

SAMPLE FOIL REQUEST LETTER

[your name]
[your address]
[date]

[name of Records Access Officer if known]
Records Access Officer
[school district name]
[school district admin office address]

Dear Records Access Officer:

In accordance with the provisions of the New York State Freedom of Information Law, please provide me with copies of all the records described below.

Records of interest are all communications between **[name of school district]** and Planned Parenthood of Nassau County or Planned Parenthood of Hudson Peconic. This includes:

- All records identifiable with this request, even though reports on those records or copies of the records have been sent to other offices
- Communications include, but are not limited to: invoices, flyers, permission slips for field trips, invitations to school functions from school personnel to Planned Parenthood (e.g. classrooms, health fairs, PTA meetings), and invitations/announcements to the school from Planned Parenthood.

This request is limited to records produced on or after **[mm/dd/yyyy]** (usually past 2 years is good)].

If for any reason any portion of my request is denied, please inform me of the reasons for the denial in writing and provide the name and address of the person to whom an appeal should be directed.

Please inform me before filling the request if there are any fees for copying the records requested.

If you have any questions about this request, please contact me. I look forward to hearing from you soon. Thank you in advance for your cooperation and assistance.

Sincerely,
[your signature]
[your name]
[your phone number]

NOT PART OF LETTER -- a few points:

- Schools are required to respond to FOIL requests
- Even if the school has nothing, it will be put on notice that someone is looking at its possible involvement with Planned Parenthood

Letter:

- The attached letter is based on example letters online from the Committee on Open Government and from NYS Committee on Safety and Health (2008)
- The letter is fairly basic and should be kept that way
- Keep a copy of your letter and the date it was sent and call the school district if you haven't received some sort of response in a couple of weeks. FOIL requests are supposed to be acknowledged in a short time (a couple of weeks). The government entity (school district) needs to search records and make copies and are allowed 30-60 days to send you materials if they exist.
- To avoid dragging out the process, instead of saying "if there are any fees, contact me" you can put in a minimal dollar amount, e.g. if the copies cost more than \$15, contact me, otherwise send a bill with the copies.
- You may get copies with parts blacked out (redacted) which is legal because some information does not fall under the FOIL law.
- Don't make a big deal about sending the letter which delays you ever getting around to doing it. Just use the sample above as a guide and send it to the central school district office.

[This isn't a legal document. It's provided for informational purposes only.]