



“Inspiring learning, developing character, building futures”

MIEX policies and procedures

Freedom of Information Policy

(inc Publication Scheme)

Aim

The College, as a public authority, has a legal obligation to comply with the Freedom of Information Act, 2000. The Act has the aim of promoting greater openness about the way public authorities operate. The Freedom of Information Act provides a statutory right, with effect from 1st January 2005, for members of the public to have access to information held by public authorities, subject to certain exemptions. The Blackpool Sixth Form College has two obligations under the Act:

1. To adopt and maintain a Publication Scheme;
2. To deal with requests for information from individual members of the public.

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| Policy authorisation: | Management: Senior Leadership Team |
| Date of policy introduction or most recent update: | August 2023 |
| Date of next policy review: | August 2025 |
| Policy author: | Head of MIS and Examinations |

1. Introduction

Public authorities spend money collected from taxpayers and make decisions that can significantly affect many people's lives. Access to information helps the public make public authorities accountable for their actions and allows public debate to be better informed and more productive. Public authorities include government departments, local authorities, the NHS, state schools FE education and police forces. However, the Act does not necessarily cover every organisation that receives public money. For example, it does not cover some charities that receive grants and certain private sector organisations that perform public functions.

2. Scope of the policy

2.1. Freedom of Information Regulations Act 2000 ("FOIA")

The FOIA provides public access to information held by public authorities. It does this in two ways:

- Public authorities are obliged to publish certain information about their activities; and
- Members of the public are entitled to request information from public authorities.

The Act covers any recorded information that is held by a public authority in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and by UK-wide public authorities based in Scotland.

2.2. What is a publication Scheme

- 2.2.1. 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. These descriptions are 'classes' of information'. The scheme is not a list of the actual publications, because this will inevitably change as new material is published or existing material is revised. It is, however, the public authority's commitment to make available the information.
- 2.2.2. A publication scheme must set out the classes or categories of information published. It must also make clear how the information described can be accessed and whether charges will apply to a request for information to be supplied.
- 2.2.3. The Act does not give people access to their own personal data (information about themselves) such as their education records. If a member of the public wants to see information that the college holds about them they should make a Data Subject Access Request under the General Data Protection Regulations and supporting UK legislation (please refer to the college Data Protection Policy or email

the Data Protection Officer dpo@blackpoolsixth.ac.uk for further information).

3. General principles of the policy

- 3.1. Adopting a publication scheme is a requirement of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA). 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.
- 3.2. 'Public authorities' are defined in the Act and include universities, further education colleges and sixth form colleges.
- 3.3. The Blackpool Sixth Form College is compliant with the requirement of the Further Education model provided by the Information Commission. The College is committed to making as much information about college activities as possible generally available to the public either through published documents (including those published on the college website), or on request.

4. Accessing information covered by the Publication Scheme

- 4.1. The classes of information the college publishes are described in Appendix A of this policy
- 4.2. Next to each class is an indication of the manner of how the information will be made available
- 4.3. Requests can be made:-
 - By Post: Data Protection Officer
The Blackpool Sixth Form College
Blackpool Old Road
Blackpool
FY3 7LR
 - Or email foi@blackpoolsixth.ac.uk
- 4.4. Please note that a publication scheme relates to 'published' information and therefore material covered has already been prepared in a format ready for distribution.

5. What about information not covered by this publication scheme.

5.1. Legal requirements for a request

For a request to be dealt with according to the Freedom of Information Act, requests must be made:

- Directly to the college, the ICO are unable to make requests on an individual's behalf;
- In writing, for example in a letter or an email;
- Requesters must state their real name; and
- State an address to which the college can reply. This can be a postal or email address.

Requesters do not have to:

- Mention the Freedom of Information Act
- Know whether the information is covered by the Freedom of Information Act; or
- Say why they want the information.

5.2. Dealing with a request

The college will aim to reply within 20 working days. We may:

- provide the requester with the information which has been asked for
- inform the requester we don't have the information
- inform the requester that the information is readily and publicly available from an external website; such information may have been provided either by us or on our behalf, we may provide a direct link to that information
- inform the requester that the information is archived, out of date or otherwise inaccessible: or that it would be impractical or resource-intensive to prepare the material for routine release
- Under FOIA, inform the requester that we have the information and offer to provide it, but a fee will be payable (we will follow the FOIA rules when working out what fee to charge)
- Under FOIA refuse to give the requester the information, and explain why, for example, the information is exempt under one of the FOIA exemptions or Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR) exceptions or its release is prohibited under another statute;
- inform the requester that we need more time to consider the public interest in disclosing or withholding the information and tell you when to expect a response. This should not be later than 40 working days after the date of the

request. The college can only extend the time limit in certain circumstances and it must explain why it thinks the information may be exempt.

- The college will endeavour to provide information promptly and without making a charge unless significant work is involved. If the request involves a significant number of personnel hours or printing required, charges will be notified in advance to the person making the request to check that they wish to proceed.

5.3. Confidentiality

The college recognises that confidentiality must be observed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the exemptions in the Freedom of Information Act, which allows for information to be withheld or qualified. This includes personal information deemed sensitive under the Data Protection Act 2018 and information where a public interest test applies. The categories for determining confidentiality are:

- personal information relating to an individual;
- information provided in confidence by a third party who has not authorised its disclosure;
- financial or other information relating to procurement decisions, including information relating to the college negotiating position, during the course of those negotiations;
- information relating to the negotiating position of the college in employment relations matters, during the course of those negotiations;
- information relating to the financial position of the college where the Corporation is satisfied in good faith that disclosure might harm the college or its competitive position;
- legal advice received from or instructions given to the college legal advisors;
- information planned for publication in advance of that publication, and/or
- information not otherwise covered above, but considered to be commercially sensitive by the college.

5.4. Making a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act

Requests can be made:-

By Post: Data Protection Officer
The Blackpool Sixth Form College
Blackpool Old Road
Blackpool
FY3 7LR

Or email foi@blackpoolsixth.ac.uk

5.5. Charges associated with making a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act

- The college may make a charge on a case by case basis to recover the cost of communicating information to you including reproducing documents, postage or providing the information in a particular way. The college make no charge for the related use of staff time. There is no charge for accessing or downloading information from our website. Where charges apply, the college will ask you to make payment before processing your request.

6. An individual wishing to request their own personal information

Under the Data Protection Act 2018, individuals (data subjects) e.g. staff, students and other users of The Blackpool Sixth Form College have the right to access personal data that is being kept about them and should refer to the Data Protection Policy and website information for details on how to make a Data Subject Access Request.

Alternatively contact the Data Protection Officer for further details dpo@blackpoolsixth.ac.uk

7. Other related policies

- Data Protection Policy (GDPR)
- CCTV Policy
- Complaints Procedure

8. Compliance, monitoring and review

- 8.1. This policy will be reviewed bi-annually or when legislation is updated

9. Feedback

It is important that this publication scheme meets your needs. If you find the scheme difficult to understand or require further information, please let us know via the contact details provided below. We also welcome suggestions as to how our scheme might be improved.

By Post: Data Protection Officer
The Blackpool Sixth Form College
Blackpool Old Road
Blackpool

or email foi@blackpoolsixth.ac.uk

10. Further Information

More information about the Freedom of Information Act 2000 is available on the Information Commissioner's website at <http://www.ico.gov.uk>.

11. Appendices

11.1. Appendix 1 - The Blackpool Sixth Form Publication Scheme

Appendix 1



The Blackpool Sixth Form College Publication Scheme

Guide to published information

Adopting the Model Publication Scheme is a requirement of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ("FOIA"), the purpose of which is to promote greater openness and accountability. The Publication Scheme describes the information that a public body publishes or intends to publish. It is not a list of the actual publications as this will change as new material is published or existing material revised. Rather it is the public authority's commitment to make available the information described.

The main groups of classes of information in the model publication scheme are:

- Who we are and what we do;
- What we spend and how we spend it;
- What our priorities are and how we are doing;
- How we make decisions;
- Our policies and procedures;
- List and registers
- The services we offer;

| Class | Description | P = Paper E Electronic W = Website |
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| 1. Who we are and what we do | | |
| 1.1 | Legal Framework Information relating to how the institution was established and its standing from the point of view of the law. Ultimately the corporate status of The Blackpool Sixth Form College's corporation is conferred by the relevant statutes, in particular the Education Reform Act of 1988 and the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 , the relevant | The actual legislation is already publicly available via the web links. |

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| | <p>statutes, in particular the Education Reform Act of 1988</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instrument and Articles of Government of the college • Charitable status - The college is an exempt charity under the powers conferred by the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 | W |
| 1.2 | <p>How the college is organised. Organisational information, structures, locations and contacts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporation (Governing Body) and Committee Membership • Standing Orders • Financial Plans • Terms of Reference • The composition, roles and responsibilities of the Corporation, including the names of members; • Code of Conduct and Standing Orders for Corporation members • Minutes and papers of the Governing Body, Corporation meetings, committees etc. • Senior Leadership Team structure / role profiles • College policies and procedures | W/P/E |
| 1.3 | <p>Information on the institutional Context</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The college Mission Statement and Core Values • The college prospectus | W |
| 1.4 | <p>Location and contact details</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details of College address, contact telephone numbers, email addresses, and directions | W https://www.blackpoolsixth.ac.uk |
| 1.5 | <p>Partnerships The Blackpool Sixth Form College works in partnership with</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding agencies • Ofsted • Awarding Bodies • Local Authorities • Local High Schools • Employers • Department of Education • Other FE Colleges • Health and wellbeing organisations | |

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| 1.6 | Marketing, recruitment and public relations Publications relating to student recruitment and publicising our facilities and activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prospectus (including entry requirements for courses) • Open days/evenings • Taster days • New student day • Press releases • Course Brochures • Newsletters • Social Media • Lettings • Employer engagement | W P Social Media |
| 2. What we spend and how we spend it Financial information relating to projected and actual income and expenditure, procurement, contracts and financial audit. | | |
| 2.1 | Funding and income <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information on the sources of funding and income, such as funding grants • Annual Report / Financial Statement | P/W |
| 2.2 | Budgetary and account information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual statement of accounts and other information to allow the public to see where money is being spent: Annual Report / Financial Statement | W |
| 2.3 | Financial audit reports Audit opinion as contained within the annual report and financial statements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Report / Financial Statement • External Audit Report (part of financial statement) | W |
| 2.4 | Capital programme Information of major plans for capital expenditure. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information related to capital expenditure upon completion of the project when accounts have been audited. | P |

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| 2.5 | Financial regulations and procedures Financial regulations and procedures including procurement. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Regulations • Details of procedures used for the acquisition of goods and services • Supplier terms and conditions of goods and services | P |
| 2.7 | Staff pay and grading structures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information on the grading structures used within College and the associated salaries • Pension Scheme information as contained in the financial statements | |
| 3. What our priorities are and how we are doing This section covers information on the institution's strategies and plans, performance indicators, audits, inspections and reviews | | |
| 3.1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic plan • College vision and values • Teaching, Learning and Assessment policy • Ofsted Inspection report • Performance Tables data | P/W .gov websites |
| 4. How we make decisions Decision making process and records of decisions. | | |
| 4.1 | Minutes from the governing board/committee Meetings Supporting documents include minutes from Governing Board meetings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full Governing Board • Admin and Finance Committee • Audit Committee • Search Committee • Strategic Planning & Standards • Financial Performance • Directors Self Assessment meetings | P/W |

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| 1. Our policies and procedures Written protocols, policies and procedures for delivering our services and responsibilities, procedures. | | |
| 5.1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anti-bullying policy • Admissions Policy • Assessment malpractice and plagiarism policy • Fitness to Study Policy • Safeguarding policy • Special leave policy students • Student voice policy • Student attendance policy • Online safety policy • Statement on Reviews of Marking – Centre Assessed Marks • Positive behaviour and discipline policy • Substance misuse policy Bursary policy and procedures • Transport policy • Student privacy notice | W |
| 5.2 | Other policies and procedures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance regulations • FOI policy and publication scheme • Web accessibility statement • Data protection policy • Contractor policy • Whistleblowing policy • Employee, Director and Volunteer Privacy notice • Employers Privacy Notice • Parent/Guardian/Carer/Third Party Privacy Notice • Equality and Diversity Policy • Health and safety policy • Complaints policy and procedure | W |
| 6. Lists and Registers Information contained only in currently maintained lists and registers | | |
| 6.1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporation members – register of interests • Asset register - Annual accounts | P/E P/E/W |
| 7. The services offered by the college Information contained only in currently maintained lists and registers | | |
| 7.1 | Prospectus and course content <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full-time prospectuses • 6Advance Programme • 6Extra Programme | W |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Careers Programme info for students and parents • Information relating to admission/enrolment | |
| 7.2 | Health, welfare and counselling services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health & Wellbeing service | P/E |
| 7.3 | Careers advice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information, advice & guidance | W |
| 7.4 | Libraries & Study Centres <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources • Computer and IT Facilities • Support/Customer Services • Printing, photocopying and scanning | W/P |
| 7.5 | Sports and recreational facilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sports Academies • Campus facilities | W/E/P |
| 7.6 | Advice and Guidance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information, advice and guidance | W/E/P |
| 7.7 | Media and Press releases | W |