
Routine Access Policy

1. **POLICY STATEMENT**

The Government of Nova Scotia seeks to provide to the public greater access to designated records. The Nova Scotia Department of Education's Routine Access Policy is designed to provide improved access to designated records held by the department.

Records obtained through the Routine Access Policy will not require application under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

The Department of Education's Routine Access Policy shall be administered in accordance with the following principles:

a) Personal Privacy

Records containing the personal information of third parties as defined in the *FOIPOP Act* will not be disclosed by the Department of Education outside the *FOIPOP Act*, unless the personal information has been severed.

b) Timeliness

The Department of Education will respond to requests made under the Routine Access Policy in a reasonable and timely fashion.

c) Cost Recovery

Fees for the reproduction and provision of records may be charged where authorized by policies, regulations or statutes.

d) Transparency

This policy shall be made readily available to the public.

e) Reasonableness

This policy shall apply to requests for reasonable quantities of records.

2. **DEFINITIONS**

Active dissemination means the periodic and proactive release of information or records in the absence of a request using mechanisms such as the Internet, libraries, press releases, etc. See Appendix B for a selective list of records which are actively disseminated by the department.

FOIPOP access means the release of a record in response to a formal FOIPOP application made under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

Office of Primary Responsibility (OPR) means an office designated the official custodian of the master record of a document. This office is responsible for the retention and disposition of the record. A division originating a record is deemed to be the Office of Primary Responsibility for those records.

Record or **records** means “books, documents, maps, drawings, photographs, letters, vouchers, papers and any other media on which information is recorded or stored by graphic, electronic, mechanical or other means, but does not include a computer program or any other mechanism that produces records”. (clause 3 (1) (k) *FOIPOP Act*)

Routine access means the routine or automatic release, in full or in part, of certain types of administrative or operational records as a matter of course in response to a request, without the need for a formal application for records under the *FOIPOP Act*.

Routine access requests means requests made by the public for records held by the Department of Education which are processed in accordance with this policy.

3. POLICY OBJECTIVES

- a) The objective of the Routine Access Policy is to improve public accessibility to designated records not released through active dissemination, without the requirement to submit a request under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.
- b) The policy will provide a greater certainty of access for those requesting information, and reflects the spirit of openness and accountability of the *FOIPOP Act*.
- c) The policy provides a process for responding to Routine Access requests by the public.
- d) The policy provides direction to staff concerning how to proceed with Routine Access requests and provides direction concerning which types of records may be released under this policy.

4. APPLICATION

This policy applies to all Department of Education staff and all records designated under this policy.

This policy shall apply to routine access requests for reasonable quantities of records and shall not apply to a request for more than 50 pages of records in a particular category and/or time period. Repetitive requests by an individual for significant volumes of records, or the separation of a request into several small requests totalling a large volume, shall not be subject to the policy. It is important to ensure that the application of the Routine Access policy not unduly interfere with the day-to-day operations of the department. This policy shall not apply to information that would be subject to the exemptions of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

This policy applies to records created on or after October 23, 2003.

5. **POLICY DIRECTIVES**

- a) The FOIPOP Administrator will coordinate the administration of this policy including maintaining information about records disclosed under the Routine Access Policy.
- b) The policy will be posted on the department's Web site.
- c) Staff of the department will be provided training on the application of this policy.

6. **POLICY GUIDELINES**

- a) The following are operational guidelines for processing Routine Access requests:
 - i) All routine access request should be made in writing. Requests from the public may be submitted by mail, E-mail or fax and should be sent directly to the FOIPOP Administrator (see Inquiries section 11).
 - ii) All routine access requests received by other staff should be forwarded to the FOIPOP Administrator in a timely manner.
 - iii) The FOIPOP Administrator will review all routine access requests in the context of this policy.
 - iv) The FOIPOP Administrator will request a copy of the record from the Division which is designated to be the Office of Primary Responsibility (OPR) for the record.
 - v) Division staff shall highlight any issues concerning the record, and in particular, whether the record should be disclosed under the Routine Access Policy, or whether it should be requested through a FOIPOP application.
 - vi) The FOIPOP Administrator will determine whether a record may be released under this policy and will advise the respective Division/ OPR.
 - vii) Fees for the reproduction and provision of records will be charged at the rate of 20 cents per page.
 - viii) The FOIPOP Administrator will sever all personal information about an identifiable individual.
 - ix) If the record is not available to be released through the Routine Access Policy, the FOIPOP Administrator shall promptly notify the requester and shall indicate what other avenues may be available to request the information (e.g., FOIPOP application).
 - x) All records accessed through this policy should be provided to the applicant within a reasonable period of time, such as 30 calendar days from receipt of the request.
 - xi) The FOIPOP administrator will maintain a data base concerning all Routine Access requests.

- b) A Routine Access Committee, chaired by the FOIPOP Administrator, will be struck to support all elements of Routine Access process, and in particular, will review the Schedule A and make recommendations for updates. The Committee may include representatives from Corporate Policy, Communications, and other Divisions, as required.
- c) All proposed changes to this policy will be identified by the FOIPOP Administrator for approval by the Deputy Minister.

7. ACCOUNTABILITY

The Deputy Minister of the Department of Education shall be accountable for the implementation of this policy.

8. COMPLIANCE

The Deputy Minister of the Department of Education shall be responsible for ensuring the compliance with this policy. The policy will be subject to audit.

9. EVALUATION

The “Routine Access” Program established under this policy shall be evaluated or reviewed on an annual basis by the Routine Access Committee. A report will be completed and submitted to the Deputy Minister on an annual basis.

10. REFERENCES

Nova Scotia Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, S.N.S. 1993, c. 5, s. 1.

11. INQUIRIES

All inquiries shall be directed to:

Andrea John
Information Management Administrator
Nova Scotia Department of Education
2021 Brunswick Street
P.O. Box 578
Halifax, NS B3J 2S9
Telephone: 424-5295
Fax: 424-0519
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12. APPENDICES

Schedule A: Routine Access Records
Schedule B: Active Dissemination Record

Schedule A: Routine Access Records

These are types of records that are available under the Routine Access Policy, appreciating that each request is reviewed individually. This policy shall not apply to information that would be subject to the exemptions of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

Human Resources

General:

- C organization charts with position titles
- C generic information of benefits and hours of work
- C job descriptions for positions under competition
- C pay scale, classification of positions (unionized, non-unionized)
- C personal service contracts of individuals not appointed pursuant to the *Civil Service Act*, excluding personal information, and service or product trade secrets
- C secondment agreements both within and outside government, excluding personal information

Selection and hiring process:

- C number of applicants for position
- C number of persons interviewed
- C identity of selection panel to only those being interviewed
- C name of successful candidate, once offer of employment has been accepted

Finance

- individual Statement of Expense (summary sheet) for a three month period within the current fiscal year and for a maximum of three individuals in one department at any one time (no receipts)
- cost of renovations carried out within the previous six months
- cost of sending a delegation out of the province or out of the country
- overtime expenditures (current year-to-date) for specific departments or divisions
- detailed expenditure reports, by category, (e.g., salaries, travel, etc.) for a maximum of three per fiscal year (e.g., 10AB-001, Cost by Cost Element Group)
- Ministerial monthly expense summary provided to Executive Council office
- program audit reports that have been released by the Auditor General
- Supplementary Detail Estimates (within current fiscal year)
- profile sheets on school board funding
- audited Financial Statements for School Boards, most recent completed fiscal year
- final audits by the Nova Scotia government corporate internal audit unit
- contracts for goods and services

Facilities Planning

- C school repair and renovation financial reports (Non P3)
- C school construction and repair - approvals, denials
- C Community Use of School Agreements
- C capital requests for school construction (current year)
- C School Facilities Design Requirements

Adult Education

- C Enhancing Program Quality - Standards For Community-based Adult Literacy Programs

Labour Market Partnerships

- C Forum of Labour Market Ministers reports

English Program Services

- C Time to Learn Strategy Paper
- C various types of research reports (e.g., on roles of principals, etc.)

Student Services

- C Special Education Policy
- C various reports, guidelines, and procedures related to Special Education, multiculturalism and cross-cultural understanding, guidance and counselling, and English as a Second Language

Research and Statistics

- C school demographic information (e.g., number of teachers, student enrollment by grade in a school, etc.)

Information Management

- C Records Management Policy and Plan

Schedule B: Active Dissemination Records

The following list of actively disseminated records indicates the kind of records routinely released by the Department of Education. Many of these records are available on the Department of Education Web site, www.ednet.ns.ca/

Annual reports

e.g., Apprenticeship, Nova Scotia Advisory Board on Colleges and Universities

Consultation documents

e.g., Learning for Life

Reports

e.g., Sir John A. MacDonald High School Evaluation

Research papers

e.g., Report of the ECF Subcommittee on Teacher Supply and Demand

Program information

e.g., Curriculum: Nova Scotia Public Schools, English and French, Atlantic Provinces Education

Foundation documents

Background information and implementation handbook for the Nova Scotia High School

Diploma for adults

Directories

e.g., Authorized Learning Resources for Nova Scotia Schools, Directory of Schools in Nova Scotia, Directory of Libraries in Nova Scotia, List of Registered Private Career Colleges

Legislation and Regulations

e.g., *Education Act*, *Private Career Colleges Act*

Training schedules

e.g., Apprenticeship training opportunities

Terms of Reference

e.g., Youth Advisory Council