

Freedom of Information Policy

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1. Rights of access to non-personal information

The Trust is a public authority for the purposes of the Freedom of Information Act, and as such the public have a general right of access to information held by the Trust, subject to certain exemptions.

The Trust is also required to adopt a publication scheme, setting out information it will proactively publish.

The Trust is also a public authority for the purposes of the Environmental Information Regulations, which gives access to environmental information.

2. Making and handling freedom of information requests

2.1 When to make a request

In many circumstances, information may be shared informally as part of the Trust's normal working practices. Where more detailed or sensitive information is required it should be treated as a formal Freedom of Information request, or where relevant, a request under the Environmental Information Regulations..

Requests for information that includes the personal data of the applicant should be treated as a data protection subject access request, rather than under freedom of information provisions.

2.2 Making a request

Formal requests for information must be made in writing, which includes email. There is no need to use a specific form. Formal requests for information must be made in writing either via the body of an email or by post to The Executive Assistant. ASSET Education, % St. Helen's Primary School, Woodbridge Road, Ipswich, Suffolk IP4 2LT. Our procedure is such that we cannot reply to FOI requests that require us to click on a link in an email or open an email attachment to submit information.

Requests may be made in the first instance to an academy or the Trust centrally. Once received, all requests must be forwarded promptly to the Trust's Executive Assistant for validation and processing.

A fee may be payable for fulfilling a request. Requests may be refused if complying with them would exceed processing limits set by legislation, or if the information is exempt from disclosure.

2.3 Handling a request

2.4 Handling charges

Where processing a Freedom of Information request would exceed the cost limits set by legislation, the Trust may refuse the request. In other cases, the Trust may charge disbursement costs as set out in our publication scheme.

For requests under the Environmental Information Regulations, the Trust will charge for reasonable staff

time required to collate the information in addition to any disbursement costs, as set out in our publication scheme.

Where a charge is to be applied we will issue a fees notice and require payment prior to completing the request.

2.5. Timescales for dealing with a request

For schools, the standard time limit for a Freedom of Information request is 20 school days, or 60 working days if this is shorter. Requests should normally be processed within this time.

Under the Environmental Information Regulations, the limit is 20 working days or 40 working days for particularly complex requests.

3. Exemptions when disclosing information

The right to access relates to information, not documents, so the Trust is not generally obliged to provide copies of original documents - only the relevant information within them.

Both the Freedom of Information Act and Environmental Impact Regulations allow exemptions as to the provision of some information, such as where disclosing information would not be in the public interest.

Where information has been provided by the police, local authority, health care professional or another school, their advice should normally be obtained before disclosing the information.

Where redaction (information blacked out/removed) has taken place then a full copy of the information provided should be retained privately by the Trust in order to establish, if a complaint is made, what was redacted and why.

4. Providing meaningful information

Information disclosed should be clear, thus any codes or technical terms will need to be clarified and explained. If information contained within the disclosure is difficult to read or illegible, then it should be retyped.

It may be useful for information to be provided at a face to face meeting, with a relevant member of staff on hand to help and explain matters if requested, or provided at face to face handover.

The views of the applicant should be taken into account when considering the method of delivery.

5. Freedom of Information Act publication scheme for academies

This generic model publication scheme has been prepared and approved by the Information Commissioner. It has been adopted by ASSET Education.

The scheme commits the Trust:

- 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

6. Classes of information

- Who we are and what we do:
- Organisational information, locations and contacts, constitutional and legal governance.
- What we spend and how we spend it: Financial information relating to projected and actual income and expenditure, tendering, procurement and contracts.
- What our priorities are and how we are doing:
- Strategy and performance information, plans, assessments, inspections and reviews.
- How we make decisions:
- Policy proposals and decisions. Decision making processes, internal criteria and procedures, consultations.
- Our policies and procedures:
- Current written protocols for delivering our functions and responsibilities.
- Lists and registers:
- Information held in registers required by law and other lists and registers relating to the functions of the authority.
- The Services we offer:
- Advice and guidance, booklets and leaflets, transactions and media releases. A description of the services offered.

The classes of 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.
- 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.

7. The method by which information published under this scheme will be made available

The authority will indicate clearly to the public what information is covered by this scheme and how it can be obtained.

Where it is within the capability of a public authority, information will be provided on a website. Where it is impracticable to make information available on a website or when an individual does not wish to access the information by the website, a public authority will indicate how information can be obtained by other means and provide it by those means.

In exceptional circumstances some information may be available only by viewing in person. Where this manner is specified, contact details will be provided. An appointment to view the information will be arranged within a reasonable timescale.

Information will be provided in the language in which it is held or in such other language that is legally required. Where an authority is legally required to translate any information, it will do so.

Obligations under disability and discrimination legislation and any other legislation to provide information in other forms and formats will be adhered to when providing information in accordance with this scheme.

8. Charges which may be made for Information published under this scheme

The purpose of this scheme is to make the maximum amount of information readily available at minimum inconvenience and cost to the public. Charges made by the authority for routinely published material will be justified and transparent and kept to a minimum

Material which is published and accessed on a website will be provided free of charge.

Charges may be made for information subject to a charging regime specified by Parliament. Charges may be made for actual disbursements incurred such as:

- photocopying
- postage and packaging
- the costs directly incurred as a result of viewing information

Charges may also be made for information provided under this scheme where they are legally authorised, they are in all the circumstances, including the general principles of the right of access to information held by public authorities, justified and are in accordance with a published schedule or schedules of fees which is readily available to the public.

If a charge is to be made, confirmation of the payment due will be given before the information is provided. Payment may be requested prior to provision of the information.

9. Written requests

Information held by a public authority that is not published under this scheme can be requested in writing, when its provision will be considered in accordance with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act.

Requests should be made to the Executive Assistant, ASSET Education, % St Helen's Primary School, Woodbridge Road, Ipswich IP4 2LT.

10. The method by which information published under this scheme will be made available

Information to be published	How the information can be obtained	Cost
Class 1 - Who we are and what we do (Organisational information, structures, locations and contacts)		
Who's who in the school	Website	Free
Who's who on the governing body / board of governors and the basis of their appointment	Website	Free
Instrument of Government / Articles of Association	Website	Free
Contact details for the principal and for the governing body, via the school	Website	Free
School prospectus	Website Hard copy	Free
School session times and term dates	Website	Free
Address of school and contact details, including email address.	Website	Free
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)		
Annual budget plan and financial statements	Website	Free
Capital funding	Website	Free
Financial audit reports	Website	Free
Governors' allowances that can be incurred or claimed, and a record of total payments made to individual governors.	Website	Free
Class 3 – What our priorities are and how we are doing (Strategies and plans, performance indicators, audits, inspections and reviews)		
Performance management policy and procedures adopted by the governing body.	Website	Free
Performance data or a direct link to it	Website	Free

Ofsted inspection reports	Website	Free
The school's future plans; for example, proposals for and any consultation on the future of the school, such as a change in status	Website	Free
Safeguarding and child protection	Website	Free
Class 4 – How we make decisions (Decision making processes and records of decisions)		
Admissions policy	Website	Free
Agendas and minutes of meetings of the governing body and its committees. (NB this will exclude information that is properly regarded as private to the meetings).	Website	Free
Class 5 – Our policies and procedures (Current written protocols, policies and procedures for delivering our services and responsibilities)		
Records management and personal data policies	Website	Free
Charging regimes and policies.	Website	Free
Class 6 – Lists and Registers		
Asset register	By inspection	Free
Any information the school is currently legally required to hold in publicly available registers	By inspection	Free
Class 7 – The services we offer (Information about the services we offer, including leaflets, guidance and newsletters produced for the public and businesses)		
Extra-curricular activities	Website	Free
Out of school clubs	Website	Free
Services for which the school is entitled to recover a fee, together with those fees	Website	Free
School publications, leaflets, books and newsletters	Website	Free

11. Schedule of charges

Charge	Description	Basis of charge
Disbursement cost	Photocopying/printing @ 10p per sheet (black & white)	Actual cost
	Photocopying/printing @ 20p per sheet (colour)	Actual cost
	Postage	Actual cost of Royal Mail standard 2nd class
Statutory fees		In accordance with the relevant legislation