



Watererton
Academy Trust

Freedom of Information Policy

2024-2026



Contents

Introduction.....	3
Categories of Information Published.....	3
Right to request information.....	4
How to Request Information.....	4
How we will deal with a FOIA request for information.....	5
Timeline for reply.....	5
Paying for information.....	5
Feedback and Complaints.....	5
Appendix A: Information to be Published.....	7
Appendix B: Freedom of Information Publication Scheme.....	10
Document Detail	14
Version Control	14

This policy includes the Publication Scheme on information available under the Freedom of Information Act 2000

The Trustees of Waterton Academy Trust are responsible for maintenance of this scheme and each Headteacher and Local Hub Board is responsible for ensuring the information stated is readily available.

Introduction

One of the aims of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) is that academies should be clear and proactive about the information they hold and how it will be made public.

To do this we must produce a publication scheme, available to the public, setting out:

- The classes of information which we publish or intend to publish
- The manner in which the information will be published
- To review and update on a regular basis the information available under this scheme
- Whether the information is available free of charge or on payment.
- To publish any dataset held by the authority that has been requested, and any updated versions it holds, unless the authority 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; and, if any information in the dataset is a relevant copyright work and the public authority is the only owner, to make the information available for re-use under a specified licence. The term 'dataset' is defined in section 11(5) of the Freedom of Information Act. The terms 'relevant copyright work' and 'specified licence' are defined in section 19(8) of that Act.

The scheme covers information already published and information which is to be published in the future. All information in our publication scheme is available in paper form.

Some information which we hold may not be made public, for example personal information.

This publication scheme conforms to the model scheme for schools approved by the Information Commissioner.

Categories of Information Published

The classes of information that we undertake to make available are organised into seven broad topic areas:

- 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

Right to request information

There is a legal right for any person to make a request to an academy for access to information held by that academy. Academies are under a duty to provide advice and assistance to anyone requesting information. Enquirers do not have to say why they want the information and the request does not have to mention FOIA. The enquirer is entitled to be told whether the academy holds the information (this is known as the duty to confirm or deny) and, if so, to have access to it. Access can include providing extracts of a document or a summary of the information sought, or access to the original document. However, the FOIA recognises the need to preserve confidentiality of sensitive information in some circumstances and sets out a number of exemptions.

There are only four reasons for not complying with a valid request for information under FOI: -

- the information is not held
- the cost threshold is reached
- the request is considered vexatious or repeated
- one or more of the exemptions apply

How to Request Information

All requests for information should:

- Be submitted in writing by either letter or email.
- State your name and correspondence address (postal or email).
- Clearly describe the information requested providing enough detail to identify and locate the information.
- Not be covered by any other piece of legislation

***To help us process your request quickly, please clearly mark any correspondence
"FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST"***

All employees of Waterton Academy Trust are aware of this process.

Our address for written requests is: Data protection, Waterton Academy Trust, The Business Village, Building 1, Innovation Way, Barnsley, South Yorkshire, S75 1JL

Our email address for requests is: dataprotection@watertonacademytrust.org

How we will deal with a FOIA request for information

If the request relates to a single academy or to multiple academies within Waterton Academy Trust the responsibility for co-ordinating the request lies with the Data Protection Officer. The Headteachers of each academy may be involved in the request and be required to provide information to the DPO.

Timeline for reply

We will do our utmost to reply to any request promptly. In any case, we will meet the legally prescribed limit of 20 school days or 60 working days if this is shorter. The response time starts from the first working day after the request is received. Where we need to ask you for more information to enable us to answer, the 20 days start time begins when this further information has been received.

If a qualified exemption applies and we need more time to consider the public interest test, we will reply within the 20 days stating that an exemption applies and include an estimate of the date by which a decision on the public interest test will be made. Where we have notified you that a charge is to be made, the time period stops until payment is received and then continues again once payment has been received.

Paying for information

Information published on the Trust and its academies websites is free, although you may incur costs from your Internet service provider. If you do not have Internet access, you can access the Trust and its academies websites using a local library.

We aim to respond to FOIA requests free of charge. However, if your request means that we do incur significant costs, e.g. a significant amount of photocopying, printing, paying a large postage charge, or a request for a priced item such as some printed publications or DVDs, we will let you know the cost before fulfilling your request. Information will be charged at the actual cost of providing it (e.g. the cost of photocopying, plus time of employee photocopying information, plus postage and any other actual costs incurred as a result of providing the requested information). If we need to charge for providing the information, we will require payment before we can provide the information.

A detailed guide to the information available and how to access it is attached as appendix A. If the information you are looking for is not available via the scheme and is not on the Trust and/or its academies (schools), you can still contact us to ask if we have it.

Feedback and Complaints

We welcome any comments or suggestions you may have about the scheme. If you want to make any comments about the scheme or if you require further assistance or wish to make a complaint then initially this should be made to the

CEO of Waterton Academy Trust. If you are not satisfied with the assistance you receive and you feel that a formal complaint needs to be made then this should be made to the Information Commissioner's Office. This is the organisation that ensures compliance with the Freedom of Information Act and deals with formal complaints. They can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF
Website: <https://ico.org.uk/>

Appendix A: Information to be Published

Who we are and what we do	How the information can be obtained	Cost
Waterton Academy Trust organisational information, structures, locations and contacts	WAT Website/hard copy	Free
Articles of Association	WAT Website	Free
Memorandum of Association	WAT Website	Free
School Prospectus / Curriculum	Academy Website	Free
Gender pay gap reporting	WAT Website	Free
Academy Master Funding Agreement Supplemental Funding Agreements	WAT Website On request from CFO	Free
Academy staff and structure	Academy Website	Free
Trust Board - names and contact details of the Trustees and the basis of their appointment	WAT Website	Free
Academy session times, term dates, holidays and key dates	Academy Website	Free
Academy location and contact information	Academy Website	Free
What we spend and how we spend it		
Financial accounts	WAT Website	Free
Annual budget plan and financial statements	On request from CFO	Free
Capital funding - details of capital funding allocated to the academy along with information on related building projects and other capital projects	On request from CFO	Free
Additional funding - income generation schemes	On request from CFO	Free
Financial Management Policy	On request from CFO	Free
Record of contracts that have gone through a formal tendering process	On request from CFO/COO	Free
Staff pay and grading structure	On request from COO	Free
Pay policy	On request from COO	Free
Governors/Directors' Allowances - details of allowances and expenses that can be claimed or incurred	On request from CFO	Free
Staff Expenses Policy	On request from CPF	Free

What our priorities are and how we are doing		
Academy Development plan	Academy website/hard copy	Free
Academy Performance data	DfE website school performance tables	Free
Academy Ofsted report	Academy Website and Ofsted Website	Free
Data Protection Impact Assessments and any other impact assessments as appropriate and relevant	On request from the DPO	Free
How we make decisions		
Agreed minutes of meetings of the Academy Standards Committee, or Hub Boards, subject with the exception of information that is properly considered to be private to the meeting.	By request to Head of Governance	Free
Trust Board of Directors meeting agendas, papers and minutes with the exception of information that is properly considered to be private to the meeting.	WAT website By request to Head of Governance	Free
Admissions policy including appeals information	WAT Website	Free
Admissions data	Hard copy	Free
Our policies and procedures		
Trust Policy Suite, including Health and Safety, Equality & diversity policies and procedures, HR policies and procedures (including recruitment and pay policies)	WAT Website and by request of the Head of Governance	Free
Individual Academy Policies, including the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.	Academy Website and by request of the Headteacher	Free
Complaints Policy	WAT Website	Free
Records management, personal data and access to information policies		Free
Whistleblowing Code of Practice	WAT Website	Free
Lists and Registers		
Asset register	By request to CFO	Free
Disclosure logs	By request to DPO	Free
Any information the academy is currently legally required to hold in publicly available registers	By request to CFO	Free
Currently maintained lists and registers only	By request to relevant party (some info may be available for inspection only)	Free
CCTV	By request to Academy	Free

Services for which the academy is entitled to recover a fee, together with those fees	By request to Academy	Free
The services we offer		
Extra-Curricular activities	By request to Academy	Free
Out of school clubs	By request to Academy	Free
Academy publications	By request to Academy	Free
Services for which an academy is entitled to recover a fee, together with those fees	By request to Academy	Free
Leaflets, booklets & newsletters	By request to Academy	Free

Appendix B: Freedom of Information Publication Scheme

This model publication scheme has been prepared and approved by the Information Commissioner. It may be adopted without modification by any public authority without further approval and will be valid until further notice.

This publication scheme commits the Trust and academies 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 the Trust and academies. Additional assistance is provided to the definition of these classes in sector specific guidance manuals issued by the Information Commissioner.

The scheme commits the Trust and academies:

- To proactively publish or otherwise make available as a matter of routine information, which is held by the Trust and academies and falls within the classifications below.
- To specify the information which is held by the Trust and academies 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 and academies 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 the Trust and academies that has been requested, and any updated versions it holds, unless the Trust and academies 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; and, if an information in the dataset is a relevant copyright work and the public, Trust or academies is the only owner, to make the information available for re-use under the terms of the Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2015, if they apply, and otherwise under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act section 19. The term 'dataset' is defined in section 11(5) of the Freedom of Information Act. The term 'relevant copyright work' is defined in section 19(8) of that Act.

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 and academies.

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.

The Trust and academies 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 the Trust and academies, 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, the Trust and academies 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 the Trust and academies are 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 Trust and academies 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: at 10 pence per sheet of A4 paper
- Postage and packaging: at the actual cost to the Academy or Trust
- The costs directly incurred as a result of viewing information: at the actual cost to the Academy or Trust


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 Trust and academies.

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 the Trust and academies 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.

Document Detail			
Document Name:	Freedom of Information Policy		
Version:	5		
Chief Officer Signature:			
Effective From:	01/04/2025		
Approved by:	D Dickinson		
Approval Meeting Reference:	ELT 3/3/25		
Next Review Date:	01/01/2027		
Version Control			
Version	Date	Author	Change/Reference
1	January 2017	V Collins	
2	February 2020	V Collins	Changes in Governance Structures. Some changes in references to other policies.
3	June 2022	V Collins / I Burns	Removed reference to 'Fax' as communication method Updated contact details for ICO Updated 'How info can be obtained column'
4	July 2024	M Bretherton	Reviewed and checked for compliance. No changes.
5	January 2025	M Bretherton	Appendix B added. Appendix A Cost added, and additional lines to comply with FOIA.