specific documents, the school does not have to create new information or give an opinion or judgment that is not already recorded.
- 4.4 We will acknowledge receipt of requests within 3 school days during term time, and as soon as practicable during school holidays. Where needed we will seek clarification to establish or in some cases help the requester refine their request before it is deemed valid. The timescales for response commence after receipt of a valid request.
- 4.5 When we have received a valid request, we will reply within the statutory timescales. The timescale is 20 school days or 60 working days whichever is the shorter. The Data Protection Advice Team will help you calculate this if required. The presumption is that the information will be provided. However, there will be occasions where we will not hold the information. Applicants will be informed if this is the case.
- 4.6 If any information is to be withheld then we will send a response that confirms or denies whether we hold the information (unless a specific exemption permits a neither confirm nor deny response to be made). The response will give details of the exemption/exception applied and why it applies. Where required the response will set out the public interest test.
- 4.7 We will only apply charges to the communication costs of some requests (e.g. photocopying, postage and packaging, copying) where these are onerous on the school (Appendix B). If this is the case we will inform the requester and give them 3 months to pay the fee before the request will lapse. On these occasions the information will be released upon receipt of any fees.
- 4.8 All responses will explain how to request an Internal Review and how to contact the Information Commissioner's Office if the requester is unhappy with the outcome of their Internal Review. A review can be requested within 2 months from the date of the response.
- 4.9 The Chair of Governors or a nominated Governor will undertake the Internal Review and will inform the requester whether they uphold or not the original response in full or in part. They will respond to an Internal Review within 25 school days during term time from the receipt date of that request.
- 4.10 The Information Commissioner (ICO) (Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF Telephone: 01625 545 700 www.ico.org.uk) is the FOIA and EIRs regulator. The school will abide by the decisions of the Information Commissioners Office unless it appeals to the Information Tribunal.

5. Roles and responsibilities

- 5.1 The Headmaster has overall responsibility for FOIA and EIRs in the school although day to day responsibility may be delegated to other members of the senior leadership team.
- 5.2 The Chair of Governors is the Qualified Person for determining whether disclosure would be likely to prejudice the effective conduct of public affairs for the s36 exemption.
- 5.3 The Chair of Governors will be responsible for undertaking Internal Reviews, unless s36 has been engaged in which case a nominated member of the Governing body with no prior involvement will be responsible for the review.

6. Handling and tracking of requests

- 6.1 Requests for information under FOI should be in writing and whilst all members of staff will assist any requester where possible, we have a designated email address to assist with prompt processing. Requesters can make an EIR request verbally but it is helpful for them to make it in writing. The email address is : office@mariafidelis.camden.sch.uk
- 6.2 All requests for information will be logged by the School Business Manager and tracked to ensure that timescales are met and to assist identification of repeat, similar or vexatious requests.
- 6.3 We will annually review multiple or similar requests for information on subjects not already included in our Publication Scheme and this will lead to consideration for inclusion within it.



Freedom of information request

Please fill in the form below to make your request. Feel free to delete the parts highlighted in yellow, which provide more instructions to help you.

Send the completed form to office@mariafidelis.camden.sch.uk

Name of requester	Please specify your real name or the name of the person or organisation you're requesting the information on behalf of.
Contact details	This can be any postal or email address you can receive correspondence to, including personal and work addresses.
Information you want to access	Please be as specific as possible. We may return to you for further clarification if we're not clear what you're looking for.
How you want to receive the information	The means of communication here can be 1 or more of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A copy of the information (e.g. hard copy, electronic document)• An opportunity to come in and inspect the information

APPENDIX B



Maria Fidelis
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Schedule of Charges

DESCRIPTION	BASIS OF CHARGE
Photocopying/printing @10p per A4 printed side (black & white)	Paper, time, printing
Photocopying/printing @20p per A3 printed side (black & white)	
Photocopying/printing @25p per A4 printed side (colour)	Paper, time, printing
Photocopying/printing @50p per A3 printed side (colour)	
Postage	Actual cost of Royal Mail standard 2 nd class or cost of secure delivery