Freedom of Information Policy and Publication Scheme

Approved by:	Full Governing Body
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Statement of intent

As an educational provider, our school has an obligation to publish a freedom of information statement, outlining how we will meet our duties under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and associated regulations. The development and effective implementation of this policy fulfils that requirement.

More specifically, this policy outlines:

- How our school will respond to requests from individuals for access to information held about them.
- Our school's policy and procedures for the release and publication of private data and public records.
- Our school's policy and procedures for providing applicants with advice and assistance throughout the duration of their requests.

It also clarifies our position regarding the appropriate limit to the costs incurred by the school in obtaining any requested information, and on charging fees for its provision.

1. Legal framework

1.1 This policy has due regard to the following legislation:

- The General Data Protection Regulation
- The Freedom of Information Act 2000
- The Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004

1.2 This policy also has due regard to guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- ICO 'Model publication scheme' 2016
- ICO 'Duty to provide advice and assistance (section 16)' 2016

1.3 This policy will be viewed in conjunction with the following other school policies:

- Data Protection Policy

2. Accepting requests for information

The school will only accept a request for information which meets all of the following criteria:

- It is in writing
- It states the name of the applicant and an address for correspondence
- It describes the information requested

A request will be treated as made in writing if it meets all of the following requirements:

- It is transmitted by electronic means
- It is received in legible form
- It is capable of being used for subsequent reference

The school will publish details of its procedures for dealing with requests for information on the school website, which includes:

- A contact address and email address
- A telephone number
- A named individual to assist applicants with their requests

3. General right of access to information held by the school

3.1 Provided that the request complies with section 2 of this policy, the school will, no later than 20 working days from receipt of the request, comply with its duty to:

- Confirm or deny to any person making a request for information to the school, whether it holds information of the description specified in the request.
- Provide the documentation, if the school confirms that it holds the requested information.

The school will not comply with section 3.1 of this policy where:

- The school reasonably requires further information to meet a freedom of information request, has informed the applicant of this requirement, but was not subsequently supplied with that further information.
- The information is no longer readily available as it is contained in files that have been placed in archive storage or is difficult to access for similar reasons.
- A request for information is exempt under Section 2 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.
- The cost of providing the information exceeds the appropriate limit.
- The request is vexatious.
- The request is a repeated request from the same person made within 60 consecutive working days of the initial one.
- A fee notice was not honoured.

Where information is, or is thought to be, exempt, the school will, within 20 working days, give notice to the applicant which:

- States the fact.
- Specifies the exemption in question.

The information provided to the applicant will be in the format that they have requested, where possible.

Where it is not possible to provide the information in the requested format, the school will assist the applicant by discussing alternative formats in which it can be provided.

The information provided will also be in the language in which it is held, or another language that is legally required. If the school is required to translate any information, it will do so.

If, under relevant disability and discrimination regulations, the school is legally obliged to provide the information in other forms and formats, it will do so.

4. The appropriate limit

The school will not comply with any freedom of information request that exceeds the statutorily imposed appropriate limit of £450.

When determining whether the cost of complying with a freedom of information request is within the appropriate limit, the school will take account only of the costs we reasonably expect to incur in relation to:

- Determining whether it holds the information.
- Locating the information, or a document which may contain the information.
- Retrieving the information, or a document which may contain the information.
- Extracting the information from a document containing it.
- Costs related to the time spent by any person undertaking any of the activities outlined in section 4.2 of this policy on behalf of the school, are to be estimated at a rate of £25 per person per hour.

Where multiple requests for information are made to the school within 60 consecutive working days of each other, either by a single person or by different persons who appear to be acting in concert, the estimated cost of complying with any of the requests is to be taken to be the total costs to the school of complying with all of them.

5. Charging fees

The school may, within 20 working days, give an applicant who has requested information from the school, a written notice stating that a fee is to be charged for the school's compliance.

Charges may be made for disbursements, such as the following:

- Photocopying
- Postage and packaging
- Costs directly incurred as a result of viewing information

Fees charged will not exceed the total cost to the school of:

- Informing the person making the request whether we hold the information.
- Communicating the information to the person making the request.

Where a fee is to be charged, the school will not comply with section 3 of this policy unless the requested fee is paid within a period of three months, beginning with the day on which the fees notice is given to the applicant.

The school will not take into account any costs which are attributable to the time spent by persons undertaking any of the activities mentioned in section 5.3 above.

When calculating the 20th working day in which to respond to a freedom of information request, the period beginning the day on which the fee notice is given to the applicant and ending with the day on which the fee is received, will be disregarded.

6. Means by which communication is to be made

Where, on making a request for information, the applicant expresses a preference for communication by any one of the following means, the school will, as far as is practicable, give effect to that preference:

- The provision to the applicant of a copy of the information in permanent form or in another form acceptable to the applicant.
- The provision to the applicant of a reasonable opportunity to inspect a record containing the information.
- The provision to the applicant of a digest, or summary of the information, in permanent form or in another form acceptable to the applicant.

7. Providing advice and assistance

The school will meet its duty to provide advice and assistance, as far as is reasonable, to any person who proposes to make, or has made, requests for information to the school.

The school may offer advice and assistance in the following circumstances:

- If an individual requests to know what types of information the school holds and the format in which it is available, as well as information on the fees regulations and charging procedures.
- If a request has been made, but the school is unable to regard it as a valid request due to insufficient information, leading to an inability to identify and locate the information.
- If a request has been refused, e.g. due to an excessive cost, and it is necessary for the school to assist the individual who has submitted the request.

The school will provide assistance for each individual on a case-by-case basis; examples of how the school will provide assistance include the following:

- Informing an applicant of their rights under the Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Assisting an individual in the focus of their request, e.g. by advising of the types of information available within the requested category
- Advising an applicant if information is available elsewhere and how to access this information
- Keeping an applicant informed on the progress of their request

In order to provide assistance as outlined above, the school will engage in the following good practice procedures:

- Make early contact with an individual and keep them informed of the process of their request.
- Adhere to the school's Customer Service protocol which outlines the steps included within the code.
- Accurately record and document all correspondence concerning the clarification and handling of any request.
- Give consideration to the most appropriate means of contacting the applicant, taking into account their individual circumstances.
- Discuss with the applicant whether they would prefer to receive the information in an alternative format, in cases where it is not possible to provide the information requested in the manner originally specified.
- Remain prepared to assist an applicant who has had their request denied due to an exemption.

The school will give particular consideration to what level of assistance is required for an applicant who has difficulty submitting a written request.

In circumstances where an applicant has difficulty submitting a written request, the school will:

- Make a note of the application over the telephone and then send the note to the applicant to confirm and return – the statutory time limit for a reply would begin here.
- Direct the individual to a different agency that may be able to assist with framing their request.

NB. This list is not exhaustive and the school may decide to take additional assistance measures that are appropriate to the case.

Where an applicant's request has been refused either because the information is accessible by other means, or the information is intended for future publication or research, the school, as a matter of good practice, will provide advice and assistance.

The school will advise the applicant how and where information can be obtained, if it is accessible by other means.

Where there is an intention to publish the information in the future, the school will advise the applicant of when this publication is expected.

If the request is not clear, the school will ask for more detail from the applicant in order to identify and locate the relevant information, before providing further advice and assistance.

If the school is able to clearly identify the elements of a request, it will respond following usual procedures and will provide advice and assistance for the remainder of the request.

If any additional clarification is needed for the remainder of a request, the school will ensure there is no delay in asking for further information.

If an applicant decides not to follow the school's advice and assistance and fails to provide clarification, the school is under no obligation to contact the applicant again.

If the school is under any doubt that the applicant did not receive the advice and assistance, the school will re-issue it.

The school is not required to provide assistance where an applicant's request is vexatious or repeated, as defined under Section 14 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

The school is also not required to provide information where the cost of complying with a request exceeds the limit outlined in the Freedom of Information Act 2000. In such cases, the school will consider whether any information can be provided free of charge if the applicant refuses to pay the fee.

A record will be kept by the Business Manager of all the advice and assistance provided.

8. Consultation with third parties

The school may need to consult third parties about information held in scope of a request to consider whether it would be suitable to disclose the information. Situations where third parties may need to be consulted include the following:

- When requests relate to persons or bodies who are not the applicant and/or the school
- When the disclosure of information is likely to affect the interests of persons or bodies who are not the applicant or the school

The school will consider if a third party needs to be directly consulted about a request, particularly, for example, if there are contractual obligations that require consultation before information is disclosed.

Third parties will also be consulted where the school is proposing to disclose information relating to them or information that is likely to affect their business or private interests.

The views of third parties will be given appropriate weighting when deciding how to respond to a request. For example, if the third party created or provided the information, they may have a better understanding of its sensitivity.

It is ultimately the school's decision as to whether information in scope of a request will be released following any relevant consultation.

Where the school decides to release information following consultation with a third party, the third party will be informed in advance that the information is going to be disclosed.

Where the school intends to release information that relates to a large number of third parties, the school will consider whether it would be more appropriate to contact a representative organisation who can express views on behalf of the third parties, rather than contacting each party individually. If no representative organisation exists, the school may also consider only notifying or consulting a sample of the third parties relating to the disclosure.

Decisions made in line with the above will be made on a case-by-case basis.

9. Internal reviews

When responding to requests for information, the details of the school's internal review process will be set out, including information about how applicants can request an internal

review. Applicants will also be informed of their right to complain to the ICO if they are still dissatisfied following the outcome of the school's internal review.

Requests for an internal review should be made in writing to the school.

For a request for an internal review to be accepted, it must be made within 40 school days from the date the school issued an initial response to the request.

Upon receipt of an application, the school will acknowledge an application and inform the applicant of the intended response date. Responses will usually be delivered within 20 school days of receipt of the application.

If an internal review is complex, requires consultation with third parties or the relevant information is of high volume, the school may need to extend the usual response timeframe. In these cases, the school will inform the applicant and provide an alternative response date. In most cases, the extension will exceed no more than a further 20 school days; however, the actual length of the extension will be decided on a case-by-case basis.

Where clarification is needed from an applicant regarding the review, the normal response period will not begin until clarification is received.

Wherever possible, the review will be undertaken by a different member of staff than the person who took the original decision.

During a review, the school will evaluate the handling of the request; particular attention will be paid to concerns raised by the applicant.

The applicant will be informed of the outcome of the review and a record will be kept of such reviews and the final decision that is made.

If the outcome of the review is to disclose information that was previously withheld, the information will be provided to the applicant at the same time they are informed of the response to the review, where possible. If this is not possible, the applicant will be informed of when the information will be provided.

Within the response to a review, the applicant will be informed again of their right to complain to the ICO.

10. Publication scheme

The school will meet its duty to adopt and maintain a publication scheme which specifies the information which it will publish on the school website, and whether the information will be available free of charge or on payment.

The publication scheme will be reviewed and, where necessary, updated every two years.

11. Contracts and outsourced services

The school will make clear what information is held by third party contractors on behalf of the school.

Where a contractor holds information relating to a contract held with the school on behalf of the school, this information is considered in the same way as information held by a public authority and so is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

When entering into a contract, the school and contractor will agree what information the school will consider to be held by the contractor on behalf of the school, this will be indicated in the contract.

Appropriate arrangements will be put in place for the school to gain access to information held by the contractor on the school's behalf, in the event that a freedom of information request is made. These arrangements will be set out in a contract, and will cover areas including the following:

- How and when the contractor should be approached for information and who the points of contact are
- How quickly information should be provided to the school
- How any disagreement about disclosure between the school and contractor will be addressed
- How requests for internal reviews and appeals to the ICO will be managed
- The contractor's responsibility for maintaining record keeping systems in relation to the information they hold on behalf of the school
- The circumstances under which the school must consult with the contractor about disclosure and the process for doing so
- The types of information which should not be disclosed and the reasons for this confidentiality, where appropriate

In some situations, the school may offer or accept confidentiality arrangements that are not set out within a contract with a third party. The school and the third party will both be aware of the legal limits placed on the enforceability of expectations of confidentiality and the public interest in transparency.

Such expectations will only be created where it is appropriate to do so.

Contractors must comply with requests from the school for access to information they hold on behalf of the school.

Requests for information held by a contractor on behalf of the school will be responded to by the school. If a contractor receives a request, this will be passed onto the school for consideration.

12. Monitoring and review

This policy will be received every three years, or in light of any changes to relevant legislation, by the Business Manager.

The next scheduled review date for this policy is September 2029.

Appendix 1 - Publication Scheme

This scheme follows the model approved by the Information Commissioner's Office and sets out the classes of information which we publish or intend to publish; the format in which the information will be made available and whether the information is available free of charge or on payment.

1. Classes of information

Information that is available under this scheme includes:

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

Information which **will not** be made available under this scheme includes:

- Information the disclosure of which is prevented by law, or exempt under the Freedom of Information Act, or is otherwise properly considered to be protected from disclosure.
- Information in draft form, or notes, documents in older versions, emails or other correspondence.
- Information that is no longer readily available as it is contained in files that have been placed in archive storage, or is difficult to access for similar reasons.

2. How to request information

Requested documents under this scheme will be delivered electronically where possible, but paper copies can be provided by contacting the school using the below contact details.

To enable us to process your request quickly, please mark all correspondence:

"FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST"

Documents can be translated under disability legislation into accessible formats where possible.

3. Charges

Documents contained in this scheme are free to view on the school website.

Single paper copies are also available free of charge to parents/carers and prospective parents/carers of the school.

4. Feedback

We welcome any comments or suggestions you may have regarding this scheme. Please contact the governing body using the following contact details: 01665 710636 or email enquiries@ccsamble.co.uk

Appendix 2: Freedom of Information - Published guide to information

Information	How the information can be obtained	Cost
Class 1 – who we are and what we do		
Instrument of governance	Website: Governors - Coquet Community School Hard copy: available upon request- contact school	Free 5p per page (hard copy)
School prospectus and curriculum	Website: Learning - Coquet Community School Hard copy: available upon request- contact school	Free5p per page (hard copy)
Governing body	Website:Governors - Coquet Community School Hard copy: available upon request- contact school	Free 5p per page (hard copy)
Information about and duties of the governors	Website: Governors - Coquet Community School Hard copy: available upon request- contact school	Free 5p per page (hard copy)
Gender pay gap reporting	Website: NA Hard copy: available upon request - contact school	Free 5p per page (hard copy)
School session times and term dates	Website: Our School Day - Coquet Community School Hard copy: available upon request - contact school	Free 5p per page (hard copy)
Location and contact information	Website: Contact us - Coquet Community School Hard copy: available upon request- contact school	Free 5p per page (hard copy)

Class 2- What we spend and how we spend it		
Annual budget plan and financial statements	Hard copy: available upon request- contact school	5p per page- hard copy
Expenditures	Hard copy: available upon request- contact school	5p per page- hard copy
Capital funding	Hard copy: available upon request- contact school	5p per page- hard copy
Financial audit reports	Hard copy: available upon request- contact school	5p per page- hard copy
Procurement and contracts	Hard copy: available upon request- contact school	5p per page- hard copy
Staff allowances and expenses	Hard copy: available upon request- contact school	5p per page- hard copy
Staff pay and grading structures	Hard copy: available upon request- contact school	5p per page- hard copy
Governors allowances	Hard copy: available upon request- contact school	5p per page- hard copy
Premiums or other forms of financial support available	Hard copy: available upon request- contact school	5p per page- hard copy
TU facility time reporting	Hard copy: available upon request- contact school	5p per page- hard copy
Class 3 – What our priorities are and how we are doing		
Performance data supplied to the government	Website: Performance & Results - Coquet Community School Hard copy: available upon request- contact school	Free 5p per page (hard copy)
Latest Ofsted report	Website: Ofsted Report - Coquet Community School Hard copy: available upon request- contact school	Free 5p per page (hard copy)
Performance management information	Website: Performance & Results - Coquet Community School Hard copy: available upon request- contact school	Free 5p per page (hard copy)

Future plans	Website: About Us - Coquet Community School Hard copy: available upon request- contact school	Free 5p per page (hard copy)
Exam and assessment results	Website: Performance & Results - Coquet Community School Hard copy: available upon request- contact school	Free 5p per page (hard copy)
Performance tables	Website: Performance & Results - Coquet Community School Hard copy: available upon request- contact school	Free 5p per page (hard copy)
Data protection impact assessments	Website: Policies - Coquet Community School Hard copy: available upon request- contact school	Free 5p per page (hard copy)
Class 4- How we make decisions		
Admissions policy and decisions	Website: Policies - Coquet Community School Hard copy: available upon request- contact school	Free 5p per page (hard copy)
Minutes of meetings of the governing body and its committees	Hard copy: available upon request - contact school	5p per page (hard copy)
Class 5 – our policies and procedures		
School policies and other documents	Website: Policies - Coquet Community School Hard copy: available upon request- contact school	Free 5p per page (hard copy)
Records management, personal data and access to information policies	Website: Policies - Coquet Community School Hard copy: available upon request- contact school	Free 5p per page (hard copy)
Equality and diversity	Website: Policies - Coquet Community School Hard copy: available upon request- contact school	Free 5p per page (hard copy)

Safeguarding and child protection	Website: Policies - Coquet Community School Hard copy: available upon request- contact school	Free 5p per page (hard copy)
Pay policy	Hard copy: available upon request- contact school	Free 5p per page (hard copy)
Health and Safety	Hard copy: available upon request- contact school	Free 5p per page (hard copy)
Policies and procedures for human resources and the recruitment of staff	Hard copy: available upon request- contact school	Free 5p per page (hard copy)
Careers programme information	Website: Careers Guidance - Coquet Community School Hard copy: available upon request- contact school	Free 5p per page (hard copy)
Complaints procedure, including for dealing with parental complaints	Website: Policies - Coquet Community School Hard copy: available upon request- contact school	Free 5p per page (hard copy)
Charging regimes and policies	Website: Policies - Coquet Community School Hard copy: available upon request- contact school	Free 5p per page (hard copy)
Class 6 – Lists and registers		
Curriculum circulars and statutory instruments	Website: Learning - Coquet Community School Hard copy: available upon request- contact school	Free 5p per page (hard copy)
CCTV	Inspection only- contact school	Free
Disclosure logs	Inspection only - contact school	Free
Asset register	Inspection only - contact school	Free

Any information you are currently legally required to hold in publicly available registers	Inspection only - contact school	Free
Class 7- The Services we offer		
Extra- curricular activities	Website: Extracurriculars - Coquet Community School Hard copy: available upon request- contact school	Free 5p per page (hard copy)
Out of school clubs	Website: Extracurriculars - Coquet Community School : available upon request- contact school	Free 5p per page (hard copy)
School publications	Website: Letters - Coquet Community School Hard copy: available upon request- contact school	Free 5p per page (hard copy)
Services for which the school is entitled to recover a fee, together with those fees	Website: Policies - Coquet Community School Hard copy: available upon request- contact school	Free 5p per page (hard copy)
Leaflets, booklets and newsletters	Website: Letters - Coquet Community School Hard copy: available upon request- contact school	Free 5p per page (hard copy)