

# Freedom of Information Policy

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## 1. INTRODUCTION:

- 1.1 What the 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, should be clear and proactive about the information they will make public.
- 1.2 To do this we must produce a publication scheme, setting out:
  - The Types of information which we publish or intend to publish
  - The manner in which the information will be published
  - 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.
- 1.3 All information in our publication scheme is currently available in paper form. Some information which we hold may not be made public, for example personal information.
- 1.4 This publication scheme conforms to the model scheme for schools approved by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). CATEGORIES OF INFORMATION PUBLISHED The publication scheme guides you to information which we currently publish (or have recently published) or which we will publish in the future.
- 1.5 This is split into categories of information and is listed below as a guide:
  - Type 1 – Who we are and what we do
  - Type 2 – What we spend and how we spend it
  - Type 3 – What our priorities are and how we are doing
  - Type 4 – How we make decisions
  - Type 5 – Our policies and procedures
  - Type 6 – Lists and Registers
  - Type 7 – The services we offer

## 2. HOW TO REQUEST

- 2.1 If you require a paper version of any of the documents within the scheme, please contact Footsteps Lydia Hall/Chris Hall, Tel: 0208 881 4050 Footsteps Trust Academy, New River Sports Centre, London N22 5QW.

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

### **3. PAYING FOR INFORMATION**

- 3.1 Information published on our website is free, although you may incur costs from your data service provider. Single copies of information covered by this publication are provided free unless 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 or videos or is for multiple copies.

### **4. TIME LIMITS**

- 4.1 Compliance with a request must be prompt and within the time limit of 20 working days (excluding school holidays). Failure to comply could result in a complaint by the requester to the Information Commissioner. The response time starts from the time the request is received. Where Footsteps has asked the enquirer for more information to enable it to answer, the 20 working days start time begins when this further information has been received. If some information is exempt this will be detailed in Footsteps' response. If a qualified exemption applies and Footsteps need more time to consider the public interest test, Footsteps will reply in 20 working days stating that an exemption applies but include an estimate of the date by which a decision on the public interest test will be made. This should be within a "reasonable" time. Where Footsteps has notified the enquirer that a charge is to be made, the time period stops until payment is received.

### **5. EXEMPTIONS**

- 5.1 The presumption of the Freedom of Information Act is that Footsteps will disclose information unless the Act provides a specific reason to withhold it. The Act recognises the need to preserve confidentiality and protect sensitive material in certain circumstances. Footsteps may refuse all/part of a request, if one of the following applies: -
- There is an exemption to disclosure within the act;
  - The information sought is not held;
  - The request is considered vexatious or repeated; or
  - The cost of compliance exceeds the threshold.
- 5.2 A series of exemptions are set out in the Act which allow the withholding of information in relation to an enquiry. Some are very specialised in their application (such as national security) and would not usually be relevant to schools.

### **6. VEXATIOUS REQUESTS**

- 6.1 There is no obligation on Footsteps to comply with vexatious requests. A vexatious request is one which is designed to cause inconvenience, harassment or expense rather than to obtain information, and would require a substantial diversion of resources or would otherwise undermine the work of Footsteps. This however does not provide an excuse for bad records management. In addition, Footsteps do not have to comply with repeated identical or

substantially similar requests from the same applicant unless a “reasonable” interval has elapsed between requests.

## **7. FEEDBACK**

- 7.1 We welcome 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 please contact Chris Hall, Principal, or Mrs Lydia Dall, Operations Officer via Footsteps office or email: [info@footstepstrust.com](mailto:info@footstepstrust.com) If you are not satisfied with the assistance that you get or if we have not been able to resolve your query satisfactorily, you can address the matter to the CEO/Headteacher. Further to this you may contact the Information Commissioner’s Office. This is the organisation that ensures compliance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and that deals with issues.