



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION POLICY

Document Control

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Table of Contents

1. Introduction	2
2. Links with other Policies.....	3
3. Classes of information	3
4. How to request Information	3
5. Response Time.....	4
6. Dealing with a request for information.....	4
7. Reasons for not complying with a request.....	4
8. Charges to be applied for information available under this scheme.....	4
9. Monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of the Policy	5
10. Equality Impact Assessment.....	5
11. Data Protection Statement	5
12. ANNEX A – Guide to Information available under the Freedom of Information Scheme.....	6
13. ANNEX B Pro-forma to Record FOI request Decision Making and Processes	9

Summary

- This Freedom of Information policy sets out the process which will be followed when a request for information is made under the Freedom of Information Act (2000) – known in this policy as FOIA.
- It fosters consistency across the Trust to ensure we are meeting our obligations relating the FOIA
- It identifies
 - The duties of the Harmony Trust
 - Classes of information
 - How to request information
 - The process for responding to requests
 - Any charges which may be relevant
- If academies receive a FOI request, this must be forwarded to the Head of Business Administration without delay. It will then be picked up and followed in line with this policy.

Introduction

- Under the provisions of the FOIA the Trust has a legal duty to supply information (where the request is compliant with the Act) to enquirers and we must be clear and proactive about the information we make public.
- We are committed to the aims of the FOIA and the access provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018 [2021 update] and promoting this open policy (referred to as our publication scheme) as we believe the public have a right to access the recorded information held by us.
- Our scheme commits the Trust and its academies to make information available to the public as part of our normal business activities. The scheme sets out
 - the classes of information which we publish or intend to publish
 - the way the information will be published
 - whether the information is available free of charge or on payment
 - how to request information

- We are obliged to produce a schedule of any fees charged for access to information which is proactively available, and to make this publication scheme available to the public. (Any such fees will be in line with the schedule of fees advised by the ICO)
- Some information which we hold may not be made available as it may be governed by other legislation for example, personal information which is governed by the UK GDPR.

Links with other Policies

As can be seen from the following section, our scheme is relevant to our policies and information relating to strategies, policies, procedures, performance information, financial information, inspections and reviews.

Classes of information

In accordance with the FOIA, and its application to academies, the classes of information covered are:

- **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.
- **Our priorities and how we are performing** - Strategy and performance information, plans, assessments, inspections and reviews.
- **Decision making** - Decisions of the Board of Trustees and Trust and our academies leadership,
- Including consultations.
- **Policies and Procedures** - Current written protocols for delivering our functions and responsibilities.
- **Registers and Lists** - Information held in registers required by law and other lists and registers relating to the functions of the Trust and its academies.
- **Services Provided** - Advice and guidance, booklets, leaflets and media releases.

How to request Information

- The attached Annex A provides information as to what information is covered by this scheme and how it can be obtained and, if applicable, any appropriate charges.
- Where possible, the Trust will provide information on its website or on the websites of individual academies. If information is not available on websites, we will indicate how information can be obtained by other means and provide it by those means.
- Some information may only be available by viewing in person. If this is the case, then information will be provided on request and arrangements made to view the information within a reasonable timescale.
- If information is required contact should be made in the first instance to the Principal of the appropriate Academy or to the Chief Executive of the Trust. Please make your request in writing, in a letter or email. Contact details for our academies are available on the websites and our Trust address is:

The Chief Executive, The Harmony Trust, Alderson Street, Oldham OL9 6AQ
 - Telephone number 0161 -260 – 0482 and email info@theharmonytrust.org

To help us process your request quickly, mark any correspondence “FOI Publication Scheme Request”. A name and contact address (postal or email) should be provided to which we can reply.

Response Time

Your request will be acknowledged as soon as possible and responded to within the specified time limit of 20 days. If the request is particularly complex, we will assess how long it is likely to take to retrieve the required information and whether it will be necessary to levy a further charge. In this case we will contact you and advise you of the position so that you can decide if you wish to pursue with your request for information.

Dealing with a request for information

In the first instance, any request will be dealt with by the Principal of the appropriate Academy. They will send this to the Head of Business Administration who will in turn send it to the Executive Leadership team for decision and allocation. A named lead will be identified and they will:

- Decide if the request comes under the Freedom of Information Act; the Environmental Information Regulations (2004) etc.
- Decide whether the Trust or Academy holds the requested information
- Provide the information if it has already been made public
- Inform the enquirer if the Trust or Academy does not have the information
- Decide if information disclosed might affect the interests of a third party
- Decide if the estimated cost of complying with the request will exceed the appropriate
- Limit
- Ensure that all personal information is excluded from a requested document
- Consider if the request is vexatious or repeated
- Deal with the request within 20 working days
- If applicable, deal with a request within the prescribed timescales of 40 calendar days.
- The pro-forma at ANNEX B can be used to record the decision making process

Reasons for not complying with a request

The FOIA outlines four reasons for not complying with a request, namely:

- that the requested information is not held
- the cost threshold is reached
- the request is considered to be vexatious and/or repeated
- that one or more of the exemptions apply.

Charges to be applied for information available under this scheme

- The purpose of the scheme and the desire of the Trust is to make as much information readily available at minimum cost to the public. Any charges made will be fully justified, transparent and kept to a minimum.
- Material which is accessed on a website will be provided free of charge.
- Charges made for information are subject to those specified by regulation. Charges may also be made by the Trust to cover actual disbursement costs incurred, such as:
 - photocopying and printing
 - postage and packaging
 - the costs directly incurred as a result of viewing information
- If a charge is to be made, confirmation of the payment due will be given before information is provided. Payment will usually be requested prior to the information being provided.

Monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of the Policy

The practical application and effectiveness of this policy will be reviewed every three years or when the need arises by the Chief Executive of the Trust.

Equality Impact Assessment

Under the Equality Act (2010) we have a duty not to discriminate against people based on their age, disability, gender, gender identity, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation. This policy has been equality impact assessed in line with the Equality Act (2010) as it is fair, it does not prioritise or disadvantage any individual and it helps to promote and encourage equality in our academies.

Data Protection Statement

The procedures and practice created by this policy have been reviewed in the light of our Data Protection Policy.

All data will be handled in accordance with the school's Data Protection Policy.

Data Audit For This Policy					
What ?	Probable Content	Why ?	Who ?	Where ?	When ?
FOI policy	Name, address, information related to the FOI request,	Required to be retained as part of FOI process	Principal / SLT, Trust central team, staff or other representative as required as part of the FOI process	Kept on file at academy (and Trust central where appropriate)	Held on file until FOI request is complete and then for 12 months.

As such, our assessment is that this policy :

Has Few / No Data Compliance Requirements	Has A Moderate Level of Data Compliance Requirements	Has a High Level Of Data Compliance Requirements
✓		

1. ANNEX A – Guide to Information available under the Freedom of Information Scheme

Who we are and what we do: - Organisational information, locations and contacts and structure.

Provision of information	How to obtain	Cost
Who is who in the Trust and academies	Websites	Free of charge (FOC)
Who is who on the Board of Trustees	Website	FOC
Scheme of Delegation	Hard copy or Secured Digital Copy	Charges as per schedule below
Academy prospectus	Website	FOC
Staffing Structures	Hard copy or Secured Digital Copy	Charges as below
Term dates	Website	FOC

What we spend and how we spend it: Financial information relating to projected and actual income and expenditure, tendering, procurement and contracts.

Provision of information	How to obtain	Cost
Annual budget and financial statements	Hard copy or Secured Digital Copy	Charges as below
Capital Funding	Hard Copy or Secured Digital Copy	ditto
Additional Funding	Hard copy or Secured Digital Copy	ditto
Procurement and projects	Hard copy or Secured Digital Copy	ditto
Pay Policy	Hard copy or Secured Digital Copy	ditto
Staffing and grading structure	Hard copy or Secured Digital Copy	ditto
Trustees Allowances	Hard copy or Secured Digital Copy	ditto

Our Priorities and how we are performing: Strategy and performance information, plans, assessments, inspections and reviews.

Provision of Information	How to obtain	Cost
Latest inspection reports	Website	FOC
Improvement Plans	Hard Copy or Secured Digital Copy	Charges as below

Decision Making: Decisions of Board of Trustees and by Trust and our academies leadership, including consultations.

Provision of Information	How to obtain	Cost
Agenda and minutes of Board of Trustees and any sub committees	Hard copy or Secured Digital Copy	Charges as below

Policies and Procedures: Current written Protocols for delivering our functions and responsibilities.

Provision of Information	How to obtain	Cost
Harmony Trust Policies and procedures	Majority on website Others by Hard copy or Secured Digital Copy	FOC Charges as below

Registers and Lists: Information held in registers required by law and other lists and registers relating to the functions of the Trust and its academies.

Provision of Information	How to obtain	Cost
Curriculum circulars and statutory instruments	Hard copy or Secured Digital Copy	Charges as below
Asset Registers	Hard copy or Secured Digital Copy	ditto
Any other information that the Trust is legally required to hold in publicly available registers (does not include attendance registers)	Hard copy or Secured Digital Copy	ditto

Services Provided: Advice and guidance, booklets, leaflets and media releases.

Provision of Information	How to obtain	Cost
Extra-curricular opportunities	Website	FOC
Trust and academy publications	Website	FOC
Newsletters	Website	FOC

Schedule of Charges:

Type of Charge	Description	Basis of charge
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Disbursement cost	Photocopying/printing @ 10p per A4 sheet (black and white) Photocopying/printing @ 30p per sheet (colour) Postage	Actual cost Actual cost Actual cost of Royal Mail standard second class
Statutory fee		In accordance with relevant legislation - £25 per hour (at time of policy review and approval)

2. ANNEX B Pro-forma to Record FOI request Decision Making and Processes

The Harmony Trust

Freedom of Information Request – Response Record

Part 1 : FOI Request Details										
Date Received										
Method of Receipt										
Individual Requesting										
Organisation										
School Referenced										
Response Date (20 Working Days)										
Hours Needed To Complete The Request	Estimated Number of Hours			Estimated Cost Calculated At £25 Per Hour (*)			£			
Does the Estimated Cost Exceed £450 ?	Yes	▶	On the Basis Of This Cost Assessment, Will You ...	Refuse The Request On The Grounds Of Costs	Yes		Notify Requester	No		Continue to Part 2
				Agree to the Request But Make A Charge	Yes		Calculate Costs in Part 4	No		Continue to Part 2
	No	▶	Continue To Part 2							

(*) Rate used is the current rate advised by the Information Commissioners Office – January 2021

Part 2 : Right to Refuse Checks										
Do Any Of the Following Statements Apply Here ?	It would cost too much or take too much staff time to deal with the request					Yes		No		
	The request is vexatious					Yes		No		
	The request repeats a previous request from the same person					Yes		No		
Is An Absolute Exemption Relevant Here ?	Yes		No		Reasons / Evidence					
Would This Request Reasonably Be Considered To Be 'In The Public Interest' ?	Yes		No		Reasons / Evidence					
On The Basis Of This Assessment, Should The FOI Request Be Granted ?	Yes		No		Reasons / Evidence					

Part 3 : Response Statements		
Ref	Request / Question	Our Response
1		
2		

3		
4		
5		
6		
7		

Part 4 : Charges

Actual Costs	Total Hours Taken		Rate Per Hour	£25	Cost To Be Paid (Hours x Rate) Minus £450	£
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Part 5 : Information Provided and Checked For Accuracy and Information

Information Gathered By	Name			
	Role			
	School			
	Date Information Collection Completed			
Information Release Approved By	Name			
	Role			
	School			
	Date Information Approved for Release			
DPO Compliance Check	Date		Signature	

Reviewed Jan 24