



# Freedom of Information Policy

<b>Last Reviewed</b>	<b>May 2024</b>
<b>Next review</b>	<b>May 2025</b>
<b>Persons responsible</b>	<b>SLT</b>
<b>Governor committee</b>	<b>F&amp;P</b>

## **This is Stocks Green Primary School's Publication Scheme on information available under the Freedom of Information Act 2000**

The governing body is responsible for maintenance of this scheme.

### **1. Introduction: what a publication scheme is and why it has been developed**

One of the aims of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (which is referred to as FOIA in the rest of this document) is that public authorities, including all maintained schools, are obliged to publish certain information about their activities via a **publication scheme (See Appendix 1)**; and members of the public are entitled to request information from public authorities.

To do this Stocks Green Primary School must produce a **publication scheme** (See Appendix 1 and 2), setting out:

- The classes of information which Stocks Green Primary School publish or intend to publish;
- The manner in which the information will be published; and
- Whether the information is available free of charge or on payment.

The scheme covers information already published and information which is to be published in the future. All information in our publication scheme is available in paper form from our school office.

Some information which Stocks Green Primary School hold may not be made public, for example personal information. (See Appendix 4: GDPR and Data Protection Policy)

This publication scheme conforms to the model scheme for schools approved by the Information Commissioner.

Stocks Green Primary School may be breaching the FOI act if:

- Stocks Green Primary School fail to respond adequately to a request for information;
- Stocks Green Primary School fail to adopt the model publication scheme, or do not publish the correct information; or
- Stocks Green Primary School deliberately destroy, hide or alter requested information to prevent it being released.

(The last point is a criminal offence that individuals and public authorities can be charged with under the Act).

### **2. Aims and Objectives**

**The vision of our school is:**

Stocks Green School is at the heart of the community.

Stocks Green Primary School aim for children to develop a lifelong love of learning and thrive in a nurturing environment, centred on independence and self-motivation.

Our children develop the skills that enable them to be:

- reflective learners
- responsible citizens
- creative and analytical thinkers who are well prepared for future challenges

**Our aims for the future encompass the following;**

**Equality:**

- ◆ Our school is a supportive learning community, where all should be able to achieve to the maximum of their potential, regardless of race, gender, religion, social class or ability.

**Collaboration:**

- ◆ Stocks Green Primary School work in collaboration and consultation with parents and the community to ensure that the very highest standards are achieved by, and on behalf of our pupils.

**Respect:**

- ◆ Everyone at Stocks Green is expected to show respect for the school, the resources they use and the school community. In this way, we can truly claim to be members of a school family.

**Innovation:**

- ◆ Stocks Green is empowered to find its own identity as a school, and we want every member of our school community to feel able to innovate and experiment to find the most successful way forward for learning.

**Enjoyment:**

- ◆ Learning happens when people are engaged, secure and supported. In providing this type of learning environment we can ensure that everyone enjoys learning at Stocks Green, and subsequently learning becomes much more effective.

and this publication scheme is a means of showing how we are pursuing these aims.

### **3. Categories of information published**

The publication scheme guides you to information which Stocks Green Primary School currently publish (or have recently published) or which Stocks Green Primary School will publish in the future. This is split into categories of information known as 'classes'.

The classes of information that Stocks Green Primary School undertake to make available are organised into seven broad topic areas:

**Class 1 - Who we are and what we do.**

(Organisational information, structures, locations and contacts).

**Class 2 – What we spend and how we spend it.**

(Financial information relating to projected and actual income and expenditure, procurement, contracts and financial audit).

**Class 3 – What our priorities are and how we are doing.**

(Strategies and plans, performance indicators, audits, inspections and reviews).

**Class 4 – How we make decisions.**

(Decision making processes and records of decisions).

**Class 5 – Our policies and procedures.**

(Current written protocols, policies and procedures for delivering our services and responsibilities).

**Class 6 – Lists and Registers.**

(Currently maintained lists and registers only - this does not include the attendance register).

**Class 7 – The services we offer.**

(Information about the services we offer, including leaflets, guidance and newsletters produced for the public and businesses).

**Also under section 46** of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Code of Practice states that every authority should have a **Records Management Policy** in place. (See Appendix 3).

**4. How to request information**

If you require a paper version of any of the documents within the scheme, please contact the school by telephone, email or letter. Contact details are set out below.

Email: **office@stocks-green.kent.sch.uk**

Tel: **01732 832758**

Contact Address: **The School Office, Stocks Green Primary School, Leigh Road, Hildenborough, Tonbridge , Kent TN11 9AE.**

To help us process your request quickly, please clearly mark any correspondence **“PUBLICATION SCHEME REQUEST”** (in CAPITALS please)

If the information you're looking for isn't available via the scheme you can still contact the school to ask if we have it.

**5. If we receive a request for information.**

Everyone has a right to request information from a public authority. Stocks Green Primary School have two separate duties when responding to these requests:

- to tell the applicant whether Stocks Green Primary School hold any information falling within the scope of their request; and
- to provide that information.

Stocks Green Primary School will respond to a request within 20 working days (from date of receipt).

For a request to be valid under the Freedom of Information Act it must be in writing, but requesters do not have to mention the Act or direct their request to a designated member of staff. Any letter or email to a public authority asking for information is a request for recorded information under the Act.

Stocks Green Primary School don't have to treat every enquiry formally as a request under the Act. Sometimes it can be dealt with as a normal customer enquiry under our usual customer service procedures, for example, if a member of the public wants to know whether we have a space for their child. The provisions of the Act need to come into force only if:

- we cannot provide the requested information straight away; or
- the requester makes it clear they expect a response under the Act.

When we receive a request, we will read it carefully to make sure we know what is being asked for. Stocks Green Primary School must not give the requestor information we think may be helpful; we must consider all the information that falls within the scope of the request, so we must identify this first. We will always consider contacting the applicant to check that we have understood their request correctly.

We will read a request objectively. We will not get diverted by the tone of the language the requester has used, our previous experience of them (unless they explicitly refer us to this) or what we think they would be most interested in.

If Stocks Green Primary School can't answer the request because we are not sure what is being requested, we will contact the requester as soon as possible for clarification.

Stocks Green Primary School will not deal with the request until we have received whatever clarification we reasonably need. However, we will consider whether we can give the requester advice and assistance to enable them to clarify or rephrase their request. For example, we could explain what options may be available to them and ask whether any of these would adequately answer their request.

The time for compliance will not begin until we have received the necessary clarification to allow us to answer the request.

The Act only covers recorded information Stocks Green Primary School hold. When compiling a response to a request for information, we may have to draw from multiple sources of information we hold, but we don't have to make up an answer or find out information from elsewhere if we don't already have the relevant information in recorded form.

If Stocks Green Primary School don't have the information the requester has asked for, we can comply with the request by telling them this, in writing. If we know that the information is held by another public authority, we will transfer the request to them or advise the requester to redirect their request.

Before sending the information in answer to a request, we should double check that we have included the correct documents and that the information we are releasing does not contain unnoticed personal data or other sensitive details which we did not intend to disclose. (See Appendix 4: GDPR and Data Protection Policy).

(This might be a particular issue if we are releasing an electronic document. Electronic documents often contain extra hidden information or 'metadata' in addition to the visible text of the document. For example, metadata might include the name of the author, or details of earlier draft versions. In particular, a spreadsheet displaying information as a table will often also contain the original detailed source data, even if this is not immediately visible at first glance).

## **6. Timescales for responding.**

Our main obligation under the Act is to respond to requests promptly, with a time limit acting as the longest time we can take. For schools, the standard time limit is 20 school days, or 60 working days if this is shorter, counting the first working day after the request is received as the first day.

(Working day means any day other than a Saturday, Sunday, or public holidays and bank holidays; this may or may not be the same as the days you are open for business or staff are in work).

The time allowed for complying with a request starts when your organisation receives it, not when it reaches the freedom of information officer or other relevant member of staff.

## **7. What if the information is inaccurate?**

The Act covers recorded information, whether or not it is accurate. We cannot refuse a request for information simply because we know the information is out of date, incomplete or inaccurate. To avoid misleading the requester, we should normally be able to explain to them the nature of the information, or provide extra information to help put the information into context.

## **8. Paying for information**

Single copies of information covered by this publication are provided free unless stated otherwise. (See Appendix 1). If your request means that we have to do a lot of photocopying or printing, or pay a large postage charge, or is for a priced item such as some printed publications we will let you know the cost before fulfilling your request. Where there is a charge this will be indicated by a £ sign in the description box.

## **9. Stocks Green Primary School can refuse a request if:**

- it would cost too much (over £450) or take too long (over 18 hours) to deal with the request;
- the request is vexatious;
- the request repeats a previous request from the same person.

In addition, the Freedom of Information Act contains a number of exemptions that allow us to withhold information from a requester. In some cases it will allow us to refuse to confirm or deny whether we hold the information.

Some exemptions relate to a particular type of information, for instance information relating to government policy. Other exemptions are based on the harm that would arise or would be likely to arise from disclosure, for example, if disclosure would likely to prejudice a criminal investigation or prejudice someone's commercial interests.

There is also an exemption for personal data if releasing it would be contrary to the Data Protection Act. (See Appendix 4: GDPR Policy)

If Stocks Green Primary School are refusing all or any part of a request, we will send the requester a written refusal notice. We will issue a refusal notice if we are either refusing to say whether we hold information at all, or confirming that information is held but refusing to release it.

## 10. What must be included in a refusal notice?

Stocks Green Primary School will refuse requests in writing promptly or within 20 working days (or the standard time for compliance) of receiving it.

In the refusal notice Stocks Green Primary School should:

- explain what provision of the Act we are relying on to refuse the request and why;
- give details of any internal review (complaints) procedure we offer or state that we do not have one; and
- explain the requester's right to complain to the ICO (Information Commissioner's office) including contact details for this.

## 11. Feedback and Complaints

Stocks Green Primary School welcome any comments or suggestions you may have about the scheme. If you want to make any comments about this publication scheme or if you require further assistance or wish to make a complaint then initially this should be addressed to: ***The Chair of Governors, Stocks Green Primary School, Leigh Road, Hildenborough, Tonbridge, Kent TN11 9AE. Email: [governors@stocks-green.kent.sch.uk](mailto:governors@stocks-green.kent.sch.uk)***

If you are not satisfied with the assistance that you get or if Stocks Green Primary School have not been able to resolve your complaint and you feel that a formal complaint needs to be made then this should be addressed to the Information Commissioner's Office. This is the organisation that ensures compliance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and that deals with formal complaints.

They can be contacted at:

***Information Commissioner, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire,  
SK9 5AF***

or

**Enquiry/Information Line: 01625 545 745**

**E Mail: [publications@ic-foi.demon.co.uk](mailto:publications@ic-foi.demon.co.uk).**

**Website : [www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk](http://www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk)**

**Related Documents:**

**Appendix 1 – Publication Scheme**

**Appendix 2 – Definition document for the governing bodies of maintained and other state-funded schools in England**

**Appendix 3 – Records Management Policy**

**Appendix 4 – GDPR and Data Protection Policy**