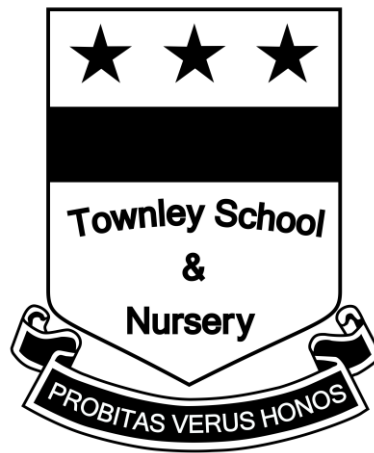


## Townley School and Nursery Policy Front Sheet



<b>POLICY DOCUMENT</b>	Freedom of Information
<b>Policy Number</b>	17
<b>Type of Policy –</b>	Statutory – own statement
<b>Governor Committee</b>	Full Governing Body
<b>Approval Date</b>	April 2025
<b>Review Frequency</b>	Three yearly
<b>Date of next review</b>	March 2028
<b>Publication Date</b>	April 2025
<b>Chair of Governing Body signature</b>	
<b>Publish on School Website</b>	Yes
<b>Purpose of Policy</b>	Policy review
<b>Supporting documents if applicable</b>	
<b>Chair of Governing Body signature</b>	
<b>Date</b>	

# **Townley Primary School and Nursery**



## **Freedom of Information**

## Freedom of Information Policy

This policy outlines the school's commitment to the principles of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the Act) and provides a framework for handling information requests. The school aims to promote transparency and accountability by providing the public with access to information, subject to certain exemptions set out in the Act.

### Scope

This policy applies to all information held by Townley School regardless of its format. This includes any information created or received by staff, Governors and any third parties (such as contractors) where the information relates to work undertaken on behalf of the school.

### Key Principles

- **Transparency:** The school is committed to being open and transparent about its operations and decision-making processes.
- **Accountability:** The school will hold itself accountable to the public by allowing access to information and explaining decisions when requested.
- **Compliance:** The school will comply with the requirements of the Act and any relevant guidance issued by the national regulator: the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

### Responsibilities

The Governing Body of the school has overall responsibility for ensuring compliance with the Freedom of Information Act. The Headteacher has day to day responsibility for FOI compliance and the Business Manager is the point of contact for enquiries.

### Publication Scheme

The FOI Act requires authorities to proactively publish core information so that it is available without the need to submit a request. Townley has adopted the Model Publication Scheme for Schools produced by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). [Publication schemes: a guide | ICO](#)

The Publication Scheme and the materials it covers will be available through the school office.

### Receiving requests for information

Anybody is entitled to submit a request and it can relate to any information that may be held by the school. The identity or motive of the requestor is only considered to determine if:

- The request may be refused as 'vexatious' under Section 14 of the FOI Act.
- The request is estimated to exceed the 18 hour 'appropriate limit'.
- The request should be processed under the UK General Data Protection Regulation rather than the FOI Act.

A valid request must be made in writing, clearly explain the information being requested and provide contact details, including name, to be used for correspondence.

The request does not have to mention the FOI Act or be sent to a specific person; however, we encourage people to submit their request via email to [office@townley.cambs.sch.uk](mailto:office@townley.cambs.sch.uk) and to state that it is intended to be considered by the school under the FOI Act so that we can consider the request as efficiently as possible.

## Handling requests for information

The school's handling of requests will be made with regard to the Code of Practice issued under Section 45 of the FOI Act.

Upon receiving a request, the school will:

- Review the wording and seek clarification if the scope of the request is unclear.
- Acknowledge receipt of the request (once clarified, if necessary) and confirm the statutory deadline.
- Consider whether the requested information is held by the school. If not, the school will issue a response confirming this and – where possible – provide advice and assistance if the information is held by another organization (for example, a local council or government department).
- Collect together all relevant information and then review it for disclosure with reference to the FOI Act exemptions and related ICO guidance.
- If some, or all, of the information is being withheld, a refusal notice will be issued that explains why the information is not being disclosed and provides complaints details if the requestor wishes to challenge the decision. We will still disclose as much information as possible and only refuse to supply the specific information that is covered by an exemption.

## Timescales

The statutory deadline for a school to respond to an FOI request is either:

- 20 school days, or
- 60 working days, if this is shorter.

“Working days” are defined as calendar days minus weekends and public holidays. This deadline typically only applies if the request period includes part of the summer school closure.

The school will aim to respond to requests as soon as possible within the statutory timescale. In limited circumstances, the Act allows a public authority to extend the deadline and where this applies the school will notify the requestor.

## Complaints

Any complaints about Freedom of Information requests, known as ‘Internal Reviews’, will be dealt with by the Headteacher. We will aim to respond to all complaints within twenty working days as recommended by the ICO.

If the requestor remains dissatisfied following the Internal Review, they are entitled to appeal to the Information Commissioner's Office. <https://ico.org.uk/>

## Other relevant legislation

Requests for environmental information will be processed in line with the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR).

Requests made by an individual for their own personal information, or on behalf of someone they have authority to act for, will be processed as a Subject Access Request under the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018.

It is the school's responsibility to determine which legislation applies to the request.

## Records Management

The school will be mindful of the Code of Practice for Records Management issued under Section 46 of the FOI Act in how information is created and managed.

The school will maintain accurate records of all requests received and the responses provided.

## Policy / procedure review

This policy will be reviewed every three years. Any associated procedures will be reviewed every three years, or as required in response to changes in the legislation or national guidance.