

drb Ignite Multi Academy Trust

Freedom of Information Policy

Trust Vision

'all pupils achieve the highest standard of educational outcomes regardless of circumstances or background.'

The Trust has been established through a shared belief that lives can be transformed by what goes on in schools. The Trust believes that the process of teaching and learning shapes futures. To this end the Trust's vision is to give every pupil learning experiences that excite them and give them the power to begin to shape their own lives.

Policy rationale

The Trust takes its responsibilities with regard to the management of the requirements of the *Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA)* very seriously. The Trust is also committed to ensure full compliance with GDPR Requirements.

The purpose of this Policy is to ensure that the provisions of the *Freedom of Information Act 2000* are adhered to and in particular that:

- a significant amount of routinely published information about the Trust is made available to the public as a matter of course.
- other information is readily available on request and any such request is dealt with in a timely manner.
- in cases where information is covered by an exemption, consideration is given as to whether or not the information should be released.

For note:

Some information which the Trust holds may not be made public, for example personal information.

Responsibilities

The Trust recognises its corporate responsibility under the *Freedom of Information Act* to provide a general right of access to information held. The Trust Board has overall responsibility for overseeing this.

The Director of IT and Compliance (DPO) is responsible for drawing up guidance on freedom of information and promoting compliance with this Policy in such a way as to ensure shared understanding and the easy, appropriate and timely retrieval of information as required.

Requests for information

Information not already made available is accessible through a specific request for information. In this regard the *Freedom of Information Act* establishes two related rights:

- the right to be told whether information exists
- the right to receive the information (subject to exemptions)

These rights can be exercised by anyone. Requests must be made in a permanent form (for example in writing or by email) and the Trust may charge for dealing with any request. Requestors will not be entitled to information to which any of the exemptions in the Act apply.

However, only those specific pieces of information to which the exemption applies will be withheld, and information covered by an exemption will be subject to review by the Trust Board.

- any FOI request should be addressed to the CEO in the first instance.
- the FOI request will be acknowledged by the Trust's *Data Protection Officer* (DPO) within **3 working days**.
- the Trust will respond to any request **within 20 working days** although further reasonable details can be requested in order to identify and locate the information.
- if a fee is required, the period of 20 working days may be extended by up to **3 months** or until the fee is paid.

Exemptions under the Act

There are exemptions under the Act:

- exemptions where the public interest test applies.
- absolute exemptions.

The Trust may decide that some information it holds should be regarded as exempt information under the Act. Where a request is made for information which includes exemptions a public interest test will be applied.

The Trust will consider the prejudice and public interest test and may, in some circumstances, reserve the right to withhold the requested information.

Charges

The Trust reserves the right to charge an appropriate fee for dealing with a specific request for information not listed in the publication scheme in accordance with the Act.

Complaints

The Trust's Chief Executive Officer (CEO) will co-ordinate any complaints received in respect of this Policy with the support of the Data Protection Officer (DPO)


If the applicant is not satisfied with the response provided by the Trust, then they should inform the Trust's Chief Executive Officer within **20 working days**.

If applicants are dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint, they may seek an independent review from the *Information Commissioner*. More information about making a complaint is available on the Information Commissioner's website through the following link or helpline

<https://ico.org.uk/>

Information Commissioner Helpline Number – 0303 123 1113

Monitoring and review

Monitoring and review:	CEO Trust Board
Links:	Data Protection Policy
Staff responsible:	Director of IT and Compliance (DPO) CEO
Committee responsible:	Audit and Risk Committee
Date approved:	March 2023
Review date:	March 2024
Sign Off Trust Chair:	 Date: March 2023

- Please note that should there be any changes/further national guidance issued relevant to this Policy, it will be updated accordingly prior to the review date shown above and referred to the next Trust Board meeting.

Change Management

Issue No	Change date	Change description
1.0	November 2016	Initial release
2.0	November 2018	Rebranded, updated and signed off for release
3.0	October 2020	Reviewed, clarifies who acknowledges the FOI
4.0	January 2022	Reviewed – complaints to ICO updated
5.0	March 2023	Reviewed and updated