

**OFFICIAL**

Our Ref: IM-FOI-2022-0830  
Date: 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2022



**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (SCOTLAND) ACT 2002**

I refer to your recent request for information which has been handled in accordance with the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002.

For ease of reference, your request is replicated below together with the response.

**I would like the following data about police in UK schools:**

- 1) The total number of Safer School Officers or school-based police officers from your force on:**
- a. 1 April 2021; and**
  - b. 1 April 2022.**

I can advise you that Police Scotland does not hold the information in the requested format. In terms of Section 17 of the Act, this letter represents a formal notice that information is not held.

By way of explanation, although a school may not have a designated Safer Schools Officer or school based officer it will have a designated Schools Liaison Officer. These can be full-time or part-time posts, where officers spend a proportion of their time working in schools and other education settings but also perform other policing functions. The nature of policing means that officers and staff are deployed to wherever their services are most required.

By way of assistance, we have provided the total number of our Constable Campus and School/Youth engagement officers, the actual total of officers who work within schools may be higher.

01/04/2021 – 83  
01/04/2022 – 86

**2) The total number of times where police officer(s) from your force have:**

- a. Been called to deal with an incident at a school involving student(s) between 1 April 2021 - 1 April 2022.**

In response to your request, I regret to inform you that I am unable to provide you with the information you have requested, as it would prove too costly to do so within the context of the fee regulations.

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As you may be aware the current cost threshold is £600 and I estimate that it would cost well in excess of this amount to process your request.

As such, and in terms of Section 16(4) of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 where Section 12(1) of the Act (Excessive Cost of Compliance) has been applied, this represents a refusal notice for the information sought.

By way of explanation, our incident recording system does not have a marker that would allow incidents at schools or incidents involving students to be automatically retrieved. Each incident between the dates requested would have to be manually examined to confirm if it related to a school and then if a student was involved.

Police Scotland record thousands of incidents each day and it is likely a single day of incidents would take hundreds of hours of work to check.

Police Scotland have assessed that the £600 cost limit within the Act equates to 40 hours of work and so this part of your request would breach the cost threshold.

**b. Conducted a search of a student at a school between 1 April 2021 - 1 April 2022.**

**c. Conducted a strip search of a student at a school between 1 April 2021 - 1 April 2022.**

**For point 2, please provide this information broken down by the ethnicity, gender and age of the student(s) involved and whether they are entitled to Free School Meals or have Special Education Needs.**

**If you do not have the data up until 1 April 2022, please could you share the most recent data you do have over the preceding 12 months.**

As per your statement to share the most recent data held I have taken the time period of 01/02/2021 to 31/01/2022.

In response to questions b and c, I regret to inform you that I am unable to provide you with the information you have requested, as it would prove too costly to do so within the context of the fee regulations.

As you may be aware the current cost threshold is £600 and I estimate that it would cost well in excess of this amount to process your request.

As such, and in terms of Section 16(4) of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 where Section 12(1) of the Act (Excessive Cost of Compliance) has been applied, this represents a refusal notice for the information sought.

By way of explanation, our stop and search system does not have a specific category for student or for searches that were conducted on school grounds. Each standard search and strip search record would need to be checked and cross-referenced with data from additional systems to confirm if it related to a student. This may involve checking free text entries in officers notebooks in instances where a crime or similar was not recorded. Once this had been done, these would then need to be checked to confirm if they took place on school grounds.

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If we take just strip searches as an example, in this case 1,084 records would need to be manually checked. At a conservative estimate of 5 minutes per record, this equates to over 90 hours of work to provide the information requested. Adding the number of standard searches would further increase the work required.

Police Scotland have assessed that the £600 cost limit within the Act equates to 40 hours of work and so this part of your request would breach the cost threshold.

You may wish to consider submitting a refined request with a narrower definition of the persons to be included and limiting your request to strip searches. Student can apply to a person of any age and so you may wish to confine your search to a particular age range such as 18 and under which is likely to return those of school pupil age. This would reduce the number of records to be checked and may allow some data to be provided.

I would however advise that your question on Free School Meals is likely to result in an information not held exemption as this is not information the police would record.

Should you require any further assistance please contact Information Management quoting the reference number given.

If you are dissatisfied with the way in which Police Scotland has dealt with your request, you are entitled, in the first instance, to request a review of our actions and decisions.

Your request must specify the matter which gives rise to your dissatisfaction and it must be submitted within 40 working days of receiving this response - either by email to [foi@scotland.pnn.police.uk](mailto:foi@scotland.pnn.police.uk) or by post to Information Management (Disclosure), Police Scotland, Clyde Gateway, 2 French Street, Dalmarock, G40 4EH.

If you remain dissatisfied following the outcome of that review, you are thereafter entitled to apply to the Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner within six months for a decision. You can apply [online](#), by email to [enquiries@itspublicknowledge.info](mailto:enquiries@itspublicknowledge.info) or by post to Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner, Kinburn Castle, Doubledykes Road, St Andrews, Fife, KY16 9DS.

Should you wish to appeal against the Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner's decision, there is an appeal to the Court of Session on a point of law only.

As part of our commitment to demonstrate openness and transparency in respect of the information we hold, an anonymised version of this response will be posted to the Police Scotland Freedom of Information [Disclosure Log](#) in seven days' time.