

Public Records Requests – Public Records Act Compliant

I. Public Records

A. Public Records Defined

The Sonoma Charter School (the “School”) provides the public with access to its public records in accordance with legal requirements. Public records are those writings containing information relating to the conduct of the School’s business that are prepared, owned, used or retained by the School regardless of physical form or characteristics. **[Note: In some circumstances, the definition can reach to emails and texts sent using private accounts.]** Certain public records, however, are exempt from disclosure by express provision of law. These records will not be provided to the public. The School may not deny disclosure of records based on the purpose for which the record is being requested.

B. Records Exempt from Disclosure

Some of the records that are exempt from disclosure include the following categories. This is not an exhaustive list.

- Preliminary drafts, notes or inter/intra-School memoranda that are not retained by the School in the ordinary course of business;
- Records pertaining to pending litigation to which the School is a party or to claims made pursuant to the Government Claims Act (if applicable), until the pending litigation nor claim has been finally adjudicated or otherwise settled.
- Personnel, medical, student records, or similar files.
- The personal email addresses of all employees of a public agency;
- Test questions, scoring keys and other examination data used to administer an examination for employment or academic examination, unless specifically authorized by law.
- The content of real estate appraisals or engineering or feasibility estimates and evaluations made for or by the School relative to the acquisition of property, until all of the property has been acquired.
- Records, the disclosure of which is exempted or prohibited pursuant to federal or state law, including, but not limited to, provisions of the Evidence Code relating to privilege.
- A document prepared by or for the School that assesses its vulnerability to terrorist attack

or other criminal acts intended to disrupt the Schools operations and that is for distribution or consideration in a closed session.

- Trade secrets.
- Computer software developed by the School.
- Identification numbers, alphanumeric characters or other unique identifying codes that the School uses to identify a vendor or contractor, or an affiliate of a vendor or contractor, unless the identifying code number, alphanumeric character or other unique identifying code is used in a public bidding or an audit involving the School.
- Records where, on the facts of the particular case, the public interest served by not disclosing the record clearly outweighs the public interest served by disclosure of the record

The School may, in its discretion and as permitted by law, waive the applicable exemption to the records. In this case, the disclosure constitutes a waiver for all requesters of that public record and will be open to inspection by all requesters.

II. Process for Requesting Public Records

A. Requests for Public Records

Any person wishing to inspect the School's public records shall make the request, preferably in writing, to Director, Sonoma Charter School, 707-9354232, SCSSOffice@scs.k12.ca.us.. The request must reasonably describe an identifiable public record(s) and must be specific and focused.

To the extent reasonable under the circumstances, the School will assist the requester to make a focused and effective request by:

- Assisting the member of the public to identify records and information that are responsive to the request or to the purpose of the request, if stated.
- Describing the information technology and physical location in which the records exist.
- Providing suggestions for overcoming any practical basis for denying access to the records or information sought.

If the School is unable to identify the requested information after making a reasonable effort to elicit additional clarifying information from the requester that will help identify the record(s), the School will not provide further assistance to the requester.

B. Response to Public Records Request

The Director will, within 10 days¹ of receipt of the request, provide a written response to the requester of public records. The written response shall contain the following information:

- Notice informing the requester whether the request, in whole or in part, seeks copies of disclosable public records in the possession of the School and the reasons for the determination.
- If the School denies any request for records, in whole or in part, and the request was in writing, the notification of denial will set forth the names and titles or positions of each person responsible for the denial.
- The date and time when the records will be made available. **[Note: Public records are open to inspection at all times during the office hours of the School. Thus, the School cannot limit the times when the inspection may take place, except to the extent necessary to gather the documents.]**
- If the request identifies information which is contained in both electronic format and hard copy, the notice may inform the requester that the information is available in either format.
- If the requester seeks copies of the records, the School may identify a fee covering the direct costs of duplication.
- If the requester seeks copies in electronic format, the School may charge the requester the direct cost of producing a copy of the record in that format. If, in order to comply with these requirements relating to electronic formatted records described below, the School is required to produce a copy of an electronic record and the record is one that is produced only at otherwise regularly scheduled intervals or the request would require data compilation, extraction or programming to produce the record, the School may charge the requester the cost to construct a record, the cost of programming and computer services necessary to produce the record.
- If the School maintains an Internet Website, Webpage or Internet Web Portal, in which

¹ In unusual circumstances, the 10 day time limit may be extended by written notice by the **[insert the title of the head of the School/nonprofit organization operating the School]** to the person making the request, setting forth the reasons for the extension and the date on which a determination is expected to be dispatched. In no event will the extension exceed 14 days. As used in this policy, “unusual circumstances” means the following, but only to the extent reasonably necessary to the proper processing of the particular request: 1) The need to search for and collect the records from field facilities or other establishments that are separate from the office processing the request; 2) The need to search for, collect, and appropriately examine a voluminous amount of separate and distinct records that are demanded in a single request; 3) The need for consultation, which shall be conducted with all practicable speed, with another agency having substantial interest in the determination of the request or among two or more components of the School having substantial subject matter interest therein; or 4) The need to compile data, to write programming language or a computer program, or to construct a computer report to extract data.

the School describes or titles as “open data,” and the School voluntarily posts a public record on that Internet Resource, the School shall post the public record in an open format that meets requirements identified in Government Code § 6253.10.

- The School may comply with the Public Records Act by posting any public record on its Internet Website, and in response to a request for a public record posted on the Website, direct a member of the public to the location on the Website where the public record is posted. If, however, the member of the public requests a copy of the public record due to the inability to access or reproduce the public record from the Website, the School shall promptly provide a copy of the public record in accordance with this policy.

III. Records Inspections or Copies

Time and Place of Inspection: A person who has made a public records request may inspect the records after the date and time identified in the response to the request. Generally, records inspections may take place at 17202 Sonoma Highway, Sonoma, CA 95476 during office hours of the School, which are Monday – Friday, 8:00am – 4:30pm, except during school breaks.

Electronic Formatted Records: If the School has information that constitutes an identifiable public record not exempt from disclosure that is in an electronic format, and it has been requested in an electronic format, the School will make that information available in an electronic format. The School will make the information available for inspection in any electronic format in which it holds the information. If the requested format is one that the School uses to create copies for its own use or for provision to other agencies, the School will provide a copy of the electronic record. The School will not, however, provide electronic records in the electronic form in which it is held by the School if its release jeopardizes or compromises the security or integrity of the original record or of any proprietary software in which it is maintained.

If the School no longer has the record in electronic format, the School will not reconstruct the record in electronic format.

Partial Disclosure: If the requested records may only partially be disclosed because some are exempt from disclosure, the reasonably segregable portion of the record(s) will be made available for inspection.

Inspection at the School: A requester who inspects a disclosable record at the School has the right to use the School’s equipment on the premises, without being charged any fees or costs, to photograph or otherwise copy or reproduce the record in a manner that does not require the equipment to make physical contact with the record, unless the means of copy or reproduction would result in either of the following: 1) Damage to the record; 2) Unauthorized access to the School’s computer systems or secured networks by using software, equipment or any other technology capable of accessing, altering, or compromising the agency’s electronic records.

The School may impose any reasonable limits on the use of the requester’s equipment that are necessary to protect the safety of the records or to prevent the copying of records from being an unreasonable burden to the orderly function of the agency and its employees. The School may also impose any limit that is necessary to maintain the integrity of, or ensure the long-term preservation of, historic or high-value records.

Adopted: March 28, 2023

Amended: