

Churchdown School Academy



Freedom of Information Policy

Governors' Policy Document 2015

Statement of Commitment

Churchdown School Academy is committed to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the Act) which came into force in January 2005. The Academy is committed to the principles of accountability and the general right of access to information, subject to legal exemptions.

Legal Framework

Any person has a legal right to ask for access to information held by an Academy. They are entitled to be told whether the Academy holds the information, and to receive a copy, subject to certain exemptions. The information which the Academy routinely makes available to the public includes information available on the Academy web site. Requests for other information are dealt with in accordance with statutory guidance. While the Act assumes openness, it recognises that certain information is sensitive. There are exemptions to protect this information. The Act is fully retrospective, so that any past records which the Academy holds is covered by the Act. It is an offence to wilfully damage, conceal or destroy information in order to avoid responding to an enquiry.

Purpose

The policy outlines our framework for managing requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Retention of Records

The Academy will publish a Retention Schedule based on the schedule recommended by the Records Management Society of Great Britain, which guides the Academy as to how long it should keep records.

Dealing with Requests

Requests for information must be made in writing, (which can include email), and should include the enquirers name and correspondence address, and state what information they require. They do not have to mention the Act, nor do they have to say why they want the information. Requests under the Act can be addressed to anyone employed by the Academy. However, all responses are to be cleared with a member of The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) prior to despatch. SLT members will take legal or other professional advice as appropriate. There is a duty to respond to all requests, telling the enquirer whether or not the information is held, and supplying any information that is held, except where exemptions apply. There is no need to collect data in specific response to an enquiry. There is a time limit of 20 days excluding school holidays for responding to the request.

Exemptions

Certain information is subject to either absolute or qualified exemptions. When The Academy wishes to apply a qualified exemption to a request, we will invoke the public interest test procedures to determine if public interest in applying the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information. We will maintain a register of requests where we have refused to supply information, and the reasons for the refusal. The register will be retained for 5 years from the date of the request.

Charging

The Academy reserves the right to refuse to supply information where the cost of doing so exceeds the statutory maximum, currently £450. The Academy reserves the right to charge a fee for complying with requests for information under Freedom of Information Act. The fees are calculated according to Freedom of Information Act regulations, and the person notified of the charge before the information is supplied

Responsibilities

Governors have delegated responsibility for compliance with the Act to the Headteacher. All Academy staff are responsible for following the procedures set out in this policy.

Complaints

Any comments or complaints will be dealt with through the Academy's normal complaints procedure. If, on investigation, the Academy's original decision is upheld, then the Academy has a duty to inform the complainant of their right to appeal to the Information Commissioner's Office.

Appeals

Appeals should be made in writing to the Information Commissioner's Office at:

Freedom of Information and Environmental Information
Regulations Complaints Resolution
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years. It will be reviewed before October 2018.

