FREEDOM OF INFORMATION POLICY

Document Control

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Contents

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The Freedom of Information Act 2000 provides public access to information held by public authorities.

1.2 It does this in two ways:

- Public authorities are obliged to publish certain information about their activities; and
- Members of the public are entitled to request information from public authorities.

1.3 The Act does not give people access to their own personal data (information about themselves). If a member of the public wants to see information that a public authority holds about them, they should make a subject access request under GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

2.0 Publication Scheme

2.1 As well as responding to requests for information, public authorities must publish information proactively. The Freedom of Information Act requires every public authority to have a publication scheme, approved by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), and to publish information covered by the scheme.

2.2 The scheme sets out our commitment to make certain classes of information routinely available, such as policies and procedures, minutes of meetings, annual reports and financial information. The school has adopted the ICO's model publication scheme and this is available in full in Appendix 1.

3.0 Written Requests

3.1 The main principle behind freedom of information legislation is that people have a right to know about the activities of public authorities, unless there is a good reason for them not to. This is sometimes described as a presumption or assumption in favour of disclosure. The Act is also sometimes described as purpose and applicant blind. Anyone can make a freedom of information request – they do not have to be UK citizens, or resident in the UK. Freedom of information requests can also be made by organisations, for example a newspaper, a campaign group, or a company.

3.2 The Act covers any recorded information that is held by a public authority in England, public authorities include schools. Recorded information includes printed documents, computer files, letters, emails, photographs, and sound or video recordings.

3.3 For a request to be valid under the Freedom of Information Act, it must be in writing. Freedom of Information requests must either be submitted electronically to the school business manager or headteacher, or in writing. Responses made under the Act will be issued within 20 school working days following the date of receipt.

3.4 A requester may ask for any information that is held by a public authority. However, this does not mean the school is always obliged to provide the information. In some cases, there will be a good reason why we should not make public some or all of the information requested. The school can refuse an entire request under the following circumstances:

- It would cost too much or take too much staff time to deal with the request.
- The request is vexatious.
- The request repeats a previous request from the same person.
- In addition, the Freedom of Information Act contains a number of exemptions that allow the school to withhold information from a requester.

4.0 Fees and Charges

4.1 Where it would not exceed the appropriate limit to comply with a request, and a public authority wishes to charge a fee, it can only include the charges it reasonably expects to incur in:

- Informing the requestor whether it holds the requested information (even if the information will not be provided), and
- Communicating that information to the requestor.

4.2 This generally means that a public authority can only charge for expenses actually incurred, for example, photocopying or postage. It must issue a fee notice advising the requestor of the amount it will charge.

5.0 Environmental Information

5.1 The Environmental Information Regulations 2004 provide public access to environmental information held by public authorities. The Regulations are derived from European law. The Regulations give people a right of access to information about the activities of public authorities that relate to or affect the environment, unless there is good reason for them not to have the information. Any request for environmental information will be dealt with under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

6.0 Complaints

6.1 If the applicant wishes to make a complaint or request a review of the school's decision, they should write to the Chair of Governors at *insert email address* or *school address*.

6.2 If they are not content with the outcome of their complaint, they may apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the complaints procedure provided by the school. The ICO can be contacted at The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF or telephone 0303 123 1113.

Further Information and other policies

Further information on the school's obligations under the act can be found at:

www.ico.org.uk.

FOI Act available at http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/36/contents

EIR Regulations available at http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2004/3391/made.

Data Protection Policy

Appendix 1 – Publication Scheme

The scheme commits an academy:

To 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.

To specify the information which is held by the authority and falls within the classifications below.

To proactively publish or otherwise make available as a matter of routine, information in line with the statements contained within this scheme.

To 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.

To review and update on a regular basis the information the authority makes available under this scheme.

To produce a schedule of any fees charged for access to information which is made proactively available.

To make this publication scheme available to the public.

To publish any dataset held by the authority that has been requested, and any updated versions it holds, unless the authority is satisfied that it is not appropriate to do so; to publish the dataset, where reasonably practicable, in an electronic form that is capable of re-use; and, if any information in the dataset is a relevant copyright work and the public authority is the only owner, to make the information available for re-use under the terms of the Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2015, if they apply, and otherwise under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act section 19. The term 'dataset' is defined in section 11(5) of the Freedom of Information Act. The term 'relevant copyright work' is defined in section 19(8) of that Act.

Classes of Information

The School publication scheme commits as an academy trust, to make information available to the public as part of its normal business activities. The information covered is included in the classes of information mentioned below, where this information is held by the School.

The following documents should also be referred to in relation to the publication scheme.

Data Protection, GDPR, Statement & Guidance Document

The Education Partnership Trust Publication Scheme

The types of information we publish includes:

- Trust Structure
- Governance
- Ofsted Reports
- Reports and Financial Statements from the EPT
- Board members
- Declaration of business interests
- Policies and procedures
- Trust visions and principles
- Services provided by the Education Partnership Trust