

Acorn Trust

Freedom of Information Policy & Publication Scheme



Written by:	J Buckley, Trust Business Manager
Date agreed:	24 th May 2016
Next Review Date:	Spring 2019
Chairs Signature	

Mission Statement

The Acorn Trust is a Multi-Academy Trust established with the aim of providing outstanding learning and opportunities for the children within its care.

Children are our nation's most precious resource. Their school life and learning experience will shape them for the whole of their lives

Safeguarding Statement

At the Acorn Trust we recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children.

We work to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected and valued. We are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and follow our procedures to ensure that children receive effective support, protection and justice.

The procedures contained in the Safeguarding Policy apply to all staff, volunteers and governors

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1. Publication Scheme

Statement of intent

The Acorn Trust has 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.

More specifically, this policy outlines:

- How our 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.

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.

1. Legal framework

1.1. This policy has due regard to the following legislation:

- Data Protection Act 1998
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- The Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004

1.2. This policy should be viewed in conjunction with the following other Trust policies:

- Data Protection Policy
- Confidentiality Policy

2. Accepting requests for information

2.1. 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

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

- It is transmitted by electronic means
- It is received in legible form
- It is capable of being used for subsequent reference
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3. General right of access to information held by the school

3.1. Provided that the request complies with section 2 of this policy, we will, no later than 20 school 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 school, whether we hold information of the description specified in the request.
- Provide the documentation, if we confirm that we hold the requested information.
- Confirm a fee if the cost complying with a request for information exceeds the appropriate limit of £450 or 18 hours. Note: Schools do not have to comply with FOI requests relating to unstructured personal data if it costs more than £450.

3.2. We will not comply with section 3.1 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.
- A request for information is exempt under Part 2 of the 2000 Act.

- It is already, or likely to be at a future date, a publically accessible record.
- Disclosure of the information would prejudice an ongoing investigation.
- It is currently in the custody of a court.
- It would endanger health and safety.
- It contains personal information.
- It was obtained by the school or academy in confidence.

- 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.

3.3. 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.

4. The appropriate limit

4.1. 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.

4.2. Costs related to the time spent by any person undertaking any of the activities outlined in section 4.1 of this policy on behalf of our Trust, are to be estimated at a rate of £25 per person per hour.

4.3. Where multiple requests for information are made to the school 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 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.

5. Charging fees

5.1. We may, within 20 working days, give an applicant who has requested information from the school a written notice stating that a fee is to be charged for our compliance.

5.2. Fees charged will not exceed the total cost to the school of:

- Informing the person making the request whether we hold the information.
- Communicating the information to the person making the request.

5.3. 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.

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

6. Means by which communication is to be made

6.1. Where, on making a request for information, the applicant expresses a preference for communication by any one of the following means, the school 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.

7. Providing advice and assistance

7.1. 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.

8. Publication scheme

8.1. Our Trust will meet its duty to adopt and maintain a publication scheme which specifies the information which it will publish on the school website, and whether the information will be available free of charge or on payment.

8.2. Our publication scheme will be reviewed and, where necessary, updated on an annual basis.

9. Monitoring and evaluation

9.1. This policy is monitored for effectiveness by the Trust Business Manager and is reviewed every 2 years or where necessary in light of changes to the law or statutory guidance.

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.

1. Classes of Information

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.

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.

2. How to request information

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.

Trust Business Manager
Acorn Trust
T/A Bedford Hall Methodist primary School
Breaston Ave
Leigh
Lancs
WN7 3DJ
Tel 01942 672614

To enable us to process your request quickly, please mark all correspondence:

“FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST”

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

3. Charges

Information published on our website is free, although you may incur costs from your Internet service provider. Access to our website can be obtained by using a local library or Internet Café.

Single copies of information covered by this publication are provided free unless stated otherwise in section 6. If your request involves a lot of photocopying/printing or large postage cost, we will let you know the cost before fulfilling your request. These are highlighted by a £ sign in the cost box.

Type of Charge	Description	Basis of charge
Disbursement Request	Photocopying/printing@ 5p per sheet	Actual cost incurred
	Postage	Actual cost of Royal Mail standard 2 nd class

4. Feedback and Complaints

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

Chair of Trustees
Acorn Trust
T/A Bedford Hall Methodist primary School
Breaston Ave
Leigh
Lancs
WN7 3DJ
Tel 01942 672614

If you are not satisfied with the assistance that you get or if we have not been able to resolve your complaint and you feel that a formal complaint needs to be made then this should be addressed to the Information Commissioner's Office. This is the organisation that ensures compliance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and that deals with formal complaints. They can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Or

Enquiry/Information Line: 01625 545 745

E-mail: publications@ic-foi.demon.co.uk

5. Classes of Information Currently Published

Information currently or intending to be published.	How the information can be obtained	Cost
Class 1 - Who we are and what we do This will be current information only		
Who's who in the school	School prospectus and website	
Who's who on the Board of Trustees/committees/local advisory boards and the basis of their appointment	Acorn/School prospectus and Acorn Trust website	
Articles of Association	Hard copy and Acorn Trust website	£
Contact details for the Head teacher and for the Chair of Trustees via the school (named contacts where possible).	School prospectus, school app and website	
The Trust and all of its schools prospectus'	Acorn/School prospectus and acorn trust/schools website	
Annual Report	Hard copy and Acorn Trust website	£
Staffing structure	School prospectus and website	
School session times and term dates	School prospectus and website	
Address of school and contact details, including email address.	School prospectus, school app and website	
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		
Annual budget plan and financial statements	Hard copy	£
Capital funding	Hard copy	£
Financial audit reports	hard copy and acorn trust website	£
Details of expenditure items over £2000 – published at least annually but at a more frequent quarterly or six-monthly interval where practical.	Hard copy	£

Procurement and contracts the school 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).	Hard copy	£
Pay policy	Hard copy	£
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.	Hard copy and in annual accounts on Acorn Website	£
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.	Hard copy and in annual accounts on Acorn Website	£
Governors' allowances that can be incurred or claimed, and a record of total payments made to individual governors.	Hard copy and in annual accounts on Acorn Website	£
Class 3 – What our priorities are and how we are doing (Strategies and plans, performance indicators, audits, inspections and reviews) Current information as a minimum		
School profile 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 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Summary - Full report • Post-inspection action plan 	School prospectus and website	
Performance management policy and procedures adopted by the governing body.	Hard Copy	£
Performance data or a direct link to it	School prospectus and website	
The school's future plans; for example, proposals for and any consultation on the future of the school, such as a change in status	Hard Copy	£
Safeguarding and child protection	Hard copy and websites (school and Trust)	

<p>Class 4 – How we make decisions</p> <p>(Decision making processes and records of decisions)</p> <p>Current and previous three years as a minimum</p>		
<p>Admissions policy/decisions (not individual admission decisions) – where applicable</p>	<p>Hard copy and websites (school and Trust)</p>	<p>£</p>
<p>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).</p>	<p>Hard copy</p>	<p>£</p>
<p>Class 5 – Our policies and procedures</p> <p>(Current written protocols, policies and procedures for delivering our services and responsibilities)</p> <p>Current information only.</p> <p>As a minimum these must include policies, procedures and documents that the school 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.</p>		
<p>Records management and personal data policies, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information security policies • Records retention, destruction and archive policies • Data protection (including information sharing policies) 	<p>Hard copy and websites (school and Trust)</p>	<p>£</p>
<p>Charging regimes and policies.</p> <p>This should include details of any statutory charging regimes. Charging policies should include charges made for information routinely published. They should clearly state what costs are to be recovered, the basis on which they are made and how they are calculated.</p> <p>If the school charges a fee for re-licensing the use of datasets, it should state in its guide how this is calculated (please see “How to complete the Guide to information”).</p>	<p>Hard copy and websites (school and Trust)</p>	<p>£</p>
<p>All other policies including SEN, accessibility plans, pupil behaviour, sex education, H&S, complaints procedure, recruitment and equality.</p>	<p>Hard copy and websites (school and Trust)</p>	<p>£</p>

Class 6 – Lists and Registers		
Currently maintained lists and registers only (this does not include the attendance register).		
Curriculum circulars and statutory instruments	Hard copy and websites (school and Trust)	£
Disclosure logs	Available by inspection	
Asset register	Available by inspection	
Any information the school is currently legally required to hold in publicly available registers	Available by inspection	
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		
Extra-curricular activities	Hard copy and websites (school and Trust)	
Out of school clubs	Hard copy and websites (school and Trust)	
Services for which the school is entitled to recover a fee, together with those fees	Hard copy and websites (school and Trust)	
School publications, leaflets, books and newsletters	Hard copy school and websites	
Additional Information		
This will provide schools with the opportunity to publish information that is not itemised in the lists above		