



Force Disclosure Unit
Police Headquarters
London Road
DEVIZES
Wiltshire
SN10 2DN

Date: 7th November 2024

Ref: FOI 2024/957

Dear,

I write in connection with your request for information dated 29th October 2024 concerning reports of incidents on school premises.

I am required by the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to handle all requests in a manner that is blind as to the identity and motives of the requestor. Any information released as a response to a request is regarded as being published and therefore in the public domain without caveat.

Your request for information has now been considered and I am not obliged to supply the information you have requested.

You wrote:

I am writing to you under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to request the following information for the past three academic years (Sept 2021-Aug 2022, Sept 2022-Aug 2023 and Sept 2023 - Aug 2024):

1. The number of reported incidents of each of the following offences:
 - a. Threaten with an offensive weapon on school premises
 - b. Possession of offensive weapon on school premises without lawful authority or reasonable excuse
 - c. Having an article with a blade or point on school premises
 - d. Threaten with a blade or sharply pointed article on school premises
2. In each case, please could you give details of the type of weapon, the type of school premises involved (primary or secondary), details of who it was in possession of the weapon (for example their age, if they are a staff member or pupil), and the outcome of the offence (where known).
3. I would prefer to receive all the information electronically.

If the decision is made to withhold some of this data using exemptions in the Data Protection Act, please inform me of that fact and cite the exemptions used.

If the request goes beyond the scope of the time limits covered by FOI, please reduce the data by year starting from the oldest – ie please send the most recent data, starting with 2023/24, then 2022/23, etc.

If some parts of this request are easier to answer than others, I would ask that you get in touch with me as soon as possible to ensure at least some of the data is released on time.

Our response:

The information that you are requesting for the majority of your request is not stored in a way which permits easy retrieval. This is because in order to find out the number of incidents that have been reported to have taken place on a school premises from Sept 2021 – Aug 2024 involving an offensive weapon, Wiltshire Police would need to manually search through all reports relating to offensive weapons that were reported during this time period in order to ascertain whether the report relates to that of a school. This is because Wiltshire Police do not have a specific tag that can be attached to incident records in order to easily identify whether the incident occurred at a school/college/university or other educational establishment. Instead, this information can be retrieved by searching on the postcode of which the school resides, however, searching for reports relating to a specific postcode also comes with its own host of caveats and issues.

Therefore, under the circumstances I am absolutely confident that to locate, retrieve and extract the information you seek would by far exceed the time obligations upon this authority to comply, and in so doing would exceed the fees limits. This is set at £450 calculated at a flat rate of £25 per hour for those work activities comprising of confirming the information is held, locating it, retrieving it and extracting it.

Please note, that if one part of the request engages a Section 12 response, the whole request will engage a Section 12 response. The reason being is due to the fact that locating, retrieving and extracting any further information would only add to the already exceeded time obligations.

Ordinarily under our Section 16 duty to provide advice and assistance, we would advise you how to refine your request to a more manageable level and in order to do so, as referenced above, we would need the names, addresses and postcodes of all of the schools that you would like us to search for this information on in order to attempt to gather this data, but even then, please be aware that further exemptions may still apply as once we have this information, we would still need to apply further filters in which to ascertain this data and we would also need to carry out a manual search in order to still confirm whether the incident occurred at or relates to that of a school which could very well still engage the time/cost exemption.

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires the Wiltshire Police, when refusing to provide such information (because the information is exempt) to provide you the applicant with a notice which: (a) states that fact, (b) specifies the exemption in question and (c) states (if that would not otherwise be apparent) why the exemption applies.

The exemption applicable to the information requested is:

Section 12 – Exemption where cost of compliance exceeds appropriate limit

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(1) Section 1(1) does not oblige a public authority to comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit.

In accordance with Section 17 of the Act, this letter represents a Refusal Notice for this particular request.

I am satisfied that all the relevant information has been passed to me and been considered in the light of your request within the time constraints applicable under the legislation.

Wiltshire Police would like to thank you for the interest that you have shown in the Force.

Yours sincerely,

Force Disclosure Decision Maker

Wiltshire Police offers a re-examination of your case under its review procedure.



Force Disclosure Unit

Wiltshire Police HQ, London Road, Devizes, Wiltshire SN10 2DN

Freedom of Information Request Appeals Procedure

1. Who Can Ask for a Review

Any person who has requested information from Wiltshire Police, which has been dealt with under the Freedom of Information Act, is entitled to complain and request an internal review, if they are dissatisfied with the response they received.

2. How to Request a Review

Requests for review of a Freedom of Information request must be made in writing to the:

Force Disclosure Unit
Wiltshire Police Headquarters,
London Road, Devizes,
Wiltshire,
SN10 2DN

Email at disclosure@wiltshire.police.uk.

The reference number, date of the request and details of why the review is being requested must be included. Requests for review should be brought to the attention of the Force Disclosure Unit within 20 working days of the Force's response to the original FOI request.

3. Review Procedure

Receipt of a request for review will be acknowledged in writing to include confirmation of the reasons for the review. The review will be conducted by another Decision Maker, who is independent from the original Decision Maker. The Force Disclosure Unit will set a target date for a response. The response will be made as soon as is practicable with the intention to complete the review within twenty working days. In more complex cases the review may take up to 40 working days.

The Independent Decision Maker will conduct a review of the handling of the request for information and of decisions taken, including decisions taken about where the public interest lies in respect of exempt information where applicable. The review enables a re-evaluation of the case, taking into account the matters raised by the complaint.

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4. Conclusion of the Appeal

On completion of the review the Independent Decision Maker will reply to the complainant with the result of the review. If the complainant is still dissatisfied following the review, they should contact the Information Commissioner to make an appeal. The Information Commissioner can be contacted via the following details:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF
Tel: 01625 545 700
Fax: 01625 524 510
Email: mail@ico.gsi.gov.uk