

# **Freedom of Information Policy**

**Reviewing Members of Staff:** Helen Wood, CEO.

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## Aims

When dealing with a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) The Trust and our schools will firstly determine the validity of the request:

### 1. Requests for Information must:

- Be in writing (e.g. in a letter, an email)
- Include the requester's real name or the name of the person or organisation on behalf of whom they are acting
- Include an address for correspondence (e.g. a residential or work postal or email address)
- Describe clearly the information requested

**2. There are circumstances** when The Trust is not obliged to provide information. There are certain reasons for not complying with a request for information:

- One or more of the exemptions (see the FOIA for details) apply. These exemptions are intended to protect sensitive or confidential information
- The information is not held
- The cost threshold is reached (£450)
- The request is considered vexatious
- The request is excessively repeated

**Vexatious requests:** The Trust can refuse to comply with any part of a vexatious request, including confirming or denying whether we hold the information.

When deciding whether a request is vexatious, we will consider whether the request is likely to cause a disproportionate or unjustifiable amount of distress, disruption or irritation.

We may take into account the context and history of a request, including the identity of the requester and previous contact with them. If we receive a legitimate request from the same person later, we will answer it.

If we refuse a request on the grounds that it is vexatious we will notify the requester of our decision and keep a record of the reasons for our decision.

**Repeated request:** The Trust can also refuse repeated requests, whether or not they're also vexatious, if there's a complete or substantial overlap between information sets requested by the same person.

- 3. The Trust will comply** with requests for information under FOI in 20 school days or 60 working days if that is sooner. If there is a charge, or further clarification of the request is required, the time scale will commence when the payment or clarification has been received.
- 4. A Lead Officer** will be appointed by The Trust and will be responsible for collecting, preparing, sending, recording and dealing with follow-up correspondence for each request.

**5. The Trust will ensure that all staff are aware of their obligations under FOI.**

**6. The following charges will apply:**

- A charge will be made for photocopying or printing (at 15p a sheet), and first class postage

The school will normally not charge for any other costs, such as staff time spent searching for information, unless the cost of compliance exceeds £450. (A £25 charge per hour will be used to calculate the staff costs of answering requests.)

**7. Payment is required before the work is started.**

When this policy was reviewed, an equality impact assessment was conducted to ensure any changes did not have an adverse effect under the terms of the Equality Act 2010. Should you have any comments regarding this policy, please contact the Trust.

Continue for appendix 1.

## Appendix 1

### Freedom of information request template

Please fill in the form below to make your request. Feel free to delete the parts highlighted in yellow, which provide more instructions to help you.

|                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Name of requester</b>                       | Please specify your real name or the name of the person or organisation for whom you're requesting the information.                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Contact details</b>                         | This can be any postal or email address to which you can receive correspondence, including personal and work addresses.                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Information you want to access</b>          | Please be as specific as possible. We may return to you for further clarification if we're not clear for what it is what you are looking.                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>How you want to receive the information</b> | The means of communication here can be one or more of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A copy of the information (e.g. hard copy, electronic document)</li><li>• An opportunity to come in and inspect the information</li><li>• A digest or summary of the information</li></ul> |