



Victorious Academies Trust

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Freedom of Information	
Policy Ref:	Gen009
Purpose	To confirm the approach for Freedom of Information requests to the Trust.
Committees	Trust and Staff and Pupil Wellbeing Committee of LGB
Other linked policies	
Issue date:	July 2018
Review Date	July 2019

Introduction

1. As an educational provider, Victorious Academies Trust and our academies have an obligation to publish a Freedom of Information Statement, outlining how we will meet our duties under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and associated regulations. The development and effective implementation of this policy fulfils that requirement.
2. More specifically, this policy outlines:
 - How the Trust will respond to requests from individuals for access to information held about them.
 - The Trust's policy and procedure for the release and publication of private data and public records.
3. It also clarifies our position regarding the appropriate limit to the costs incurred by the Trust in obtaining any requested information, and on charging fees for its provision.
4. It also includes in Appendix 1 the classes of information that are included in the scheme and those that are not included.
5. Appendix 2 provides a guide to the information available from the Trust and our Academies under the publication scheme

Legal framework

6. This policy has due regard to the following legislation:
 - Data Protection Act 1998
 - GDPR 2018
 - Freedom of Information Act 2000
 - The Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004
7. This policy should be viewed in conjunction with the following other Trust policies:
 - Data Protection Policy

Accepting requests for information

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

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

General right of access to information held by the Trust

10. Provided that the request complies with section 2 of this policy, we will, no later than 20 working days from receipt of the request, comply with our duty to:

- Confirm or deny to any person making a request for information to the Trust, whether we hold information of the description specified in the request.
- Provide the documentation, if we confirm that we hold the requested information.

11. We will not comply with section 8 of this policy where:

- We reasonably require further information to meet a freedom of information request, have informed the applicant of this requirement, but were 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 Part 2 of the 2000 Act.
- 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 honoured.

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

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

The appropriate limit

13. We will not comply with any freedom of information request that exceeds the statutorily imposed appropriate limit of £450.

14. When determining whether the cost of complying with a freedom of information request is within the appropriate limit, we will take account only of the costs we reasonably expect to incur in relation to:

- Determining whether we hold the information.
- Locating the information, or a document which may contain the information.
- Retrieving the information, or a document which may contain the information.
- Extracting the information from a document containing it.

15. Costs related to the time spent by any person undertaking any of the activities outlined in section 12 of this policy on behalf of the Trust, are to be estimated at a rate of £25 per person per hour.

16. Where multiple requests for information are made to the Trust within 60 consecutive working days of each other, either by a single person or by different persons who appear to be acting in concert, the

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estimated cost of complying with any of the requests is to be taken to be the total costs to the Trust of complying with all of them.

Charging fees

17. We may, within 20 working days, give an applicant who has requested information from the Trust a written notice stating that a fee is to be charged for our compliance.
18. Fees charged will not exceed the total cost to the Trust of:
 - Informing the person making the request whether we hold the information.
 - Communicating the information to the person making the request.
19. Where a fee is to be charged, we will not comply with section 3 of this policy unless the requested fee is paid within a period of three months beginning with the day on which the fees notice is given to the applicant.
20. We will not take into account any costs which are attributable to the time spent by persons undertaking any of the activities mentioned in section 12 above.
21. When calculating the twentieth working day in which to respond to a freedom of information request, the period beginning with the day on which the fee notice is given to the applicant and ending with the day on which the fee is received, will be disregarded.

Means by which communication is to be made

22. Where, on making a request for information, the applicant expresses a preference for communication by any one of the following means, the Trust will, as far as is practicable, give effect to that preference:
 - The provision to the applicant of a copy of the information in permanent form or in another form acceptable to the applicant.
 - The provision to the applicant of a reasonable opportunity to inspect a record containing the information.
 - The provision to the applicant of a digest or summary of the information in permanent form or in another form acceptable to the applicant.

Providing advice and assistance

23. We will meet our duty to provide advice and assistance, as far as is reasonable, to any person who proposes to make, or has made, requests for information to us.

Publication scheme

24. The Trust will meet its duty to adopt and maintain a publication scheme which specifies the information which it will publish on the Trust website, and whether the information will be available free of charge or on payment.
25. Our publication scheme will be reviewed and, where necessary, updated on an annual basis.

Monitoring and evaluation

26. This policy will be reviewed every three years at Trust level in line with our policy review schedule.



Appendix 1: Publication scheme

This scheme follows the model approved by the Information Commissioner's Office 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

1. Information that is available under this scheme includes:
 - Who we are and what we do.
 - What we spend and how we spend it.
 - What our priorities are and how we are doing.
 - How we make decisions.
 - Our policies and procedures.
 - Lists and registers.
 - The services we offer.

2. 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.
 - 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

3. Requested documents under this scheme will be delivered electronically where possible, but paper copies can be provided by contacting the Trust using the contact details below.

4. To enable us to process your request quickly, please mark all correspondence:
"FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST"

5. Under disability legislation, documents can be translated into accessible formats where possible.

Charges

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

7. Single paper copies are also available free of charge to parents and prospective parents of pupils at our academies.

Feedback

8. We welcome any comments or suggestions you may have regarding this scheme. Please contact the Trust Board using the below contact details:

For the attention of Nicky Wise, Victorious Academies Trust, Mossley Road, Ashton under Lyne OL6 9RU (info@victoriousacademies.org)



Appendix 2

Guide to information available from Victorious Academies Trust under the publication scheme

Information to be published. This includes datasets where applicable	How the information can be obtained	Cost
Class 1 - Who we are and what we do (Organisational information, structures, locations and contacts) This will be current information only	Web site	
Who's who in the Trust	As above	
Who's who on the Trust Board and the basis of their appointment	As above	
Instrument of Government / Articles of Association	As above	
Contact details for the Chief Executive and for the Trust Board (named contacts where possible).	As above	
Annual Report	As above	
Staffing structure	As above	
Address of the Trust and our academies along with contact details, including email address.	As above	
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) Current and previous financial year as a minimum	Web site	
Annual budget plan and financial statements		
Capital funding		
Financial audit reports		
Details of expenditure items over £2000 – published at least annually but at a more frequent quarterly or six-monthly interval where practical.		
Procurement and contracts the Trust has entered into, or information relating to / a link to information held by an organisation which has done so on its behalf (for example, a local authority or diocese).		
Pay policy		
Staff allowances and expenses that can be incurred or claimed, with totals paid to individual senior staff members (Senior Leadership Team or equivalent, whose basic actual salary is at least £60,000 per annum) by reference to categories.		
Staffing, pay and grading structure. As a minimum the pay information should include salaries for senior staff (Senior Leadership Team or equivalent as above) in bands of £10,000; for more junior posts, by salary range.		
Trustees' allowances that can be incurred or claimed, and a record of total payments made to individual governors.		
Class 3 – What our priorities are and how we are doing (Strategies and plans, performance indicators, audits, inspections and reviews)	(hard copy or website)	



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Information to be published. This includes datasets where applicable	How the information can be obtained	Cost
Current information as a minimum		
Profile of our academies (if any) And in all cases: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance data supplied to the English or Welsh Government or to the Northern Ireland Executive, or a direct link to the data • The latest Ofsted / Estyn / Education and Training Inspectorate report - Summary and Full report • Post-inspection action plan 	Website	
Performance management policy and procedures adopted by the Trust		
Performance data or a direct link to it		
The Trust's future plans; for example, proposals for and any consultation on the future of our academies, such as a change in status	Website where appropriate	
Safeguarding and child protection	Website	
Class 4 – How we make decisions (Decision making processes and records of decisions) Current and previous three years as a minimum	Website	
Admissions policy/decisions (not individual admission decisions) – where applicable		
Agendas and minutes of meetings of the Trust Board meetings and its committees. (NB this will exclude information that is properly regarded as private to the meetings).		
Class 5 – Our policies and procedures (Current written protocols, policies and procedures for delivering our services and responsibilities) Current information only. As a minimum these must include policies, procedures and documents that the academy is required to have by statute or by its funding agreement or equivalent, or by the Welsh or English government or the Northern Ireland Executive. These will include policies and procedures for handling information requests. In addition, for Wales, this will include a Welsh Language Scheme in accordance with the Welsh Language Act 1993. For Northern Ireland, this will include an equality scheme / statement in accordance with the Northern Ireland Act 1998.	Website	
Records management and personal data policies, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information security policies • Records retention, destruction and archive policies • Data protection (including information sharing policies) 		
Class 6 – Lists and Registers Currently maintained lists and registers only (this does not include the attendance register).	Website where appropriate (some information may	



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Information to be published. This includes datasets where applicable	How the information can be obtained	Cost
	only be available by inspection)	
Curriculum circulars and statutory instruments		
Disclosure logs		
Asset register		
Any information the Trust Board and our academies are currently legally required to hold in publicly available registers		
Class 7 – The services we offer (Information about the services we offer, including leaflets, guidance and newsletters produced for the public and businesses) Current information only	Website; some information may only be available by inspection)	
Services for which the Trust is entitled to recover a fee, together with those fees		
Trusts and our academies publications, leaflets, books and newsletters		