

South Gloucestershire and Stroud Academy Trust

Group Freedom of Information Policy

If you would like this document in an alternate format Please contact the Human Resources Department

Prepared by:	Gavin Murray			
Job Title / Role:	Deputy Principal & Data Protection Officer			
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	Upload to External College website? Yes			
	Upload to e-Campus? Yes			
Approved by:	SGS Academy Trust Board SGS College Corporation			
Date of Approval:				

MANDATO	RY INITIAL IMPACT SCREENIN	IG		SGS Suff Groundwine and formed College
Gavin Murray	Deputy Principal	26/05/2023		
I have read the guidance document: Comple	eting a Policy Impact Assessmen	t?	✓	/
If this policy has been up-dated, please tick also been reviewed:	to confirm that the initial impac	t screening has]

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT					
Characteristic	This policy seeks to:				
Age	No appreciable impact				
Disability	Commit to making reasonable adjustments to promote equality of access and opportunity for learners, employees and members of the public with disabilities and/or learning difficulties/disabilities.				
Faith or Belief	No appreciable impact				
Gender	No appreciable impact				
Race or Ethnicity	No appreciable impact				
Orientation	No appreciable impact				
Gender reassignment	No appreciable impact				
Economic disadvantage	Use available resources to identif	fy and	address	any	issues of inequality as a
	result of social and economic factors. Supporting learners and staff, both academically and pastorally in order for all to be successful				
Rural isolation	No appreciable impact				
Marriage	No appreciable impact				
Pregnancy & maternity	No appreciable impact				
Carers & care leavers	No appreciable impact				
Vulnerable persons	Safeguarding children or vulnerable adults				
Please identify any sections of the policy that specifically seek to maximise					
opportunities to improve diversity within any of the College's stakeholder groups:					
Please identify any sections of the policy that specifically seek to improve equality of opportunity within any of the College's stakeholder groups:					
Is there any possibility that this policy					
could operate in a discriminat	could operate in a discriminatory way? characteristic will be most affected? Choose an item.			e most affected?	
If yes please confirm that the & Diversity Impact Assessmen	Policy has been sent for a full Equa t, and note the date:	ality		Clic	k or tap to enter a date.

Note: if the policy does not seek to increase diversity or improve equality you should go back and review it before submitting it for approval.

MAPPING OF FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS		
Which United Nations Convention on	Art. 17 Access to information	
the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), Right	Art. 42 Right to know your rights	
does this policy most protect:	Choose an item.	
Which Human Right (HRA) does this	Choose an item.	
policy most protect:	Choose an item.	

DATA PROTECTION & PRIVACY BY DESIGN SCREENING	
Tick to confirm that you have considered any data protection issues as part of the design and	
implementation of this policy; and, that implementing this policy will <u>not</u> result in the collection,	✓
storage or processing of personal data outside of official College systems:	
Tick to indicated that this policy has or requires a Data Privacy Impact Assessment:	

ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAI	L AND E	CONOMIC IMPACT	ASSESSM	ENT		
Does this policy relate directly or indirectly to environmental or sustainability standard(s)?	any lega	al, regulatory		Yes 🗆	No	
If so, please list them:						
Will any aspects of this policy result in:						
Reduced miles travelled or provide / improve /	-					
transport (e.g. public transport, walking and cyc	_	_		Yes □	No	×
emission vehicles, community transport, enviro	nmenta	lly friendly fuels ar	ıd/or	.65 _		_
technologies) Reduced waste, environmental hazards and/or	toxic ma	aterials for example	e hv			
reducing PVC, photocopier and printer use, air		•	-			_
or deforestation? Or increase the amount of Co	-		_	Yes 🗆	No	×
composted?						
Reduced water consumption?				Yes 🗆	No	X
Reduced instances of single use plastic?				Yes □	No	×
Reduced use of natural resources such as raw n	naterials	and energy to pro	mote a	Yes □	No	×
circular economy?		1.1.		163 🗖		
Improved resource efficiency of new or refurbis density, use of existing buildings, designing for		• •	gy,	Yes □	No	\boxtimes
Will this policy improve green space or access t				Yes 🗆	No	
Please list the sections of this policy which	o green	эрисс.		163	140	
specifically target an improved environment:						
Will any aspects of this policy result in:						
The promotion of healthy working lives (includi life/home-life balance and family friendly pract	_	h and safety at wo	rk, work-	Yes □	No	×
Greater employment opportunities for local per				Yes 🗆	No	×
The promotion of ethical purchasing of goods o	r service	es for example by		Yes 🗆	Na	×
increasing transparency of modern slavery in or				res 🗆	No	
Greater support for the local economy through		of local suppliers,	SMEs or	Yes □	No	×
engagement with third sector or community grant The promotion of better health, increased com	-	rosilioneo social co	hosion			
reduced social isolation or support for sustainal	-		nesion,	Yes □	No	×
Mitigation of the likely effects of climate chang		•	e and			
community support for vulnerable groups; cont				Yes □	No	\boxtimes
heatwaves and other weather extremes)?						
The promotion of better awareness of sustaina	-	ealthy behaviours,	mental	Yes ✓	No	
wellbeing, living independently or self-manager	ment?					
Please list the sections of this policy which specifically target improved sustainability:						
specifically target improved sustainability.						
		Increased	Decre	ased N	et Zero	CO2
What is the *estimated* carbon impact of this policy (in terms of tCO2e)		(+tCO2e)	(-tCO	2e)		
		*				
Records collation, transfer, storage, dealing wit		-	-		, wher	е
possible requests are responded to electronical	ily to red	duce the impact of	printing ar	na postage.		
		NA	to atau t			
Mandatory initial impact screening completed by:	Gavin	Murray, Deputy Pr	ırıcıpaı			
oopictcu by						

Mandatory initial impact screening	Gavin Murray, Deputy Principal
completed by:	
Date	26/05/2023
Initial impact screening supported by (Please	Ben Winter, Assistant Date Protection Officer
list each individual)	

Group Freedom of Information Policy

1. Executive Summary

This policy sets out your rights and our obligations under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), the Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) and the INSPIRE Regulations. SGS College and Academy Trust publishes certain information as a matter of routine under its Model Publication Scheme. This policy also sets out how a request, for information, should be made or what you can do if you are seeking to request access to information not published under that scheme. This policy also describes how we intend to deal with any such request.

2. Introduction

Under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and the Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) the public have a right to request information recorded and held by SGS College, SGS Group and SGS Academy Trust in its capacity as a public authority.

Throughout the remainder of the policy references to 'SGS' should be read as meaning (SGS Group (Commercial Services), SGS College and the SGS Academy Trust, including The Forest High School, SGS Berkley Green UTC and SGS Pegasus).

You may ask us for any information that you think we may hold. However, the right to access information **only** applies to recorded information which includes information held electronically or in hardcopy as well as images, video and audio recordings.

Should you wish to make a request:

You should identify the information you want as clearly as possible; although
your request can be in the form of a question, rather than a request for
specific documents.

SGS does **not** have to answer your question if this would mean creating new information or giving an opinion or judgment that is not already recorded.

Not all information held by SGS is accessible under the FOIA; and some information may be exempt, for example because it would unfairly reveal personal details about somebody else or if it is commercially sensitive, protected by copyright or other intellectual property rights.

You don't have to know whether the information you want is covered by the Environmental Information Regulations or the Freedom of Information Act. When you make a request, it is for SGS to decide which law we need to follow. We will explain our decision making, in this respect, when we respond to any request we receive.

3. 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 recorded information that is held by a public authority in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The FOIA **does not** give people access to their own personal data (information about themselves) such as their educational record. If you want to know what information that SGS holds about you, you should refer to our Data Privacy and Protection Policy.

Public authorities spend money collected from taxpayers and make decisions that can significantly affect many peoples' lives. Therefore access to certain information can help the public hold authorities accountable for their actions and allows for public debate to be better informed and more productive.

Public authorities include government departments, local authorities, the NHS, state schools 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.

4. Model Publication Scheme

Adopting a 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 across the public sector by requiring all "public authorities" to make information available proactively. 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 SGS Model Publication Scheme can be found in the attached annexes, it contains a list of information we publish, which is predominantly available via our website. Where it is impracticable to make information available on the website or if you prefer not to access the information via the website, a written request should be made as follows.

5. Requirements for making a FOIA request:

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

- Made directly to SGS in writing, for example in a letter or an email or verbal or written requests for environmental information;
- The request must state your real name; and
- Provide an address to which we can reply. This can be a postal or email address.

You **do not** have to:

- Mention the Freedom of Information Act or Environmental Information Regulations; or
- Know whether the information is covered by the Freedom of Information Act or the Environmental Information Regulations; or
- Say why you want the information, but telling us why you want the information or what you intend to do with the information could help us to respond more accurately.

6. Getting the most out of a request

The more information given to us about your request, the more likely it is that we will be able to deal with your request efficiently and to help you by providing guidance and advice where necessary.

Requests for information should:

- Describe the information required as clearly as possible;
- Include a date on the request so that we can reply within the 20-day timescale.

Please:

- Only ask for information that you think we may hold, identifying the information you want as clearly as possible;
- Be aware that the right to access information only covers recorded information;
 and,
- Access to information will not be provided to you as an individual but to the
 public at large. Therefore, SGS may consider public interest arguments
 before deciding whether to disclose information. We will not normally publish
 information that is not in the public interest.
- Be aware that if your request is in the form of a question, rather than a request for specific documents, we do not have to answer your question if this would mean creating new information or giving an opinion or judgment that is not already recorded;
- If you are planning on asking for a large volume of information, or make a very general request, we may ask you to assist us by considering whether you can narrow or refocus the scope of the request, to reduce any unnecessary burden or costs on SGS resources.
- The UK Information Commissionaire's Office advises that the amount of time and resources that we must expend in responding to a request should not be out of all proportion to that request's value and purpose. SGS will not respond to requests where the cost of complying with the request exceeds the

- appropriate cost limit of £600. If we estimate that the appropriate cost limit may be exceeded, we will refuse the request and explain why.
- Where you find it impossible or difficult to make a request in writing please do
 let us know so that we can consider making a reasonable adjustment for you
 under the Equality Act 2010; If you wish to receive information in a particular
 format, due to a disability or because English is not your first language, please
 make this clear when you make your request.

Before making a request, you may find it help to ask yourself:

- Is the information you are considering requesting suitable for general publication? The aim of the Freedom of Information Act is to make information available to the public. Only information that would be given to anybody who asked for it or would be suitable for the public to see can be obtained. We therefore may refuse your request based on certain exemptions available to us under the FOIA.
- Does your request have a serious or clear purpose? If not, then the FOIA
 and EIR are probably not an appropriate means through which to pursue your
 request/concern. The ICO have published a list of dos and don'ts as a quick
 reference tool to help users make effective freedom of information requests
 here.

7. How we will handle your request:

Where the information requested is readily available, we aim to provide this within a few days. Where it takes longer to gather the information we aim to supply the information within 20 working days.

When responding to requests we will tell you whether we hold any information falling within the scope of the request; and provide that information.

SGS does not charge a fee for responding to requests for information. However, under Section 9 (et. Al.) of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000 SGS does charge reasonable fees for reproducing documents containing the information, and the postage costs of transmitting the information, as follows:

- photocopying @ 15p per sheet; and,
- postage @ the Post Office's published rates (depending upon weight) for first class recorded delivery.

If we decide to charge a fee, we will provide you with the details of this fee in a fee notice. Note: SGS will **not** send information until we have received the fee; and the time limit for complying with the request excludes the time spent waiting for the fee to be paid. If we do not receive payment within three months of issuing a fee notice, we will **not** respond to your request; but we will tell you about the deadlines in our fees notice.

If you request information which is available from another source that is not a public authority, we may also add VAT to our fee.

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

Write for the attention of the Principalship: SGS College, Stroud Campus, Stroud, Stratford Road, Gloucestershire, GL5 4AH.

9. Refusing Requests

SGS is committed to being open and transparent, however, the FOIA recognises that there will be valid reasons why some kinds of information may be withheld, such as if its release would damage commercial interests. For some exemptions we must consider whether the public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in releasing it. If we decide that the information cannot be released, we will explain why. However, we will **not** deal with vexatious or repeated requests or in some cases if the cost exceeds an appropriate limit.

If we refuse your request, we will tell you why.

10. Complaints or concerns

If you are not satisfied with our response to a FOIA or EIR information request, complaints or concerns should be made in writing with a request for an internal review and sent to:

The Data Protection Officer, SGS College, Filton Campus, Filton Avenue, Bristol, BS34 7AT.

We will aim to carry out the internal review as soon as possible or within 20 working days for FOIA reviews and 40 working days for EIR reviews. We will not make a charge for conducting an internal review.

If you remain dissatisfied with our response or if we fail to review your case, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner provides an online facility for reporting complaints which you will find at https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/

11. Sensitive Information

Where SGS reasonably considers that particularly sensitive information is being sought, the Data Protection Officer will inform the appropriate governing body (via that body's Clerk) prior to release of the information.

12. DfE and ESFA Conditions of Funding Agreement

The DfE and ESFA Conditions of Funding Agreement (GFE & Specialist Colleges) sets out specific clauses in relation to Freedom of Information and Confidentiality.

13. Related Policies:

- Data Privacy and Protection Policy
- SGS Complaints Policy and Procedure
- SGS CCTV Policy
- SGS Model Publication Scheme

Annex A: Model Publication Scheme SGS Further Education Corporation

Who we are and what we do

Organisational information, structures, locations and contacts.

- Legal framework / Instrument of Government / Articles of Association
- How the institution is organised
- Lists of and information relating to organisations it works in partnership with and any companies wholly or partially owned by it
- Location and contact details
- Student activities

What we spend and how we spend it

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

- Funding / income
- Budgetary and account information; expenditure
- Financial audit reports
- Capital programme
- Financial regulations and procedures
- Pay policy
- Staff allowances and expenses
- Governors' allowances
- Register of suppliers
- Procurement and tender procedures and reports
- Contracts

What our priorities are and how we are doing

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

- Annual report and Self-assessment report
- Corporate and business plans
- Teaching and learning strategy
- Academic quality and standards
- Most recent Ofsted inspection report
- Privacy impact assessments (in full or summary format)
- External review information
- Corporate relations
- Government and regulatory reports

How we make decisions

Decision making processes and records of decisions.

Minutes, agendas and papers from governing body, council, academic boards, steering groups and committees.

Our policies and procedures

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

- Policies and procedures for conducting college business
- Procedures and policies relating to academic services
- Procedures and policies relating to student services
- Procedures and policies relating to human resources
- Procedures and policies relating to recruitment

- Code of Conduct for members of governing bodies
- Equality and Diversity policies and our Equality Objectives
- Health and Safety
- Estate management
- Complaints policies and procedures
- Records management and personal data policies
- Charging regimes and policies

Lists and registers

- Any information the college is currently legally required to hold in publicly available registers
- Asset registers
- Information asset register
- Details and locations of overt CCTV surveillance cameras operated by or on behalf of the college
- Disclosure logs
- Any register of interests kept in the college
- Senior staff's declaration of interests
- Register of gifts and hospitality provided to senior staff

The services we offer

Information about the services we offer, including leaflets, guidance and newsletters.

- Prospectus and course content
- Services for outside bodies
- Health including medical services
- Welfare and counselling services
- Funding, such as grants and bursaries, available to students from the college
- Careers advice
- Chaplaincy services and multi-faith provision
- Services for which the college is entitled to recover a fee together with those fees
- Sports and recreational facilities
- Facilities relating to music, art and other cultural activities
- Museums, libraries, special collections and archives
- Conference facilities
- Advice and guidance
- Media releases

Annex B: Model Publication Scheme **SGS Academy Trust**

Affilex B. Model i ublication ocheme 303 Academy Trust
Who we are and what we do
Organisational information, structures, locations and contacts.
 Articles of Association
School prospectus and curriculum
 Board of Trustees/ Local School Boards
 School session times and term dates
 Location and contact information of each school
What we spend and how we spend it
Financial information about projected and actual income and expenditure,
procurement, contracts and financial audit.
 Annual budget plan and financial statements for the Trust
and individual schools
 Capital funding
 Financial audit reports
Procurement and contracts
 Pay policy
 Staff allowances and expenses
 Staff pay and grading structures
 Trustees/Local School Board members' allowances
What our priorities are and how we are doing
Strategies and plans, performance indicators, audits, inspections and reviews.
Performance data supplied to the government
 Latest Ofsted report
Performance management information
The school's future plans
Safeguarding and child protection
How we make decisions
Decision-making processes and records of decisions
Admissions policy / decisions
 Minutes of meetings of the governing body and its
committees
Our policies and procedures
Current written protocols, policies and procedures for delivering our services and
responsibilities.
School policies and other documents
 Records management and personal data policies
 Equality and diversity
r onolog and procedures for the restallment of stan
Charging regimes and pension
Lists and registers (Trust and Schools)
Curriculum circulars and statutory instruments Disclosure large
Disclosure logs
Asset register
Any information the school is currently legally required to
hold in publicly available registers
The services we offer

Information about the services the school provides including leaflets, guidance and newsletters.

- Extra-curricular activities
- Out of school clubs
- School publications
- Services for which the school is entitled to recover a fee, together with those fees
- Leaflets, booklets and newsletters

Annex C: Model Publication Scheme SGS Higher Education Provision

Who we are and what we do

Organisational information, structures, locations and contacts.

- Legal framework and information about how the Higher Education offer is organised
- Location and contact details
- Lists of and information relating to organisations which the College's Higher Education Faculty has responsibility for, those it works in partnership with, those it sponsors and companies wholly or partially owned by it.
- Student activities

What we spend and how we spend it

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

- Funding / income
- Financial statements, budgets and variance reports
- Financial audit reports
- Capital programme
- Financial regulations and procedures
- Staff allowances and expenses
- Staff pay and grading structures
- Register of suppliers
- Procurement and tender procedures and reports
- Contracts
- Research funding

What our priorities are and how we are doing

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

- Annual report and Self-evaluation
- Corporate and business plans
- Teaching and learning strategy
- Academic quality and standards
- Privacy impact assessments (in full or summary format)
- External and internal audit; review information
- Corporate relations
- Government and regulatory reports
- Higher Education compliance with its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and Widening Participation

How we make decisions

Decision making processes and records of decisions.

- Agendas, officers' reports, background papers and minutes from governing body, Council / Senate, academic boards, steering groups and committees
- Teaching and learning committee minutes
- Minutes of staff / student consultation meetings
- Appointment committees and procedures

Our policies and procedures

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

- Policies and procedures for conducting Higher Education business
- Procedures and policies relating to academic services
- Procedures and policies relating to student services
- Procedures and policies relating to human resources
- Pay policy statement
- Procedures and policies relating to recruitment
- Code of Conduct for members of governing bodies
- Equality and Diversity policies; Equality Scheme
- Health and Safety
- Estate management
- Research policy and strategy
- Publicly funded research outputs and data
- Charging regimes and policies

Higher Education Lists and registers

- Higher Education Information we are currently legally required to hold in publicly available registers.
- Any register of interests kept in respect of Higher Education

The services we offer

Information about the services we offer, including leaflets, guidance and newsletters.

- Funding, such as grants and bursaries, available to students benefiting from the Higher Education offer
- Services for which the College is entitled to recover a fee together with those fees