



Freedom of Information Policy and Publication Scheme

Author	HR Manager
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Person Responsible	HR Manager (Freedom of Information Officer)
Approval/ review bodies	SLT/JNC /Corporate Services Committee/Corporate Board
Frequency of Review*	36 months

**Policies will be reviewed more frequently if legal changes or good practice require*

Review History:		
Date of review	Reviewed by	Reason for review
May 2010	Vice Principal	Update person responsible/job titles
December 2013	HR Manager	Update person responsible/job titles
October 2014	HR Manager	Review and re-write

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1. About Freedom of Information

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 (“the Act”) gives the public a right of access to all types of recorded information held by public authorities, but also sets out exemptions from that right. The purpose of the Scheme is to ensure that information is readily available to the general public.

2. What is the purpose of the Act?

The Act is intended to give the public greater access to information about the workings of public authorities. This will mean increased transparency and accountability, which will raise the quality of public administration.

3. What does the Act do?

The Act gives the public a general right of access to all types of ‘recorded’ information held by public authorities from 1 January 2005, subject to certain exemptions. Public authorities also have to adopt and maintain a Publication Scheme.

4. What is the Publication Scheme?

The Act places a duty on public authorities to adopt and maintain a Publication Scheme. The Publication Scheme must set out the types of information they intend to publish on an ongoing basis, the form in which the information is published and details of any charges.

5. Making a request for information

North Kent College seeks to be open and accountable and already provides the public with a great deal of information about its activities. A lot of this information is available on our website.

To make a request for further information you must put your application in writing (which also includes email).

- 5.1. you must state your name and address for correspondence and or email address;
- 5.2. you must state clearly what information is required and how you would prefer to receive this information, e.g. a summary of the information, a copy of the documents that the information comes from, by email, on paper or a visit to inspect records in person; and

- 5.3. you do not have to mention the Freedom of Information Act or why you want the information, but it would help us to help you if you do.

Please address your request to the Freedom of Information Officer:

By email: HR@northkent.ac.uk

By post: Freedom of Information Officer
HR Department
North Kent College
Oakfield Lane
Dartford
Kent DA1 2JT

Once you have made your request we must respond as soon as possible; completing your request no later than 20 working days after we have received it.

If your request, however, is unclear, we will contact you to clarify exactly what information you are looking for. The 20 working days begins from the date you confirm the details of your request.

6. Fees

In some instances a charge may apply for the supplying the information you want. If so, we will advise you of the cost and you will need to pay this before we proceed with your request. The majority of the information detailed in the Publication Scheme is available free of charge, but if it is not, details of costs are provided. If you are asking for any other information (not listed on the Publication Scheme) you may be required to contribute towards specific costs such as photocopying, translation services or postage. If the cost of us looking for the information you want, extrapolating and collating it exceeds £450 (which is equivalent to 18 hours @ £25 per hour) you may be asked to pay this too.

We prefer to provide information electronically in line with our sustainability objectives. The information provided on our website is free of charge to download at your own cost. However, if paper copies are required, there will be a copy charge of 15p per sheet and additional charge for postage if applicable.

If you refuse to pay then we are not obliged to supply you with the information you've asked for.

We can refuse to supply the information requested if:

- it would cost us more than £450 to locate and extract the information you have asked for; or
- it falls under one of the exemptions.

Either way, we must write and tell you why we are refusing to deal with your request and which exemption applies. We will also give you details of how you can get our decision re-assessed. If following re-assessment, you are still unhappy with our response, you can ask the Information Commissioner to review our decision.

There is no limit to how many requests that you can make, providing each request is different. However, if you make repeated requests for the same information, or are obviously trying to disrupt our operations, we do reserve the right to refuse requests.

7. What happens if I'm not satisfied with the service I receive?

The policy of North Kent College is to be as open as possible and to supply the information you have requested, but we have to withhold certain information. The Freedom of Information Act sets out a series of exemptions to protect confidential or other information where disclosure may prejudice the interests of the College or of third parties. Decisions about refusal of access to information, the way in which access is given or the level of fees or charges, are also subject to review. The two review processes are set out below.

7.1. Internal Review

If you are dissatisfied with the response from North Kent College you may seek an internal review of that decision. The review will be undertaken by a senior member of staff at the College who has not previously been involved with your request. Requests for an internal review should be submitted in writing to FOI Review Officer:

By email: HR@northkent.ac.uk

By post: Freedom of Information Officer
HR Department
North Kent College
Oakfield Lane
Dartford
Kent DA1 2JT

7.2. Review by the Information Commissioner

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome, or the handling of the internal review, you may seek an independent review from the Information Commissioner. Requests for a review should be made in writing directly to the Information Commissioner at the following address:

The Information Commissioner
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire SK9 5AF

Telephone: 01625 545700

Fax: 01625 545510

Email: data@dataprotection.gov.uk