

Dear All Schools,

We have received notification that a member of the public has been putting a FOI request, about 'Parent Records', in to schools across the County. You may remember that this is the same applicant submitted this request, and asked for answers to be provided by weblink, earlier this year. North Yorkshire County Council has repeated its advice that schools should not follow hyperlinks in emails unless they have confidence in the sender. If you receive such a request from this applicant, or any applicant that asks you to answer a request by clicking on a link, advice from Veritau Ltd about this is:

1. Do not click on any links in the email
2. Do respond to his email address 'noreply@....' – although this is a 'No-Reply' email it is the only address he has provided and therefore is the only available method of communication.
3. We advise using the wording below (or similar wording to the same effect) which outlines the school's position on communication preference.
4. Provide the information he has requested in the responding email.
5. It is likely that the applicant will ask for an internal review as you have not followed the links. If this is the case we ask you to hold the line that a school will not click on links from unverified sources as this may jeopardise your cyber security standards. We can provide further advice if necessary

*'Dear <Applicant Name>,'*

*Thank you for your email.*

*<School Name> notes that you are requesting us to click on a link in order to answer or refuse your FOI request.*

*Section 11 of the Freedom of Information Act obliges a public authority to comply with a preference of communication if it is reasonable in all the circumstances to do so. The school believes that in this instance, it is not reasonably practical to provide its answers via a weblink due to the cyber security risk of clicking on email links from unverified sources. Therefore the school will not comply with your preference for communication in electronic format and has instead answered your request below.*

*<Provide Answers>*

*I hope this is satisfactory. Yours etc...*

I hope this helps but please feel free to contact us if you have any further questions regarding FOI.

Kind Regards,

Matt North, Trainee Information Governance Officer

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