

ANNEX A: FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (FEES)

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION – FEES PROCEDURE

St John Rigby College is committed to meeting its obligations under the Freedom of Information and other access legislation as decreed to government.

We will consider all requests for information on their individual merits and aim to send a response within 20 working days, or 40 calendar days for requests for personal information, handled under the Data Protection act. If we are unable to give an answer within the allotted time, we will let you know and tell you how much longer we need.

Requests for Personal Information under the Data Protection Act

Where a request is made for access to personal information held by the college, a charge of £10 will normally apply. This includes any photocopying which we need to do.

The College reserves the right to waive this fee for existing staff and for applicants who are in receipt of benefit providing that proof of current benefit entitlement is provided when requested.

Request for Information under the Freedom of Information Act

The Freedom of Information Act and the associated Fees Regulations stipulate that we cannot levy a fee for information unless the amount of time taken to locate the information exceeds 18 hours. However, we are allowed to charge for disbursements related to the provision of information and any reformatting requested by the applicant provided we ensure that applicants are aware of any charges.

For any information which is provided in hard copy our rates for photocopying/printing, reformatting and postage will normally be as follows:

Table of Charges

- A4 black and white - 5p per printed side
 - A4 colour - 20p per printed side
 - A3 black and white - 20p per printed side
 - A3 colour - 40p per printed side
 - Alternative media - Charge to be agreed in advance on request
- Printouts from a PC:

Postage - At the prevailing Royal Mail rates

Charges for retrieving the information

The Freedom of Information Act gives public bodies two options for handling difficult or voluminous requests: to either charge or refuse to answer the request. On assessing your request, we will first inform you that your request will exceed the appropriate limit of £450, which is set by government, and discuss ways in which you can reduce your request to bring it within the appropriate limit.

In order to assess whether the appropriate limit has been exceeded we will take into account the staff time, charged at a rate of £25 per hour, involved in the following:

- Finding out if we hold the information requested
- Locating information or documents
- Retrieving information or documents
- Extracting, editing and blanking out exempt information from documents

In cases where we do not hold the requested information, the time taken to determine whether or not we hold it may be charged if the 18 hours is exceeded.

Aggregated requests

If we receive two or more related requests within a period of 60 consecutive working days from an individual or different individuals who appear to be acting together or as part of a campaign, the costs of complying with the individual requests are aggregated. If the total is found to be in excess of the appropriate limit, we treat the set of requests as a single request that exceeds the appropriate limit. For example a request made by 2 individuals, each amounting to £300; added together the total costs are £600 and therefore exceed the appropriate limit of £450. The college can charge each applicant £300 (together with any disbursement charges).

Payment

If a charge is to be levied, we will notify you in a Fees Notice. We are not obliged to respond to a request unless the fee is paid within three months.

Charges for Environmental Information

The Environmental Information Regulations allow authorities to levy a "reasonable" charge for the provision of information. As long as the cost of locating the information is likely to be below the "appropriate limit" set by the Freedom of Information legislation, we will only charge you for printing, photocopying and postage, at the same rate as for Freedom of Information requests.

Where charges apply, we will send you a fees notice as soon as possible specifying what you have to pay. We must receive payment from you before we can supply you with the information which you have requested. If we do not receive payment from you within 60 working days for Environmental Information requests we will treat your request as having been withdrawn.