

College Group Policy

Freedom of Information Act

Manager Responsible: Director MIS & Digital Transformation

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Intended Audience: <i>(Check appropriate box)</i>			
Staff:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Governors:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Students:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	External:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

AMENDMENT SUMMARY

<u>Version</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
2.3	16 May 2018	Update to ensure GDPR Compliance
2.4	16 Oct 2018	Periodic Review
2.5	12 Sep 2019	Periodic Review
2.6	04 Oct 2020	Periodic Review
2.7	23 Aug 2021	Periodic Review
2.8	30 Aug 2022	Periodic Review
2.9	31 Aug 2023	Periodic Review. Change to appointment titles
2.10	04 Sep 2024	Periodic Review
2.11	11 Aug 2025	Periodic Review

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Age, Disability, Gender & Race Equality Statement

Age, Disability, Gender and Race Equality Impact Measures will be set and monitored through analysis of all data related to potential suspected or actual abuse of this policy.

A copy of the Equality Impact Assessment Initial Screening Form is attached as an Annex to this document

1. Policy Statement

The Chelmsford College Group takes its responsibilities with regards to the management of the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) seriously. FOIA gives the public a general right of access to information held by public authorities and publicly funded organisations.

The Chelmsford College Group is obliged to respond in writing within 20 working days to specific requests from any individual. In its response, it will state whether it holds information of the type requested, and, if so, subject to certain exemptions (including issues of Data Protection), communicate it.

2. Scope

The Chelmsford College Group recognises its corporate responsibility under FOIA to provide a general right of access to information held. The Senior Manager with overall responsibility for this policy is the Director MIS & Digital Transformation. He is supported in responding to FOI requests by the Digital & Data Compliance Manager

The Director MIS & Digital Transformation is responsible for drawing up guidance on freedom of information and promoting compliance with this policy in such a manner as to ensure the easy, appropriate and timely retrieval of information.

Wherever possible, members of staff should receive an introductory briefing on FOIA procedures.

3. Publication Schemes

The model Publication Scheme and Definition Document provided by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) for Colleges of Further Education has been adopted by Chelmsford College Group.

The College Group's Publication Scheme provides a list of the information routinely published by the College Group institutions which the ICO expects to be made available unless:

- The information is not held
- The information is exempt under one of the FoI exemptions or Environmental Information Regulations (EIRs) exemptions, or its release is prohibited under another statute
- The information is archived, out of date or otherwise inaccessible; or, it would be impractical or resource-intensive to prepare the material for routine release

The current Model Publication Scheme and Definition Document for Further Education establishments are attached as Appendices to this document.

4. Requests for Information

A request for information regarding the Chelmsford College Group may be made by contacting the Director MIS & Digital Transformation. Contact details are set out below:

Director MIS & Digital Transformation
Chelmsford College Group
102 Moulsham Street
Chelmsford
Essex
CM2 0JQ

DataProtection@chelmsford.ac.uk

All requests must:

- Be made in writing, or electronically by email
- Give the applicant's name and correspondence address
- Describe the information being sought

A response must be made within 20 working days although further reasonable details can be requested in order to identify and locate the information. Working days exclude weekends and bank holidays but include days upon which organisations within Chelmsford College Group are closed but which are neither weekends nor bank holidays.

5. Charges

Details of charges are set out in the Model Publication Scheme.

6. Complaints

The Director MIS & Digital Transformation will co-ordinate any complaints received in respect of this policy.

The complaint should be addressed to the Director MIS & Digital Transformation in the first instance. The complaint will be acknowledged immediately, and every reasonable effort will be made to offer a more comprehensive reply within 21 days.

If the applicant is not satisfied with the reply, then they should inform the Director MIS & Digital Transformation within 21 days. The complaint will then be dealt with in accordance with the College Group's Complaints or Grievance Procedures as appropriate.

If the applicant is dissatisfied with the outcome of the Complaints Procedure, they may seek an independent review from the Information Commissioner. Requests for review from the Information Commissioner should be made in writing to:

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

Tel: 01625 545 700
Fax: 01625 545 510

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Initial Screening Form

Name of the Policy, Procedure, Practice or Proposal being screened:

Freedom of Information Act Policy

Provide a brief description of its purpose:

This policy describes the methodology used to implement the Freedom of Information act requirements within the Chelmsford College Group.

Are there controls in place to monitor the uniform application of this practice? (if no please explain below)

Yes

No

Requests for information under the act are recorded centrally and monitored at SMT level. The model publication scheme ensures routine information is made available on a routine basis.

Does the policy or process have the potential to affect a particular group disproportionately in either a positive or negative way? Please provide comments with supporting evidence:

The policy is applied equally to all College documentation and information so will not impact positively or negatively on any particular cohort.

If you have identified a medium or high equality impact please complete the following, otherwise leave blank. Add additional comment below the questions as necessary.

Are there any other policies or practices that need to be assessed alongside this screening?

Yes

No

Should the policy or practice proceed to a full Equality Impact Assessment?

Yes

No

If the answer to the above question is no, please give the reasons for this decision:

If a full impact assessment is required, please give the date by which it will be completed

(Note – If you have assessed a negative impact as high, you must seek advice and conduct a full EIA on a high priority basis)

Declaration:

We are satisfied that an initial screening has been carried out and a full Equality Impact Assessment [is / is not] required at this time.

(If a full EIA is required, a template form is available within the EIA Guidance Notes which must be read before completing a full EIA).

Manager:

Signature:

S Hodges

Date:

11 Aug 2025

Countersigned

Signature:

S Parker

Date:

11 Aug 2025