

1 INTRODUCTION

The Freedom of Information Act (“FOIA”) provides public access to information held by public authorities. The two main obligations under FOIA are to, publish certain information about their activities proactively and to respond to requests for information.

All Academies are classed as public authorities therefore the FOIA applies to all the Academies within the Great Academies Education Trust (“the Academy Trust”) and the Academy Trust itself.

The responsibility for ensuring compliance with the FOIA lies with the Academy Trust and it will need to ensure that all its policies and day to day operations at each of the Academies are conducted in a way which will stand up to public scrutiny.

This policy details the publication scheme and access policy adopted by the Academy Trust to ensure that all relevant information is published and all requests for information under the FOIA are dealt with in a fair and consistent manner.

The FOIA is regulated by the Information Commissioner who also has responsibility for The Data Protection Act 1998 and The Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

2 PUBLICATION SCHEME

The Information Commissioner has published a model publication scheme which the Academy Trust is expected to adopt. The scheme commits the Academy Trust to:

- 2.1 proactively publish or otherwise make available as a matter of routine, information, including environmental information, which is held by the authority and falls within the classifications below.
- 2.2 specify the information which is held by the authority and falls within the classifications below.
- 2.3 proactively publish or otherwise make available as a matter of routine, information in line with the statements contained within this scheme.
- 2.4 produce and publish the methods by which the specific information is made routinely available so that it can be easily identified and accessed by members of the public.

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- 2.5 review and update on a regular basis the information the authority makes available under this scheme.
- 2.6 produce a schedule of any fees charged for access to information which is made proactively available.
- 2.7 make this publication scheme available to the public.

3 CLASSES OF INFORMATION

The Academy Trust would be expected to make the following information available under the publication scheme:

- 3.1 **Who we are and what we do**
Organisational information, locations and contacts, constitutional and legal governance documents.
- 3.2 **What we spend and how we spend it**
Financial information relating to projected and actual income and expenditure, tendering, procurement and contracts.
- 3.3 **What our priorities are and how we are doing**
Strategy and performance information, plans, assessments, inspections and reviews.
- 3.4 **How we make decisions**
Policy proposals, decisions, decision making processes, internal criteria, procedures and consultation.
- 3.5 **Our policies and procedures**
Current written protocols for delivering functions and responsibilities.
- 3.6 **Lists and registers**
Information held in registers required by law and other lists and registers relating to the functions of the Academy.
- 3.7 **The services we offer**
Description of the services offered, advice, guidance, booklets, leaflets, transactions and media releases.

The Classes of Information will not generally include:-

- Information the disclosure of which is prevented by law, or exempt under the Freedom of Information Act, or is otherwise properly considered to be protected from disclosure.

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- information in draft form;
- information which is no longer readily available as it contained in files that have been placed in archive storage or is difficult to access for similar reasons.

4 ACCESS POLICY

The model publication scheme requires the Academy Trust to set out the means of access to the information available through the publication scheme and to specify what information is held under each of the classes of information identified at section 3 above.

4.1 The method by which information published under this scheme will be made available

Wherever possible, the information to be published under this scheme will be made available on the Academy Trust's website; this will provide ease of access and minimise costs. Information will also be made available in hardcopy upon request. All requests for information and the response will be processed in accordance with section 5 below.

4.2 Specific information available through the publication scheme

The specific information held under each of the classes of information identified at section 3 above by the Academy Trust and each of the Academies within the Academy Trust Group and the means of access.

4.3 Charges for providing information

The Academy Trust reserves the right to charge a fee for actual disbursements incurred in providing information and the costs directly incurred as a result of locating, retrieving and communicating any information requested which is not routinely available through the publication scheme, this includes the cost of staff time. Written notice of any applicable charge will be provided and payment will be expected in advance of the release of the information requested.

5 DEALING WITH A REQUEST FOR INFORMATION UNDER THE FOIA

5.1 The FOIA request should be in writing, state the enquirer's name, address (email address will suffice) and describe the information requested in sufficient detail so as to enable the information to be identified and located.

5.2 All requests for information should be forwarded to Emily Morris, Governance Officer, in the first instance who will forward the request on to the relevant person within the appropriate Academy for action. Requests can be made to

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Great Academies Education Trust, Cavendish 249, Cavendish Street, Ashton-under-Lyne, OL6 7AT or email emorris@gaet.co.uk

- 5.3 The relevant person within the Academy will establish whether it holds the information requested. Holding information includes where the Academy has created it, received it from another body or person or where the information is held by another body on the Academy's behalf.
- 5.4 Where the information requested is deemed to be vexatious or manifestly unreasonable or repeated the Academy is not obligated to comply with the request.
- 5.4 Consultation may be required with third parties where the release of the requested information may affect their interests such consultation may influence the decision as to whether the information should be disclosed.
- 5.6 Where there are real concerns about disclosing information consideration should be given as to whether an exemption applies. Where a potential exemption (qualified exemption) is identified information can only be withheld where the public interest in withholding it outweighs the public interest in disclosing it (advice on conducting a public interest test is available on the Information Commissioner's website www.ico.org.uk).
- 5.7 The Academy will respond to a valid FOIA request within 20 school days. Where a potential exemption applies and more time is needed to consider the public interest test a reply will be sent within the 20 days stating the estimated date by which a decision will be made, this should be no longer than 10 school days.
- 5.8 Where the information requested is not to be disclosed the Company Secretary must ensure that the case has been properly considered and that the reasons for refusals are sound. A record of the enquiry and the reason for refusal will be retained for 5 years in case of an appeal or an investigation by the Information Commissioner.

6 Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The Company Secretary will be responsible for reviewing this policy on a regular basis and for ensuring that the publication scheme is kept up-to-date as appropriate.

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Guide to information available under the publication scheme

INFORMATION TO BE PUBLISHED	MEANS OF ACCESS	CHARGE (If Applicable)
1. Who we are and what we do		
1.1 Organisational information, structures, locations and contacts	Website	
1.2 Academy Funding Agreement – a link to the document on the Department for Education’s website	Website	
1.3 Academy Order (if applicable)	Hard Copy	
1.4 School staff and structure – names of key personnel	Website	
1.5 Governing body – names and contact details of the governors and the basis of their appointment	Website	
1.6 School session times, term dates and holidays	Website	
1.7 Location and contact information – address, telephone number and website	Website	
1.8 Contact details for the Principal and the Governing Body	Website	
1.9 School Prospectus	Website	

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INFORMATION TO BE PUBLISHED	MEANS OF ACCESS	CHARGE (If Applicable)
1.10 School Session times and term dates	Website	
1.11 GCSE results – a link to the data on the Department for Education’s website	Website	
2. What we spend and how we spend it		
2.1 Financial information relating to projected and actual income and expenditure, procurement, contracts and financial audit)	Website	
2.2 Annual budget plan and financial statements	Website	
2.3 Capital funding – details of capital funding allocated to the school along with information on related building projects and other capital projects	Website	
2.4 Additional funding – Income generation schemes and other sources of funding.	Hard Copy	
2.5 Procurement and contracts – details of procedures used for the acquisition of goods and services. Details of contracts that have gone through a formal tendering process.	Hard Copy	
2.6 Staffing and grading structure	Hard Copy	

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INFORMATION TO BE PUBLISHED	MEANS OF ACCESS	CHARGE (If Applicable)
2.7 Pay policy – a statement of the Academy’s policy on procedures regarding teachers’ pay.	Hard Copy	
2.8 Governors’ allowances – Details of allowances and expenses that can be claimed or incurred.	Hard Copy	
3. What our priorities are and how we are doing		
3.1 Strategies and plans, performance indicators, audits, inspections and reviews	Hard Copy	
3.2 School profile	Hard Copy	
3.3 Government supplied performance data	Hard Copy	
3.4 OFSTED report – summary and full report	Website	
3.5 Performance management information	Hard Copy	
3.6 Academy’s future plans – any major proposals on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.	Hard Copy	
3.7 Child protection – policies and procedures on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.	Website	

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INFORMATION TO BE PUBLISHED	MEANS OF ACCESS	CHARGE (if Applicable)
4. How we make decisions		
4.1 Decision making processes and records of decisions	Hard Copy	
4.2 Admissions policy - arrangements and procedures and right of appeal – include information on application numbers and number of successful applicants by each oversubscription criteria.	Website	
4.3 Governing body meeting agendas, papers and minutes – information that is properly considered to be private should be excluded.	Hard Copy will be made available upon request	Provision of large numbers of paper copies may attract a reasonable charge.
4.4 Current written protocols, policies and procedures for delivering our services and responsibilities	Hard Copy	
5. Our policies and procedures		
5.1 School policies including: Charging and remissions policy Health and Safety and risk assessment Complaints procedure Staff conduct policy Discipline and grievance policies Pay policy Staffing structure implementation plan Information request handling policy Staff recruitment policies	Website Hard Copy Website Hard Copy Hard Copy Hard Copy Hard Copy Website Hard Copy	

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INFORMATION TO BE PUBLISHED	MEANS OF ACCESS	CHARGE (if Applicable)
5.2 Pupil and curriculum policies, including: Home-school agreement Curriculum Sex education Special education needs Accessibility Race equality Collective worship Careers education Pupil discipline	Website Website Website Website Website Website Website Website Website	
5.3 Records management and personal data policies including: Information security Records retention Destruction and archive policies Data Protection policies	Website Website Website Website	
5.4 Equality and Diversity Policies, schemes, statements, procedures and guidelines relating to equal opportunities Policies and procedures for the recruitment of staff – details of vacancies should be included	Website Hard Copy	
5.5 Charging regimes and policies	Website	

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INFORMATION TO BE PUBLISHED	MEANS OF ACCESS	CHARGE (if Applicable)
6. Lists and Registers		
6.1 Currently maintained lists and registers only	Hard Copy	
6.2 Curriculum circulars and statutory instruments	Hard Copy	
6.3 Disclosure logs	Hard Copy	
6.4 Asset register	Hard Copy	
6.5 Any information the Academy is currently legally required to hold in publicly available registers	Website	
7. The services we offer		
7.1 Information about the services we offer, including leaflets, guidance and newsletters produced for the public and businesses	Website and Hard Copy	
7.2 Extra-curricular activities	Website	
7.3 Out of school clubs	Website	
7.4 School publications	Website and Hard Copy	
7.5 Services for which the Academy is entitled to recover a fee, together with those fees	Hard Copy	
7.6 Leaflets, booklets and newsletters	Website and Hard Copy	

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