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Academies Trust
(UKAT)

Freedom of Information Policy

Person responsible for this document:	
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Reviewed by:	Date:
L Duke	21/03/2022
Approved by:	Date:
J Culham	21/03/2022
Cycle of Review:	3 Years
Next Review Date:	March 2025

The Trust will comply with:

- The terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, and any subsequent relevant legislation, to ensure all information held by The Trust is treated in a manner that is fair and lawful.
- Information and guidance displayed on the Information Commissioner's [Website](#)
- This policy should be used in conjunction with The Trust's Acceptable Use Policy and Data Protection Policy.

Data Gathering and Storage

- Information will only be gathered and stored for specified purposes.
- In order to be able to respond to requests for information The Trust will implement effective records management policies to enable staff to identify whether data is held and, if it is, locate it quickly and easily.
- Information held by The Trust will be regularly reviewed with a view to archiving or destruction, where appropriate.
- The Trust will fully comply with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Publication Scheme

- The Trust will adopt and publish the appropriate model publication scheme, as recommended by the DfES, Information Commissioner and approved by Trustee/ Governors.
- The current recommended model schemes can be viewed via the Information Commissioner's website.

Dealing with Requests for Information

- Theoretically any request for information is a request under the Freedom of Information Act, however, the Trust has taken the decision that it will not consider any request that forms part of the normal pattern of work to be a Freedom of Information request. Only those requests which are considered to be outside the normal remit of the service provided will be recorded as Freedom of Information requests.
- The Trust will assist applicants in making their request to have access to information held by The Trust.
- Assistance will be given to applicants whose requests need to be transferred to another public authority (e.g., Academy, LEA, hospital).
- The Trust will exercise its duty to confirm or deny the existence of requested data, subject to any exemptions that may apply.
- The Trust will supply data requested within 20 working days (or in line with the Information Commissioner's current policy during Trust holidays), subject to any

exemptions that may apply, and the estimated cost of complying with the request falling within the current defined charge limit. All requests for information should still be dealt with by compliance with the 20-working day deadline, whether they are recorded as Freedom of Information requests or not.

- If a response will take longer than 10 working days to supply an acknowledgement should be sent to the person making the request, informing them when the information will be supplied. This acknowledgement does not allow the Trust to exceed the overall 20-day deadline.
- The Compliance Officer staff will be responsible for ensuring requests are fulfilled within the stipulated deadline and recording details of the request on The GDPRiS Database. Copies of data supplied should be retained for two years from the date it was put into the public domain.

Applying Exemptions

- A full list of exemptions can be found at the Information Commissioner's website. There are two types of exemption — absolute and qualified. In practice there are very few which are likely to be applied by the education sector.
- The decision to apply absolute exemptions should not be taken by individual members of staff but should be made by a constituted group of at least three of the following: Chair of Governors, other Governors, Executive Principal, Principal. The decision to apply qualified exemptions should not be taken by individual members of staff but should be made by a constituted group of at least three of the following: Chair of Governors, other Governors, Executive Principal, Principal.
- Even if the group decides information should not be disclosed, a public interest test should be carried out when applying qualified exemptions, to decide whether the public interest in disclosure outweighs the objection to disclosure. If it does the information must be disclosed.
- Advice should be sought from legal services if there is any doubt as to whether information should be disclosed.

Logging Requests Received

The Trust should keep a record of all requests received for monitoring purposes via the GDPRiS Database, noting:

- a) the date the request was received,
- b) name and contact details of the person or organisation making the request,
- c) the date the request was fulfilled or refused,
- d) the reason for any refusal given,
- e) the reason for any exemption being applied,
- f) the reason for any failure to meet the 20-working day deadline.