



Freedom of Information Policy and Procedure

Updated: March 2022
Produced by: Mrs E Swansbury
School Business Manager
Ratified by: To be ratified by the Board of Trustees

Signed:

Review Date: Chair of Trustees Headteacher
February 2024

This page has been intentionally left blank

Contents

1. Introduction.....	2
2. Publication Scheme	2
3. Receiving a request under FOI	2
4. Refusing a Request	3
5. Timescales	4
6. Contacts	4
7. Charges for supplying information.....	4
8. Complaints.....	5

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Ryhope Infant School Academy (the 'Academy') is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI) and as such must comply with any requests for information as laid out in the Act. This policy has been developed in line with guidance from the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) and outlines procedures for managing requests.
ICO Guide to freedom of information

<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-freedom-of-information/>

- 1.2. This policy does not cover enquiries or subject access requests under the Data Protection Act 2018 or the General Data Protection Regulation i.e., where the enquirer asks to see what personal information the academy holds about them. These enquiries will be dealt with under the Data Protection Policy which can be found on the academy's website.

2. Publication Scheme

- 2.1. Under the FOI the Academy is required to publish information proactively and have a publication scheme in place. The ICO has developed a model publication scheme which the Academy has adopted.
- 2.2. The model publication scheme commits the Academy to publish certain classes of information. It also specifies how to make information available, what you can charge, and what you need to tell members of the public about the scheme. These can be found via the following links:
Model Publication Scheme

<https://ico.org.uk/media/for-organisations/documents/1153/model-publication-scheme.pdf>

Definition document for Schools

<https://ico.org.uk/media/1235/definition-document-schools-in-england.pdf>

3. Receiving a request under FOI

- 3.1. Anyone has the right to request information and as such any request for any information from the Academy is technically a request under the FOI. However, for a request to be valid, the request must be:
- In writing, including email or fax
 - State the enquirers name and correspondence address (email addresses are allowed)
 - Describe the information requested – there must be enough information to be able to identify and locate the information
 - Not covered by another piece of legislation

- 3.2. The requester does not have to specifically mention the FOI or direct the request to a specific person.
- 3.3. The ICO has stated that not all requests have to be treated formally and routine requests (for example a parent requesting a copy of a policy) can be dealt with outside of the provisions of the FOI. They state that the provisions of the Act need only come into force if:
 - You cannot provide the requested information straight away; or
 - The requester makes it clear they expect a response under the Act
- 3.4. On receiving a request, the Academy will consult the following flowchart to determine if the request is valid and how to manage the request:
[Flowchart of Request handling under Freedom of information](#)
- 3.5. In all non-routine cases, if the request is simple and the information is to be released, then the individual who received the request will release the information. The individual will ensure that this is done within the timescales set out below. A copy of the request and response will then be sent to the Academy Headteacher/School Business Manager/Data Protection Officer (DPO).
- 3.6. All other requests will be referred in the first instance to the Academy Headteacher/School Business Manager/DPO, who may allocate another individual to deal with the request. This will be done promptly, and in any event within 3 working days of receiving the request.
- 3.7. When considering a request under FOI, it will be considered that a release under FOI is treated as release to the general public. As such, once the information has been released to an individual, this will be available to anyone who requests it and access will not be restricted when releasing by marking the information “confidential” or “restricted”.
- 3.8. The Policy also covers any staff and students who may be involved in research or other activity that requires them to process or have access to personal data, for instance as part of a research project or as part of professional practice activities. If this occurs, it is the responsibility of the Academy to ensure the data is processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and that students and staff are advised about their responsibilities.

4. Refusing a Request

- 4.1. There are certain circumstances in which a requester may ask for information but this request is refused. The Academy can refuse an entire request based on the following circumstances:
 - It would cost too much or take too much staff time to deal with the request.
 - The request is vexatious.
 - The request repeats a previous request from the same person.
- 4.2. In addition to this there are a number of exemptions within the FOI which allows the Academy to withhold information from the requester. Exemptions can be found in Part II of the FOI, at sections 21 to 44.

More information on refusing a request, including exemptions can be found via the following link:

<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-freedom-of-information/refusing-a-request/>

- 4.3. If the Academy refuses all or any part of the request, the sender will be notified of this via a written refusal notice.

5. Timescales

- 5.1. The Academy aims to respond to a request as soon as possible, and in any event, within 20 working days of the date of receipt of the request. When calculating the 20-working day deadline, a 'working day' is a school day, counting the first working day after the request is received as the first day.

6. Contacts

- 6.1. If you would like to make a request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, please contact the school:

Headteacher: Mrs T Allen

School Business Manager: Mrs E Swansbury

Tel: 0191 9171910

Email: info@ryhopeinfantschool.org.uk

The Data Protection Officer can be contacted at:

Data.Protection@sunderland.gov.uk

7. Charges for supplying information

- 7.1. The Academy will make no charge for downloading information from its website or for the Academy providing via email, copies of readily available information. A charge will be made for the following:

- Photocopying
- Postage and packaging
- Costs incurred directly as a result of viewing information

- 7.2. The Academy will ask the requester if they wish to continue with the request before work is carried out that will attract a charge.

8. Complaints

- 8.1. If you have a complaint this will be dealt with via the Academy's Complaints Policy which is published on its website (<http://www.ryhopeinfantschool.org.uk>).
- 8.2. If a complaint cannot be resolved by the Academy, a complaint can be made to the ICO, the independent body who oversees the FOI, details of which can be found below:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

<https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/>

Tel: 0303 123 1113