



LIFE ACADEMIES TRUST

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Freedom of Information & Publication Scheme

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Definition. The Trust refers to LIFE Academies Trust and Biggleswade Academy.

The Trust is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA), which includes Academies by the Academies Act 2010, with effect from the 1 January 2011. As a public authority, and as such, must comply with any requests for information in accordance with the principles laid out in the Act.

2 WHAT IS A REQUEST UNDER FOI

2.1 Any request for any information from the Trust is technically a request under the FOIA, whether or not the individual making the request mentions the FOIA. However, the ICO has stated that routine requests for information (such as a parent requesting a copy of a policy) can be dealt with outside of the provisions of the Act.

2.2 In all non-routine cases, if the request is simple and the information is to be released, then the individual who received the request can release the information, but must ensure that this is done within the timescale set out below. A copy of the request and response should then be sent to the Administration Manager.

2.3 All other requests should be referred in the first instance to the Administration Manager who may allocate another individual to deal with the request. This must be done promptly, and in any event within 3 working days of receiving the request.

2.4 When considering a request under FOI, you must bear in mind that release under FOIA is treated as release to the general public, and so once it has been released to an individual, anyone can then access it, and you cannot restrict access when releasing by marking the information “confidential” or “restricted”.

3 TIME LIMIT FOR COMPLIANCE

3.1 The Trust must respond as soon as possible, and in any event, within 20 working days of the date of receipt of the request. For the Trust, a “working day” is one in which pupils are in attendance, subject to an absolute maximum of 60 calendar days to respond. Details of what constitutes a “working day” should be defined from the term dates provided on the Academy website.

4 PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH A REQUEST

4.1 When a request is received that cannot be dealt with by simply providing the information, it should be referred in the first instance to the Administration Manager who may re-allocate to an individual with responsibility for the type of information requested.

4.2 The first stage in responding is to determine whether or not the Academy “holds” the information requested. The Academy will hold the information if it exists in computer or paper format. Some requests will require the Trust to take information from different sources and manipulate it in some way. Where this would take minimal effort, the Academy is considered to “hold” that information, but if the required manipulation would take a significant amount of time, the requestor should be contacted to explain that the information is not held in the manner requested, and offered the opportunity to refine their request. For example, if a

request required the Academy to add up totals in a spread sheet and release the total figures, this would be information “held” by the Academy. If the Academy would have to go through a number of spread sheets and identify individual figures and provide a total, this is likely not to be information “held” by the Academy, depending on the time involved in extracting the information.

4.3 The second stage is to decide whether the information can be released, or whether one of the exemptions set out in the Act applies to the information. Common exemptions that might apply include:

- 4.3.1 Section 40 (1) – the request is for the applicants personal data. This must be dealt with under the subject access regime in the DPA, detailed in paragraph 9 of the DPA policy above;
- 4.3.2 Section 40 (2) – compliance with the request would involve releasing third party personal data, and this would be in breach of the DPA principles as set out in paragraph 3.1 of the DPA policy above;
- 4.3.3 Section 41 – information that has been sent to the Academy (but not the Academy’s own information) which is confidential;
- 4.3.4 Section 21 – information that is already publicly available, even if payment of a fee is required to access that information;
- 4.3.5 *Section 22 – information that the Academy intends to publish at a future date;*
- 4.3.6 *Section 43 – information that would prejudice the commercial interests of the Academy and/or a third party;*
- 4.3.7 *Section 38 – information that could prejudice the physical health, mental health or safety of an individual (this may apply particularly to safeguarding information);*
- 4.3.8 *Section 31 – information which may prejudice the effective detection and prevention of crime – such as the location of CCTV cameras;*
- 4.3.9 *Section 36 – information which, in the opinion of the chair of the Trust Board, would prejudice the effective conduct of the Academy. There is a special form for this on the ICO’s website to assist with the obtaining of the chair’s opinion.*

4.4 The sections mentioned in italics are qualified exemptions. This means that even if the exemption applies to the information, you also have to carry out a public interest weighting exercise, balancing the public interest in the information being released, as against the public interest in withholding the information.

5 RESPONDING TO A REQUEST

5.1 When responding to a request where the Academy has withheld some or all of the information, the Academy must explain why the information has been withheld, quoting the appropriate section number and explaining how the information requested fits within that exemption. If the public interest test has been applied, this also needs to be explained.

5.2 The letter should end by explaining to the requestor how they can complain – either by reference to an internal review, or by writing to the ICO.

6 CONTACT

6.1 Any questions about this policy should be directed in the first instance to the Academy Principal.

7 THE DEVELOPMENT OF A PUBLICATION SCHEME

LIFE Academies Trust has produced a Publication Scheme of information that is available under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and it conforms to the model scheme for schools and academies approved by the Information Commissioner. The Trust Board has responsibility for ensuring that the Academy complies with the Act.

7.1 Under the Freedom of Information Act 2010 (FOIA) public authorities should be proactive about information that is available to the public. This includes all maintained sector schools and from 1 January 2011, academies.

7.2 In order to comply with the requirements of the Act, the publication scheme covers the Trust's commitment on the following points:

- to proactively publish, or otherwise make available as a matter of routine, information which is held by the Academy and falls within the classifications below.
- to specify the information that is held by the Academy 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 Academy 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.

7.3 All information in the Publication Scheme is available in paper form.

Categories of Information Published

7.4 The Publication Scheme is a guide to the information which is currently published (or has recently been published) or which we will publish in the future. This information is available on the website and is categorised in 'Classes' as outlined later.

7.5 The 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. This includes information protected by the Data Protection Act.
- 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.

Requests for Information

7.6 Information that is not published under the scheme can be requested by email or letter, addressed to The Administration Manager, Biggleswade Academy, Mead End, Biggleswade, Bedfordshire, SG18 8JU

How the Information can be received

7.7 The information can be asked for in a number of different formats:

- Paper or electronic copies of any documents
- Audio format
- Large print

7.8 Requesters need to make sure they check the copyright status of the information they receive if they plan to reproduce it. It is their responsibility to check this. Biggleswade Academy or any representative of the Trust shall not be held liable for their failure to check this

7.7 All requests will be considered in accordance with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act.

7.8 When making a request, the following should be included:

- Name of requester
- An address where the requester can be contacted (including an email address)
- A detailed description of the recorded information that is being requested

8 IF THE REQUEST IS TURNED DOWN BY THE ACADEMY WHAT CAN THE REQUESTER DO?

8.1 Some sensitive information might not be available to members of the public. If this is the case, the Academy will tell the requester why we have withheld some or all of the information requested.

8.2 We can turn down a request if we think it will cost them more than £450 to deal with the request.

8.3 We might ask the requester to be more specific so we can provide the information they're looking for. If we don't provide the requester with the information they requested, they should first contact us asking us to review our decision. If they are still not satisfied, they can complain to the Information Commissioner's Office. – www.ico.org.uk

Paying for Information

8.4 Information published on the Academy website is free. Single copies of information covered by this publication are provided free unless stated otherwise. However, there may be a charge if the request:

- requires a lot of printing or photocopying
- incurs a large postage charge
- requires a priced item e.g. some printing publication or video

In such instances, you will be notified in advance.

9 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION PUBLICATION SCHEME

Information to be published	How the information can be obtained (Website/hardcopy/inspection)	Cost
Class 1 - Who we are and what we do (Organisational information, structures, locations and contacts)		
Who's who in the MAT	Website	
Who's who on the Trust Board and the basis of their appointment	Website	
Articles of Association	Website	
Contract details for the Academy Principal and members of the Trust Board	Website	
Who's who in the Academy – Staffing Structure	Website	
Academy prospectus	Website	
Address of school and contact details, including email addresses	Website	
Annual Report	Website	
School session times and term dates	Website	
Class 2 – What we spend and how we spend it (Financial information relating to projected and actual income and expenditure, procurement, contracts and financial audit) <i>Current and previous financial year as a minimum</i>		
Annual budget plan and financial statements	Hard copy	
Capitalised funding	Hard copy	
Financial Audit Reports	Hard copy	
Details of expenditure items over £2000 (published at 6 month intervals)	Hard copy	
Additional funding	Hard copy	
Procurement and projects	Hard copy	
Staff allowance and expenses that can be occurred or claimed, with totals paid to Senior Leadership Team (salary over £60,000) by reference to categories	Hard copy	
Pay policy	Hard copy	
Staffing, pay and grading structure	Hard copy	
Governors' expenses	Hard copy	
Class 3 – What our priorities are and how we are doing (Strategies and plans, performance indicators, audits, inspections and reviews)		
School profile <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government supplied performance data • The latest Ofsted report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Summary - Full report • Post inspection action plan 	Website	
Performance management policy and procedures adopted by the governing body	Hard copy	
Performance data or a direct link to it	Website	
Safeguarding and child protection	Website	
Every Child Matters – Behaviour and Rewards Policy	Website	

Class 4 – How we make decisions <i>(Decision making processes and records of decisions)</i> <i>Current and previous three years as a minimum</i>		
Admissions policy – current and previous, 3 years as a minimum	Website	
Agendas of meetings of the Trust Board and its sub-committees	Hard copy	
Minutes of meetings (as above) – this will exclude information classified as 'Confidential'	Hard copy	
Class 5 – Our policies and procedures <i>(Current written protocols, policies and procedures for delivering our services and responsibilities)</i>		
Trust policies including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charging and remissions • Health and Safety • Complaints • Staff conduct policy • Discipline and grievance • Equality and diversity (including equal opportunities) • Staff recruitment 	Website Hard copy Website Hard copy Hard copy Website Hard copy	
Pupil and curriculum policies, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home-school agreement • Curriculum • Sex & relationship education • Special educational needs • Accessibility • Collective worship • Medical • Inclusion 	Hard copy Hard copy Hard copy Hard copy Hard copy Hard copy Hard copy Hard copy	
Records management and personal data policies, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freedom of Information • Data protection 	Website Website	
Class 6 – Lists and Registers <i>Currently maintained lists and registers only</i>		
Disclosure logs	Hard copy	
Asset register	Hard copy	
Curriculum circulars and statutory instruments	Hard copy	
Any information the school is currently legally required to hold in publicly available registers (THIS DOES NOT INCLUDE THE ATTENDANCE REGISTER)	Hard copy	
Class 7 – The services we offer <i>(Information about the services we offer, including leaflets, guidance and newsletters produced for the public and businesses)</i> <i>Current information only</i>		
Extra-curricular activities	Website	
Out of school clubs	Website	
School publications and newsletters	Website	

10 SCHEDULE OF CHARGES

TYPE OF CHARGE	DESCRIPTION	BASIS OF CHARGE
Disbursement cost	Photocopying/printing @ 4p per sheet (black & white)	Actual cost
	Photocopying/printing @ 15p per sheet (colour)	Actual cost

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

	Postage	Actual cost of Royal Mail standard 2 nd class
Statutory Fee		In accordance with the relevant legislation