



Information Commissioner

## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION PUBLICATION SCHEME

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1. Legal requirement

- 1.1 Adopting a publication scheme is a requirement of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. This Act promotes greater openness and accountability across the public sector by requiring all 'public authorities' to make information available proactively, through a publication scheme.
- 1.2 'Public authorities' are defined in the Act and include universities, further education colleges and sixth form colleges.

#### 2. What is a publication scheme?

- 2.1 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 public authority's commitment to make available the information described.
- 2.2 A publication scheme must set out the classes, or categories, of information published. It must also make clear how the information described can be accessed and whether or not charges will be made.

#### 3. The 'model' publication scheme for further education

- 3.1 Varndean College has adopted the model publication scheme developed for the Further Education sector (approved by the Governing Body on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2008) and is therefore committed to publishing the information it describes. This replaces the College's existing publication scheme with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2009.
- 3.2 This model is designed for sixth form colleges across England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The purpose of the model is to save institutions duplicating effort in producing individual schemes and to assist the public in accessing information from across the sector. However, to reflect the diversity in size and function of institution, a number of optional classes of information are included. As a result, models within the sector will vary slightly. Any optional classes relevant to us have been included in our scheme.

#### 4. Who we are and what we do

Varndean College is a sixth form college with over 1,200 students aged between 16-18 studying AS, A2 and BTEC courses. A wide range of evening courses is also available for up to 1,800 adult learners. 85% of students live within the City of Brighton and Hove and the College is increasing popular with international students. The College also has a range of full and part-time Access to Higher Education courses on-site as well as offering extensive provision for adult part-time courses through 6 outreach centres, mainly in East Brighton.

The most recent Ofsted inspection found the College to be very strong on the added value it brings to the work of its students and particularly good in terms of educational and social

inclusion and the range of additional support and enrichment activities available. There is more information available on our website: [www.varndean.ac.uk](http://www.varndean.ac.uk)

## **5. Accessing information covered by the publication scheme**

- 5.1 The classes of information we publish are described in the second part of the scheme.
- 5.2 Next to each class we have indicated the manner in which the information described will be available. We have also indicated whether charges apply to material in each class.
- 5.3 To request information available through our publication scheme, please contact: **Communications Officer**.
- 5.4 Please note that a publication scheme relates to 'published' information. Therefore, material covered has already been prepared in a format ready for distribution.

## **6. What about information not covered by the publication scheme?**

- 6.1 You have the right, under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, to request any information held by a public authority which it has not already made available through its publication scheme. Information will not be made available where it is deemed to be confidential.
- 6.2 Requests will have to be made in writing and, in general, public authorities will have 20 working days to respond. A reasonable charge will be made for information provided which is not available on the College's website. They will not be required to release information to which an exemption in the Act legitimately applies. However, public authorities may be required to explain to the applicant why they are not releasing information and they may also have to justify this to the Information Commissioner.

## **7. Feedback**

- 7.1 It is important that this publication scheme meets your needs. If you find the scheme difficult to understand, please let us know. We also welcome suggestions as to how our scheme might be improved. Any questions, comments or complaints about this scheme should be sent in writing to:

**Communications Officer,  
Varndean College, Surrenden Road, BRIGHTON, East Sussex BN1 6WQ.**

- 7.2.1 If we are unable to resolve any complaint, you may complain to the Information Commissioner, the independent body which oversees the Freedom of Information Act:

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

## **8. Further Information**

More information about the Freedom of Information Act and the Model Publication Scheme is available on the Information Commissioner's website at: [www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk)

## Freedom of Information Act 2000 Publication Scheme for Varndean College – Guide to Information

In order to protect the environment we will endeavour to provide information electronically. However we are able to provide paper copies if you so request.

### 1. Who we are and what we do

This section includes organisational information, locations and contacts, constitutional and legal governance. It covers information relating to the way the College is governed and how decisions are made. It includes information on the legal status of the College, which individual member of staff or group within the organisation is responsible for specific functions and where they fit in the overall structure of the organisation. In some instances information for example from committee minutes will be exempt from disclosure where it contains personal information, information that may damage the commercial interests of the College or that may threaten the health and safety of specific individuals.

	Class	Description	Manner	Fee
1.1	Legal Framework	<p>This section contains information relating to how the College was established and its standing from the point of view of the law. Ultimately the corporate status of some FE 'Corporations' will be conferred by the relevant statutes, in particular the Education Reform Act of 1988 and the Further and Higher Education Act 1992. The actual legislation is often already publicly available for example on the HMSO web site (<a href="http://www.legislation.hmso.gov.uk/acts.htm">www.legislation.hmso.gov.uk/acts.htm</a>) and need not be duplicated.</p> <p>Every educational institution (university, further or higher education college) has a legal basis, which forms its legal status. This legal status can have been obtained in a variety of ways such as by instruments and articles of government, charter or an act of parliament.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Instrument and Articles of Government</li> <li>* Financial Memorandum</li> <li>* Scheme of Delegation</li> <li>* Corporation Standing Orders</li> </ul>	<p>Paper</p> <p>Or</p> <p>Web (as applicable)</p>	<p>£10</p> <p>Free</p>
1.2	How the information is organised.	<p>This class contains information relating to how the individual units of the College are organised and where each unit fits in the overall structure of the College. Examples of the type of information in this class include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organisational structure charts</li> <li>• Description of work/responsibilities of units</li> <li>• Corporation and Committee Structure and Procedures including terms of reference for Committees</li> <li>• Code of Conduct for the Governing Body</li> <li>• Minutes and papers of Governing Body and its Committees (non-confidential)</li> </ul>	<p>Paper</p> <p>Or</p> <p>Web (as applicable)</p>	<p>£10</p> <p>Free</p>

1.3	Locations and contacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Map of main site</li> <li>• Address of main site and telephone number and any other locations</li> </ul>	Web	Free
1.4	List of and information relating to organisations it works in partnership with and any companies wholly owned by it	<p>On the basis that most of these bodies will be responsible for their own affairs, it is expected that this information need be only sufficient for the purposes of identifying the relationship between these bodies (such as business, the professions and the community) and the College.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• List of organisations</li> <li>• List of collaborative partners/other providers</li> </ul>	Paper	
1.5	Student Activities	<p>Information relating to the operation and activities of the Student Union and other clubs, associations and non-academic activities that are organised for or by the students can also be included where this information is held by the College.</p> <p>* Students' Union Constitution * List of Students Union Officers</p>		

## 2. What we spend and how we spend it

### Introduction

This section covers financial information relating to projected and actual income and expenditure, tendering, procurement, contracts and financial audit. The Finance Division provides accounting, procurement and contracting services, helping to make best use of resources and fulfilling statutory responsibilities. Information that may damage the College's commercial interests will be excluded from publication. It is expected that as a minimum that financial information for the current and previous two financial years should be available.

	Class	Description	Manner	Fee
2.1	Funding/income	<p>Examples of the type of information in this class include information on the sources of funding and income e.g. funding grants, tuition fees, endowment and investment income (and including investment strategy):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual Report and Financial Statements (item 2.2)</li> <li>• Tuition Fees</li> </ul>	Paper	£10

2.2	Budgetary and account information	<p>This class should include information such as the annual statement of accounts and other information to allow the public to see where money is being spend, where it is or has been planned to spend it and the difference between one and another, revenue budgets and budgets for capital expenditure may also be included.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual Report and Financial Statements</li> <li>• Remuneration of Senior Staff as published in annual accounts</li> <li>• Financial forecasts</li> <li>• Business procedures</li> </ul>	Paper	£10
2.3	Financial Audit Reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• internal audit reports</li> <li>• external audit management letter</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	Paper	£10
2.4	Capital Programme	<p>This section may include information on major plans for capital expenditure including any public private partnership contracts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plans</li> <li>• Planning Application</li> <li>• LSC Funding Approval</li> </ul>	Paper	£10
2.5	Financial Regulations and Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial regulations and including procurement policy (business procedures – item 2.2)</li> <li>• Strategic Plan/Mission statement (item 3.2)</li> <li>• Annual report and Financial Statements (item 2.2)</li> <li>• Annual budget (item 2.2)</li> </ul> <p>Property Strategy</p>	Paper	£10
2.6	Staff Pay and Grading Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Salary Grades</li> </ul>	Paper	£10
2.7	Register of Suppliers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Register of Suppliers</li> </ul>	Paper	£10
2.8	Procurement and tender procedures and reports	<p>Details of procedures used for the acquisition of goods and services. Contracts currently available for public tender and reports of successful tenders.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Policies relating to the procurement and disposal of equipment</li> <li>* Business Procedures ( item 2.2)</li> <li>* goods and services</li> <li>* Insurance</li> <li>* Pensions</li> </ul>	Paper	£10
2.9	Contracts	<p>This section could include details of contracts which are of sufficient size to have gone through a formal tendering process.</p>	Paper	£10

### 3. What our priorities are and how we are doing

#### Introduction

This section covers information on the College's strategy and plans, performance indicators, audits, inspections and reviews. It is expected that information in this class be available at least for the current and previous three years. The following information would be expected to be included in respect of Further Education Colleges, together with any other reports or recorded information which demonstrates the College's planned or actual performance: annual report, corporation and business plans, teaching and learning strategy, academic quality and standards, information on the College's internal procedures for assuring academic quality and standards and qualitative data on the quality and standards of learning and teaching.

	<b>Class</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Manner</b>	<b>Fee</b>
3.1	Annual Report	* Annual Report and Financial Statements (2.2)	Paper	£10
3.2	Corporate and business plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic Plan (incl. Mission Statement)</li> </ul>	Paper	£10
3.3	Teaching and Learning Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment Policy</li> <li>• Educational Trips Policy</li> <li>• Retention Strategy</li> <li>• Student Charter</li> <li>• Quality Assurance</li> <li>• Exams Policy</li> <li>• Student Management Policy</li> </ul>	Paper	£10
3.4	Academic quality and standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality Assurance Policy</li> <li>• Data on Student Retention, Achievement and Value Added</li> <li>• Data on students classified by age, gender, ethnicity, disability</li> <li>• Quality Assurance Cycle</li> <li>• Arrangements for academic and tutorial guidance, support and supervision</li> <li>• Accommodation, equipment and facilities for teaching and learning</li> <li>• Professional development arrangements ((Staff Development Plan (item 5.4 )</li> <li>• NQT Policy</li> <li>• Lesson Observation Policy</li> <li>• Outcome of Student satisfaction surveys</li> </ul>	Paper	£10

3.5	External Review information	This will include information such as the annual monitoring and review process together with statement of roles, responsibilities and authority of different bodies within the institution involved in programme approval and review.  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ofsted Reports</li> <li>• Information on EQR Scheme</li> </ul>	Paper  Or (as applicable)  Web	£10  Free
3.6	Corporate Relations	This section will include information relating to the College's links with employers and the development of learning programmes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work Experience Partners</li> </ul>	Paper	£10
3.7	Government and Regulatory Report	This includes accreditation and monitoring reports by professional, statutory or regulatory bodies and information that an institution is legally obliged to make available to its funding and/or monitoring bodies. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Returns to the Learning and Skills Council</li> <li>• Ofsted Inspection Report</li> <li>• Other returns made e.g. to government departments, other regulatory bodies, research councils, professional bodies etc.</li> </ul>	Paper	£10

#### 4. How We Make Decisions

##### Introduction

This section will include the College's decision making processes and records of decisions made. Information is expected to be provided for at least the current and previous three years.

	Class	Description	Manner	Fee
4.1	Minutes from governing body, council, academic boards and steering groups.	Minutes of meetings where key decision are made about the operation of the College, excluding material which is properly considered to be private, should be available to the public.  * Minutes and papers of Corporation and Committee meetings, excluding confidential matters. (Item 1.2)	Paper  Or  Web	£10  Free
4.2	Teaching and Learning Committee minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Curriculum and Standards Committee Meeting minutes, excluding confidential matters.</li> </ul>	Paper Or Web	£10 Free
4.3	Minutes of staff/student consultation meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Terms of reference of staff/student liaison Committee/s</li> <li>• Minutes of staff/student liaison committee/s meetings</li> </ul>	Paper	£10
4.4	Appointment Committees and procedures	*Corporation and its Committee procedures and terms of reference (item 1.2) * Recruitment and Selection Policy *	Paper Or (if applicable) Web	£10 Free

## 5. Our Policies and Procedures

### Introduction

This section relates to current written protocols, policies and procedures for delivering our services and responsibilities and relates to current information only.

	<b>Class</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Manner</b>	<b>Fee</b>
5.1	Policies and procedures for conducting College business	<p>This section would include: codes of practice, memoranda of understanding, procedural rules, standing orders and similar information.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Term dates</li> <li>• College Calendar</li> <li>• Corporation Standing Orders (Governing Body)</li> <li>• Code of Conduct (Governors)</li> <li>• Code of Conduct (Staff)</li> </ul>	<p>Paper</p> <p>Web</p>	<p>£10</p> <p>Free</p>
5.2	Policies and procedures relating to academic services	<p>Some of the policies may already be covered in class 2 What our Priorities are and how we are doing, in the context of external review and academic quality and standards. Additional policies under this heading may include such matters as policies and procedures relating to changing course, regulation and policy on student assessment, appeal procedures and policy on breach of assessment regulations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Academic policies relating to Teaching and Learning, including:</li> <li>• Admissions Policy</li> <li>• Assessment Policy</li> <li>• Plagiarism Policy</li> <li>• Quality Assurance</li> <li>• Student Management Policy</li> <li>• Complaints &amp; Appeals Students</li> </ul>	Paper	£10
5.3	Policies and procedures relating to student services.	<p>This will include relevant policies and procedures to for example, student admission and registration, accommodation, management of the student record system, assessment of external qualifications, internal student complaints and appeals, code of student discipline.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Admissions and enrolment policies and procedures documents</li> <li>• Entry Qualifications</li> <li>• Registry student records policies and procedures documents</li> <li>• College Charter</li> <li>• Code of Student discipline and other policy and procedure documents</li> <li>• Internal Student complaint and appeals procedures</li> <li>• Learning Development and Support</li> <li>• Personal Development Advice</li> </ul>	<p>Paper</p> <p>Or (if applicable) Web</p>	<p>£10</p> <p>Free</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Services for Students with Special Needs</li> <li>• Student Handbook and Prospectus</li> <li>• Policies relating to Students <b>NOT</b> included elsewhere</li> <li>• Child Protection Policy</li> <li>• Drugs and Alcohol Policy</li> <li>• Student Handbook</li> <li>• Learning Resources Services</li> <li>• IT User Agreement</li> <li>• Educational Visits Policy and Procedures</li> <li>• Counselling services (Student Handbook)</li> </ul>		
5.4	Policies and procedures relating to human resources	<p>The full range of HR policies and procedures will be included here e.g. generic terms and conditions of employment, collective bargaining and consultation with trade unions and professional organisations, grievance, disciplinary, harassment and bullying, public interest disclosure, staff development etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support staff contract</li> <li>• Teaching staff contract</li> <li>• Management contract</li> <li>• Support staff conditions of service</li> <li>• Teaching staff conditions of service</li> <li>• Grievance policy and procedure</li> <li>• Disciplinary procedures and policies</li> <li>• Staff development plan (item 3.4)</li> <li>• Bullying and Harassment policy</li> <li>• Health and Safety Policy and procedures (refer item 5.8)</li> <li>• Compliance with Public Interests Disclosure Act</li> <li>• Appraisal Policy/NQT Induction Policy</li> <li>• Policies on upgrades and promotions</li> <li>• Any policy relating to staff not included elsewhere.</li> </ul>	Paper	£10 or Free
5.5	Policies and procedures relating to recruitment	<p>If vacancies are advertised as part of recruitment policies, details of current vacancies will be readily available.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruitment Policy</li> <li>• Job vacancies</li> </ul>	Paper Web	£10 Free
5.6	Code of Conduct for members of the governing body.	* Code of Conduct – (item 1.2)	Paper Web	£10 or Free
5.7	Equality and Diversity	<p>This will include policies, statements, procedures and guidelines relating to E &amp; D.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equality &amp; Diversity Policy and Equality Scheme</li> <li>• Disability Equality Scheme</li> <li>• Gender Equality Scheme</li> <li>• Race Relations and Race Equality Policy</li> </ul>	Paper	£10
5.8	Health and Safety	* Health and Safety Policy	Paper	£10

5.9	Estate Management	<p>This will include such policies as disposals policy, estates strategy and plan, facilities management policies, grounds and building maintenance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Property Strategy</li> <li>• Tendering policies (and refer item 2.8)</li> <li>• Grounds maintenance contract</li> <li>• Building maintenance contract</li> <li>• Recycling and Disposal Policies</li> </ul>	Paper	£10
5.10	Complaints policies and procedures	<p>Complaints procedures will include those covering requests for information and operating the publication scheme.</p> <p>* Complaints policy and procedures</p>	Paper	£10
5.11	Records Management and personal data policies	<p>This will include information security policies, records retention and archive policies and data protection (including data sharing) policies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data Protection Policy</li> <li>• IT Security Policy</li> <li>• CCTV Policy</li> </ul>	Paper	£10
5.12	Charging regimes and policies	<p>Details of any statutory charging regimes should be provided. Charging policies should include charges made for information routinely published and clearly state what costs are to be recovered together with the basis on which they are made and how they are calculated.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tuition fees for home/EU students (item 2.1 and 7.4)</li> <li>• Information for international students</li> <li>• Information on other charges</li> </ul>	Paper	£10

## 6. Lists and Registers

### Introduction

This section would be expected to include information contained only in currently maintained lists and registers.

	<b>Class</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Manner</b>	<b>Fee</b>
6.1	Any information we are currently legally required to hold in publicly available registers.	Governors' Register of Interests (appointments available on request)	Visit to College during normal opening hours	
6.2	Asset Registers			
6.3	Disclosure Logs	Where a department produces a disclosure log indicating the information that has been provided in response to request it should be readily available. Disclosure logs are themselves recommended as good practice.	Paper	£10

## 7. The Services we offer

### Introduction

This section includes information about services offered, including leaflets, guidance and newsletters.

Generally this is an extension of part of the first class of information. While the first class provides information on the roles and responsibilities of the College, this class includes details of the services which are provided by the College as a result of them. It will also relate to information covered in other classes.

	<b>Class</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Manner</b>	<b>Fee</b>
7.1	Prospectus and Course content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• College prospectus</li> <li>• Open Day information</li> <li>• Entry requirements</li> <li>• Widening participation</li> </ul>	Paper Paper Web	Free £10 Free
7.2	Health Advice	List of activities delivered via the tutorial programme	Paper	£10
7.3	Careers Advice	Information is included in the Student Handbook and tutorial programme	Paper	£10
7.4	Services for which the College is entitled to recover a fee together with those fees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fee information for Home/EU Students</li> <li>• Fee information for International Students (refer item 2.1 and 7.4)</li> </ul>	Paper	£10

