

How does the GIPA Act affect the department's business areas?

The department continues its commitment to the GIPA Act and government policy by releasing as much information as possible to the public free of charge or for a nominal fee. This includes providing information upon request to a member of the public.

The department routinely releases information as part of day to day business. If information is not made available routinely, under the [GIPA Act](#), the department may release information in 4 different ways:

- **Mandatory Disclosure:** obligatory publication of certain information on our website
- **Proactive Release:** release of information in the public interest
- **Informal Release:** release of information in response to an informal request
- **Formal Access:** release of information, for a nominal fee, in response to a formal access application.

It is government and departmental policy to release information unless there is an overriding public interest against disclosure. You can read more about this on the [Information and Privacy Commission \(IPC\)](#) website.

Media requests

Continue to refer inquiries to your local media liaison officer or the department's Media Unit phone: 9561 8501

Routine administrative release outside the GIPA Act

Where you routinely release information as part of your usual business, continue to do so. Most business areas have [policies and guidelines](#) about how people can access the information your business area holds and any conditions (such as needing to provide identification for personal information). [Legal Issues Bulletins](#) also provide guidance.

If you are unsure, check the [policies](#) on the website and if in doubt, check with your supervisor about what can be released. Records containing other people's personal or business information should generally be considered under guidelines for [formal release](#).

Records that might be suitable for routine release may include:

For schools: Information on the department's public website; student records (such as an individual's own attendance records or assessment results) subject to any policy requirements and the person providing ID; school-specific policies; school annual reports.

Specific help for schools is provided in the [staff guidelines](#). It includes a link to the training module "Managing Information in Schools".

For other corporate business areas: Information on the department's website; published reports; published statistics; information provided under statutory orders such as subpoenas or court order.

More help is provided in the [staff guidelines](#).

Informal Release

If you receive a request for information that is not routinely made available it may be possible to provide the information informally.

The GIPA Act allows agencies to decide on reasonable conditions for informal release. Only officers authorised under the GIPA Act can release information in this way.

The department has developed guidelines in consultation with the different portfolios that help you to decide which is the best way of giving access and gives a list of [authorised officers](#) (staff only). For example, if a lot of work will be needed to provide the information, you may decide to ask the requester to make a formal access application

Records that might be released under an informal access request may include:

For schools and other public contact points

Certain types of student records that do not include other people's personal information (must first verify applicant's ID); financial or budget information not published.

For corporate business areas

Copies of correspondence, where the request is made by the person who sent the original to the department; statistical information not yet published.

Formal release

If informal release is not appropriate, a formal access application may be required. Access applications are processed by the Information Access Unit in Legal Services.

Records to be considered for release under a formal application may include:

For schools and other public contact points

- student counselling records (held by Psychological Counselling Services)
- school accident reports
- documents containing other students' information
- parent complaints
- staff grievances.

For corporate business areas

Sensitive information; reports or statistics not compiled in the form requested; financial information not compiled in the form requested; briefings; staff grievances; disciplinary records (such as EPAC records).

Contracts

The department must maintain and publish a [register of contracts](#). The Chief Procurement Officer manages this register. Officers responsible for contracts need to

ensure that all tenders are uploaded to the [department's e-Tendering](#) website through the Department of Finance, Services and Innovation (DFSI) and that all contracts contain appropriate clauses about access to information and consultation. More information about this process is available from [Procurement](#).

What if I have a question?

- Visit the department's Information Access webpage:
<https://education.nsw.gov.au/about-us/rights-and-accountability/information-access> or
- call the Information Access Unit on 9561 8100 or
- send an email to iaunit@det.nsw.edu.au