



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION POLICY

VERSION 1

13/11/2017

Freedom of Information

We believe this policy should be a working document that is fit for purpose, represents the trust ethos, enables consistency and quality across the multi academy trust and is related to the following legislation:

- Data Protection Act 1998
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Environmental Information Regulations 2004

Waveney Valley Academies Trust are aware that under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) we have a legal duty to supply certain information to enquirers and that we must be clear and proactive about the information we make public.

To do this we have in place a publication scheme that sets out:

- The classes of information we publish or intend to publish
- The manner in which the information will be published
- How to request information
- Payment for information

We are committed to the aims of the FOIA and the access provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998 by promoting an open transparent policy as we believe the public have a right to access the recorded information held by us.

We believe the FOIA will encourage greater openness and accountability in public authorities, help increase levels of public trust, encourage improvements in our interaction with the public and provide the public with information they require in order to participate in decision making.

We understand that the FOIA allows schools to withhold certain information which are listed under absolute exemption and qualified exemption.

We are under a duty to provide advice and assistance to anyone requesting information and must respond to the enquiry promptly, and in any event, within 20 working days of receipt (not including school holidays).

We believe it is essential that this policy clearly identifies and outlines the roles and responsibilities of all those involved in the procedures and arrangements that is connected with this policy.

Aims

- To provide certain information to enquirers under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.
- To recognise that we have a duty to provide advice and assistance to anyone requesting information.
- To ensure compliance with all relevant legislation connected to this policy.

Responsibility for the Policy and Procedure

The **Trust** has:

- full responsibility as Data Controller for the organisation
- delegated powers and responsibilities to the Director of Business and Finance to ensure all academy personnel and stakeholders are aware of and comply with this policy
- responsibility for ensuring funding is in place to support this policy

Dealing with a Request for Information

The **Director of Business and Finance** will

- comply with all aspects of this policy
- handle all written requests for information in compliance with the various acts:
 - Data Protection Act
 - Environmental Information Regulations
 - Freedom of Information Act
- take advice from the Trust Board regarding written requests for information
- decide whether the multi academy trust holds the information
- provide the information if it has already been made public
- inform the enquirer if the trust does not have the information
- decide if information disclosed might affect the interests of a third party
- consider the estimated cost of complying with the request
- ensure that all personal information is excluded from a requested document
- consider if the request is vexatious or repeated
- deal with a FOI request within 20 working days
- deal with a Data Protection request within 40 calendar days.
- provide guidance and support to staff

Reasons for not complying with a request

We accept the four reasons under the FOIA for not complying with a request for information:

- that the requested information is not held or is in draft form
- the cost threshold is reached
- the request is considered vexatious or repeated
- that one or more of the exemptions apply

Charges

Charges may be made for actual disbursements incurred by the provision of information. This may include:

- Photocopying
- Postage and packaging
- Direct costs relating to preparation and viewing of documents

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 the provision of information.

Complaints

All complaints will be dealt with by the trust's complaints policy.

Reporting Requests

All requests for information will be reported to the Trust Board.

Equality Impact Assessment

Under the Equality Act 2010 we have a duty not to discriminate against people on the basis of their age, disability, gender, gender identity, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

This policy has been equality impact assessed and we believe that it is in line with the Equality Act 2010 as it is fair, it does not prioritise or disadvantage any student and it helps to promote equality within the multi academy trust.

Publication Scheme

This publication scheme commits us as a public authority to make information available to the public as part of its normal business activities. The information covered is included in the classes of information mentioned below, where this information is held by a public authority. Additional assistance is provided to the definition of these classes in sector specific guidance manuals issued by the Information Commissioner.

The scheme commits Waveney Valley Academies Trust (WVAT):

- To proactively publish or otherwise make available as a matter of routine, information, including environmental information, which is held by the Trust and falls within the classifications below.
- To specify the information which is held by the organisation 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 Trust 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.
- To publish any dataset held by Waveney Valley Academies Trust that has been requested and any updated versions it holds, unless the Trust is satisfied that it is not appropriate to do so; to publish the dataset, where reasonably practicable, in an electronic form that is capable of re-use.

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 Trust.

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.

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

Waveney Valley Academies Trust 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.

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. Charges may also be made for making datasets (or parts of datasets) that are relevant copyright works available for re-use. These charges will be in accordance with the terms of the Re-use of Public.

Sector information

Regulations 2015, where they apply, or with regulations made under section 11B of the Freedom of Information Act, or with other statutory powers of the public authority. 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.

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.

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