



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION POLICY

This Policy has been written to cover all sites belonging to Ysgol Plas Brondyffryn this includes:

Ty'n Fron – Primary Site

Park Street – Secondary Site

Ty'r Ysgol – Secondary Site- SLD

Gerddi Glasfryn – Residential Site

Please note that whenever the term Brondyffryn or School appears it is therefore referring to all of the above sites.

1. Description of School and its Community

Ysgol Plas Brondyffryn is a Local Authority Residential Special School maintained by Denbighshire Education Authority. The school specialises in meeting the needs of children/young people with Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC) and associated specific learning difficulties aged 3-19 years. The school is able to accommodate up to 125 children/young people. Gerddi Glasfryn Residential accommodates between 26 – 30 children/young people on a part time basis. As a Regional school, Ysgol Plas Brondyffryn welcomes children/young people from across North Wales and the closer counties of England. Our policies are relevant to all our children/young people regardless of county of residence.

The majority of the children/young people are from English speaking families. For most children/young people, Welsh is taught as a second language; however, education can be provided through the medium of Welsh if requested by the family and detailed in the Statement of Special Educational Needs. The majority of the children/young people are boys due to the higher prevalence of autism in males.

At YPB we are conscious of the need to maintain a low arousal environment which has been shown to be beneficial for individuals with ASC, reducing their anxiety and aiding concentration. To this end, we strive to keep all areas tidy and free from clutter; to make sure classroom displays are orderly and muted in colour; to communicate information in a clear and concise manner and to aim for a quiet and calm atmosphere. The approach varies on each site as dictated by the needs and abilities of the pupils and our aim is always to organise the environment as far as possible to promote independence in our young people.

2. Description of Policy Formation and Consultation Process

This Policy has been formulated by a working party consisting of the Senior Leadership Team. Staff, governors and parents were consulted before the Policy was finalised and formally adopted by the Governing Body.

3. General

The governing body is aware that the school has a legal duty to supply certain information to enquirers.

The school will comply with any Freedom of Information guidance issued by the LA.

The school's policy is that:

- an enquirer must be informed whether the school holds that information or not, and if it does it must supply the information;
- the information must be supplied within 20 days of the request;
- the information can include personal or non-personal information, but no information relating to named individuals will be released;
- other information that the Headteacher considers to be of a sensitive nature may also be withheld. In so deciding the Headteacher will consider whether it should be released in the public interest if in withholding the information is greater than the public interest in releasing it;
- the Headteacher will administer the school's process for providing information. In so doing the Headteacher will take into account the Code of Practice, and any guidance from the local authority;

4. Responsibilities

The Headteacher has overall responsibility to the Governing Body for ensuring that the policy is implemented and that the management process is maintained.

The school's Data Manager is responsible to the Headteacher for the day-to-day management of the policy.

5. The School's Process:

On receipt of a request in writing for information the Headteacher will:

- decide whether the request is a request under Data Protection Act, Environmental Information Regulations or Freedom of Information Act;
- decide whether the school holds the information or whether the request should be transferred to another body if the information is held by them;
- provide the information if it has already been made public;
- inform the enquirer if the information is not held ;
- consider whether a third party's interests might be affected by disclosure and if so consult them;
- consider whether any exemptions apply and whether they are absolute or qualified;
- carry out a public interest test to decide if applying the qualified exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information;
- decide whether the estimated cost of complying with the request will exceed the appropriate limit (£450 with a maximum of £50 per individual educational record);
- if a request is made for a document that contains exempt personal information ensure that the personal information is removed by applying the redaction procedure; and

- consider whether the request is vexatious or repeated;

The school recognises its duty to provide advice and assistance to anyone requesting information.

6. Reasons for Not Complying with a Request

The school accepts that according to the legislation there are only four reasons for not complying with a valid request for information under FOI:

1. the information is not held;
2. the cost threshold is reached (the threshold has yet to be decided but is likely to be in the region of £500);
3. the request is considered vexatious or repeated, or
4. one or more of the exemptions apply.

The school also recognises that the exemptions provided by the FOIA are:

- a. information accessible by other means;
- b. personal information;
a request for personal information is covered by the Data Protection Act (DPA) 1998. Individuals may continue to make a "subject access request" under the DPA – these are where the enquirer asks to see what personal information the school holds about themselves;
- c. environmental information;
where information is covered by the Environmental Information Regulations 1992.

7. Complaints

Expressions of dissatisfaction will be handled through the school's existing complaints procedure.

8. Information to be provided

The governors have decided that:

1. all published information by the school will be made available;
2. all unpublished information (including any advice or memoranda) will be made available on request, except where:
 - a. the names of individual people can be identified in the documents;
 - b. the Headteacher considers that the document(s) contain sensitive material in the meaning of the Act and as explained in the Code of Practice; and
3. where the school intends to publish it in due course.

9. Advertising the Service

The school will advertise its policy on Freedom of Information in the school's website.

10. Charging

The governors have resolved not to charge for the service.

(N.B. It is possible to levy a charge in accordance with FOIA regulations. If a charge is made, you must give written notice to the person, before supplying the information requested. The charge has been fixed for Education Records at a maximum of £50. A maximum hourly rate is chargeable at £25 per hour).

11. Training

Staff involved in the storage and management of the service will receive appropriate training.

12. Monitoring and Review

The Headteacher will monitor the policy in liaison with the Data Manager and will report annually to the Governing Body on the progress of the policy.

The Headteacher will provide information about enquiries in regular reports to the governors.

Policy recommended for approval:	Summer 2009
Policy adopted:	Summer 2009
Reviewed:	Spring 2016
To be reviewed:	Spring 2017

Equality Impact Assessment completed

An Equality Impact Assessment offers an opportunity for staff to think carefully about the impact of their work on local people and other members of staff.

Date completed:

January 2016