



The Queen Katherine School Multi Academy Trust

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION POLICY

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and we may amend it from time to time.

Committee	MAT Board
Date of adoption:	November 2021
Date of next review:	November 2023

Document Control

The information in the table below details earlier versions of this document with a brief description of each review and how to distinguish amendments made since the previous version date (if any).

Version Number	Amended by	Purpose	Date of Revision
001		Original policy used by all the schools in the Trust	Nov 2019
002		Review with no changes	Nov 2021

1. Statement of intent

The Queen Katherine School Multi Academy 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 school is treated in a manner that is fair and lawful. This policy should be used in conjunction with the *Data Protection Policy*. The development and effective implementation of this policy fulfils that requirement.

More specifically, this policy outlines:

- How the school will respond to requests from individuals for access to information held about them.
- Our school's policy and procedures for the release and publication of private data and public records.
- Our school's policy and procedures for providing applicants with advice and assistance throughout the duration of their requests.

It also clarifies our position regarding the appropriate limit to the costs incurred by the school in obtaining any requested information, and on charging fees for its provision.

2. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to the following legislation:

- The General Data Protection Regulation
- The Data Protection Act 2018
- The Freedom of Information Act 2000
- The Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004

This policy also has due regard to guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- ICO 'Model publication scheme' 2016
- ICO 'Duty to provide advice and assistance (section 16)' 2016

This policy will be viewed in conjunction with the following other school policies:

- Data Protection Policy
- Overarching Safeguarding Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- IRMS Toolkit (Information Records Management for Schools)

3. 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 school 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 schools will be regularly reviewed with a view to archiving or destruction, where appropriate and will follow the IRMS Toolkit (Information Records Management for Schools).

4. Publication Scheme

The schools will adopt and publish the appropriate model publication scheme, as recommended by the DFE, Information Commissioner, and approved by school governors. The current recommended model schemes can be viewed via the Information Commissioner's website www.ico.gov.uk.

5. Dealing with Requests for Information

Theoretically any request for information is a request under the Freedom of Information Act, but The Trust receives a considerable number of requests for information through our day-to-day operations. Most of these are dealt with as 'business as usual' requests and responded to accordingly. The Trust are committed to

responding to all requests for information.

6. Accepting requests for information

The school will only accept a request for information which meets all of the following criteria:

- It is in writing
- It states the name of the applicant and an address for correspondence
- It describes the information requested

A request will be treated as made in writing if it meets all of the following requirements:

- It is transmitted by electronic means
- It is received in legible form
- It is capable of being used for subsequent reference

The school will publish details of its procedures for dealing with requests which include:

- A contact address and email address
- A telephone number
- A named individual to assist applicants with their requests

Legally Environmental Information Requests can be made verbally over the phone or in person. Where this does happen, The Trust will put it in writing and process the request as a standard information request and, as part of this process, consider whether or not the request should be dealt with as an Environmental Information Request.

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 school 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 in compliance with the 20-day deadline, whether they are recorded as Freedom of Information requests or not.

If a response will take longer than 10 working days to respond an acknowledgement should be sent to the person making the request, informing them when the information will be supplied. This acknowledgement does to allow the school to exceed the overall 20-day deadline.

7. The appropriate limit

The school will not comply with any freedom of information request that exceeds the statutorily imposed appropriate limit of £450. If the estimated cost of complying with the request does not exceed this amount the school is not entitled to make a charge for fulfilling the request.

A senior member of staff will be responsible for ensuring requests are fulfilled within the stipulated deadline and recording details of the request on the Trust's tracking database.

Persons requesting data will be supplied with a copy of our complaints procedure. Copies of data supplied should be retained for two years from the date it was put into the public domain.

8. Applying Exemptions

A full list of exemptions can be found at the Information Commissioner's website www.ico.gov.uk.

The school will not comply with this policy where:

- The school reasonably requires further information to meet a freedom of information request, has informed the applicant of this requirement, but was not subsequently supplied with that further information.

- The information is no longer readily available as it is contained in files that have been placed in archive storage or is difficult to access for similar reasons.
- A request for information is exempt under section 2 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.
- The cost of providing the information exceeds the appropriate limit.
- The request is vexatious.
- The request is a repeated request from the same person made within 60 consecutive working days of the initial one.
- A fee notice was not honored.

Where information is, or is thought to be, exempt, the school will, within 20 working days, give notice to the applicant which:

- States the fact.
- Specifies the exemption in question.

The decision to apply 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, Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher, HR Manager, with input from the DPO if required. Even if the group decides information should not be disclosed, a public interest test should be carried out when applying exemptions, to decide whether the public interest in disclosure outweighs the objection to disclosure. If it does the information must be disclosed.

Legal advice should be sought from if there is any doubt as to whether information should be disclosed.

9. Logging Requests Received

The Trust will keep a record of all requests received for monitoring purposes, 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 exemption being applied,
- e) the reason for any failure to meet the 20 day deadline.

**This is The Queen Katherine School Multi Academy Trust
Publication Scheme on information available under the Freedom of Information Act
2000**

This scheme follows the model approved by the ICO and sets out the classes of information which we publish or intend to publish; the format in which the information will be made available and whether the information is available free of charge or on payment.

Classes of information

Information that is available under this scheme includes:

- Who we are and what we do
- What we spend and how we spend it
- What are our priorities are and how we are doing?
- How we make decisions
- Our policies and procedures
- Lists and registers
- The services we offer

Information which **will not** be made available under this scheme includes:

- 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.
- Information in draft form, or notes, documents in older versions, emails or other correspondence.
- Information that is no longer readily available as it is contained in files that have been placed in archive storage or is difficult to access for similar reasons.

How to request information

Requested documents under this scheme will be delivered electronically where possible, but paper copies can be provided by contacting the school.

To enable us to process your request quickly, please mark all correspondence:

“FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST”

Documents can be translated under disability legislation into accessible formats where possible.

Charges

Documents contained in this scheme are free to view on the school website.

Single paper copies are also available free of charge to parents/carers and prospective parents/carers of the school.

Feedback

We welcome any comments or suggestions you may have regarding this scheme. If you require further assistance then initially this should be addressed to the Deputy Headteachers using the following contact details:

The Queen Katherine School
Appleby Road
Kendal, Cumbria
LA9 6PJ

Tel: 01539 743900

Email: enquiries@queenkatherine.org

Walney School
Sandy gap lane
Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria
LA14 3JT

Tel: 01229 471528

Email: office@walney.cumbria.sch.uk

George Hastwell School
Moor Tarn lane
Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria

Tel: 01229 475253

Email: admin@georgehastwell.org.uk

If you are not satisfied with the assistance that you get or if we have not been able to resolve your complaint and you feel that a formal complaint needs to be made then this should be addressed to the Information Commissioner's Office. This is the organisation that ensures compliance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and that deals with formal complaints. They can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF

Website www.ico.gov.uk.