



PLUMPTON

COLLEGE

Freedom of Information Policy

This policy has been produced to ensure compliance with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000¹. The policy incorporates the guidance from the Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO); it applies to all members of staff, contractors and suppliers working for, or on behalf of, the College.

SMT Assigned Owner	Deputy Principal
Document Author	Deputy Principal
Approved by	Corporation
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Date of minor amendments approved by SMT	-
Frequency of review	3 years (or change of legislation)
Date of next review	September 2026

The SMT is delegated to approve minor changes to the policy in response to legal changes and best practice.

¹ Specifically note - Version 3 20130822

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Freedom of Information Act 2000 was designed to establish a culture of openness and transparency in public administration. It gives a general right of access to all types of recorded information held by public authorities, sets out exemptions from that right and places a number of obligations on public authorities.
- 1.2. A 'public authority' is defined in the Act, and includes but is not restricted to, central and local government, non-departmental public bodies, the police, the health service and schools, colleges and universities.

2. The Model Publication Scheme

2.1. Section 19 of the Freedom of Information Act places a duty on every college to:

- Adopt and publish a scheme listing all the information it makes available to the public.
- 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 called 'classes of information'. The scheme is not a list of the actual publications, because this will change as new material is published or existing material revised. It is, however, the college's commitment to make available the information described.

2.2. The scheme sets out information to be made available by the College in accordance with ICO guidelines, in the following categories:

- *Who we are and what we do*
 - Organisational information – structures, locations, contacts
- *What we spend and how we spend it*
 - Published accounts
- *What our priorities are and how we are doing*

- Strategic plan, inspections and reviews
- *How we make decisions*
 - Decision-making processes, records of decisions
- *Our policies and procedures*
 - Current written protocols, policies and procedures for delivery of College services and responsibilities
- *Lists and registers*
 - Information legally required to be held in publicly available registers and logs
- *The services we offer*
 - Prospectuses, leaflets, advice and guidance

3. Making a request for information

3.1. Requests for information not included in the publication scheme can be assessed on receipt of a specific written request. The college is not obliged to provide the information if it does not routinely produce it or it can be sourced publicly elsewhere. As a minimum the ICO expects colleges to make available information that is required by statute or by virtue of a funding agreement, financial memorandum or other arrangement.

3.2. For a request to be considered valid under the Freedom of Information Act it must:

- Be in writing;
- Include a name and address for correspondence (email address is sufficient);
- Clearly set out the information required.
- Requests should be addressed to The Clerk to the Corporation.

General information on the Freedom of Information Act and the Model Publication Scheme can be obtained from www.ico.org.uk

4. Responding to a request

4.1. The College will respond to a request promptly, and by the 20th working day following receipt of the request.² If the College is unable to respond within this time frame, it will contact the person requesting the information with explanation and request an extension.

4.2. The response will confirm whether the College holds the information, which if it does it will release. Some information may be exempt from disclosure as set out below.

5. Charges

5.1 The College has the right to charge applications for supplying the requested information but is under no obligation to provide the information if the cost of doing so would be in excess of what is deemed to be an 'appropriate limit'.

6. Exemptions

6.1. In those cases that the College considers a request to be subject to an exemption under the Freedom of Information Act, consideration will be given as to whether the information can be disclosed. This would take into account public interest, the rights of data subjects, legal and contractual obligations and issues of information access and security.

6.2. A full list of the examples can be found on the ICO website:
<https://ico.org.uk/>

7. Questions, comments and complaints

7.1. If you are not able to obtain what you require, or if you have any questions, comments or complaints about this scheme, please contact:

- The Clerk to the Corporation
Plumpton College
Ditchling Road
Plumpton
East Sussex
BN7 3AE
laura.holt@plumpton.ac.uk

² The 20th working day should be viewed as a long stop – i.e the latest possible date that a response should be issued by.

8. Complaints

8.1. If the individual requesting the data is unhappy with the way their request has been handled, or the outcome, an appeal can be made to:

- The Principal
Plumpton College
Ditchling Road
Plumpton
East Sussex
BN7 3AE
complaints@plumpton.co.uk

8.2. The individual submitting the appeal has a further right to complain to the Information Commissioner if the appeal was not handled satisfactorily. The contact details to address this complaint can be found at www.ico.org.uk