

08 February 2017

Freedom of Information Request - Reference No: 20170265

REQUEST

Could you please tell me how many times weapons have been seized or confiscated from school premises in your area in each of the following financial years:

:: The 2016/17 year to date

:: 2015/16

:: 2012/13

In each case of seizure or confiscation, please could you give details, where possible, of -

:: the type of weapon involved

:: the type of school premises involved, for example primary or secondary school.

:: details of who it was seized or confiscated from, for example their age, if they are a staff member or pupil

:: the number of arrests made

:: details of arrests made, for example their age, if they are a staff member or pupil

:: the number of charges

:: Details of any charges, for example the name of the charge, the age of the person charged.

I would also like to know, for each of the year's listed above, the number of police officers based in schools.

RESPONSE

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires South Yorkshire 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 following exemption applies to the disclosure of the information:

Section 12(2) – Exemption where cost of compliance exceeds appropriate limit

'Property Seized' is not a field recorded on our Crime Management System. As such, it is not possible to search crimes where the location is recorded as 'school' and extract any relevant data from this system without having to review each recorded offence in school and manually review each record to ascertain whether any weapons were used and whether these were then seized. Furthermore the word 'weapon' has many connotations particularly in the context of a recordable crime; a 'weapon' could be for example, a fist, a foot etc or any type of object. Providing an answer from this system would therefore far exceed the 18 hour Appropriate Limit.

I then approached our Property Database Administrator for further assistance. I have been informed that we would be unable to extract any meaningful data, as the entry field for property is a free text field. Whilst it is possible to carry out a keyword search on words such

as 'gun', 'firearm', 'pistol', 'knife', 'bat' etc., the list of weapons used would be endless. There is also no way of establishing that the weapon has been seized in a school or educational establishment without reviewing every property record manually which again would far exceed the Appropriate Limit.

The Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004 provide that the cost limit for non-central government public authorities is £450. This must be calculated at the rate of £25 per hour, providing an effective time limit of 18 hours. . If you feel your endeavours can be achieved within the appropriate limit by refining your request, South Yorkshire Police would be more than happy to consider any further request.

Guidance from the Information Commissioner to public authorities is that where one part of a request is reasonably estimated to exceed the appropriate limit then the authority is not obliged to consider or comply with the remainder of the request up to the point at which the appropriate limit has been reached. Please note point 30 of the below link:-

https://ico.org.uk/media/for-organisations/documents/1199/costs_of_compliance_exceeds_appropriate_limit.pdf