



KING EDWARD VI
SHELDON HEATH ACADEMY

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION POLICY

1. Purpose

KESH Academy is committed to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FoIA) which came into force on 1 January 2005 and which came to include Academy by the Academy Act 2010, with effect from 1 January 2011. The Academy is committed to the principles of accountability and the general right of access to information, subject to legal exemptions. The policy outlines our framework for managing requests.

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, any person has a legal right to ask for access to information held by the Academy. They are entitled to be told whether the Academy hold the information, and to receive a copy, subject to certain exemptions.

The information which the Academy routinely make available to the public is included in the Publication Scheme. 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 hold are covered by the Act. The Academy has a Retention Schedule based on the schedule recommended by the Records Management Society of Great Britain, which guides the Academy as to how long they should keep records. It is an offence to wilfully conceal, damage or destroy information in order to avoid responding to an enquiry, so it is important that no records that are the subject of an enquiry are amended or destroyed.

Requests under the Act can be addressed to anyone employed by the Academy. All staff need to be aware of the process for dealing with requests. Requests 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. 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.

2. Scope

This procedure applies to all Academy staff. Requests for personal data are still covered by the Data Protection Act (DPA). Individuals can request to see what information the Academy holds about them. This is known as a Subject Access Request, and must be dealt with accordingly.

Requests for information about anything relating to the environment – such as air, water, land, the natural world or the built environment and any factor or measure affecting these – are covered by the Environmental Information Regulations (EIR). Requests under EIR are dealt with in the same way as those under FOIA, but they do not need to be written and can be verbal.

3. Procedure

OBLIGATIONS AND DUTIES

The Governing Body recognises the duty to provide advice and assistance to anyone requesting information. We will respond to straightforward verbal requests for information and will help enquirers to put more complex verbal requests into writing so that they can be handled under the Act.

The Governing Body recognises the duty to tell enquirers whether or not we hold the information they are requesting (the duty to confirm or deny), and provide access to the information we hold in accordance with the procedures laid down in Appendix 1.

PUBLICATION SCHEME

The Academy have created a Publication Scheme derived from the Model Publication Scheme for Schools approved by the Information Commissioner.

DEALING WITH REQUESTS

We will respond to all requests in accordance with the procedures in Appendix 1.

EXEMPTIONS

Certain information is subject to either absolute or qualified exemptions. The exemptions are listed in Appendix 2.

When we wish 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.

PUBLIC INTEREST TEST

Unless it is in the public interest to withhold information, it has to be released. We will apply the Public Interest Test before any qualified exemptions are applied.

For information on applying the Public Interest Test see Appendix 3.

CHARGING

We reserve the right to refuse to supply information where the cost of doing so exceeds the statutory maximum, currently £450.

The Governing Body reserves the right to charge a fee for complying with requests for information under FoIA. The fees are calculated according to FoIA regulations, (see Appendix 4) and the person notified of the charge before the information is supplied. Fees must be paid before the information is released.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Governing Body has delegated the day-to-day responsibility for compliance with the FoIA to the Director of Finance and Resources (FD).

COMPLAINTS

Any comments or complaints will be dealt with through the respective 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 should be made in writing to the Information Commissioner's Office at:

FOI/EIR Complaints Resolution, Information Commissioner's Officer
Wycliffe House, Water Lane
Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF

4. Records

Record	Where kept	Retention time (Min)	Disposal authority
Register of Requests	FD office	Five Years	FD
Original Written Requests	FD office	Five Years	FD
Response to Requests	FD office	Five Years	FD
Correspondence Related to FoIA Requests	FD office	Five Years	FD

5. Attachments:

Appendix 1 - Procedures for Dealing with Requests (including 2 process maps)

Appendix 2 - Exemptions

Appendix 3 - Applying the Public Interest Test

Appendix 4 - Charging

Appendix 5 - Standard Letters

6. Policy Information

The Policy was approved by KESH Academy Finance Committee in March 2015.

The policy is scheduled to be reviewed every four years unless legislation changes.