



TUDHOE LEARNING TRUST

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

Policy, Procedure & Guidance

Agreed by the Governing Bodies of:

Acre Rigg Academy
Stephenson Way Primary
Tudhoe Colliery Primary
Victoria Lane Academy
Shield Row Primary
Dene House Primary
South Hetton Primary

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Introduction

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 provides public access to information held by public authorities.

It does this in two ways:

- public authorities are obliged to publish certain information about their activities; and
- members' of the public are entitled to request information from public authorities.

What does the Act cover?

The Act covers any recorded information that is held by a public authority in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and by UK-wide public authorities based in Scotland. Information held by Scottish public authorities is covered by Scotland's own Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002.

What constitutes a Public Authority?

Public authorities include government departments, local authorities, the NHS, state schools and police forces. However, the Act does not necessarily cover every organisation that receives public money. For example, it does not cover some charities that receive grants and certain private sector organisations that perform public functions.

What is Recorded Information?

Recorded information includes printed documents, computer files, letters, emails, photographs, and sound or video recordings.

Exemptions & Exclusions?

The Act does not give people access to their own personal data (information about themselves) such as their health records or credit reference file. If a member of the public wants to see information that a public authority holds about them, they should make a subject access request under the Data Protection Act 1998. A request for personal information should be dealt with in line with our Trust Subject Access Requests Policy.

Procedure for Dealing with a Request for Information

The Trust recognises that anyone has the right to make a request for information. Any senior member of staff within the Trust will deal with a Freedom of Information request in a fair and reasonable manner and in line with current legislation and Trust policy.

Upon receipt of a Freedom of Information request the Trust will:

- Confirm whether or not the information requested is held within the Trust.
- Where appropriate provide details of the information.

The Trust will not provide personal information. Requests for information of this kind will be considered and dealt with as a Subject Access Request. See Trust Subject Access Requests Policy.

The Trust will make every effort to respond to a request for information within 20 working days.

Requests for information must be made in writing.

Refusing a Request for Information

The Trust will consider refusing a request for information under the following circumstances:

- Dealing with the request will cost too much money and take up too much staff time.
- There is reasonable belief that the request is frivolous or vexatious.
- A similar or identical request has been made previously by the same person.

The Trust will also consider withholding some or all information where disclosure will have the potential to cause harm, pose a threat to the safeguarding of a child or jeopardise a police investigation or trial in court. Consideration will also be given to the provisions made in the Data Protection Act. Ultimately, the Trust will make a decision about whether or not to refuse a request based on whether or not it is in the public's interest to do so.

Where the Trust makes a determination to refuse a request for information a Refusal Notice will be issued to the person making the request.

Publication Scheme

The Trust recognises its obligations with regard to the publication of information relating to policy, procedure, minutes of meeting, financial information and annual reports. Each school within the Trust has its own website where relevant information is published and kept up to date and the Trust has a website where collective information relating to the Trust organisation as a whole is published and maintained regularly. Any information that is not published may be requested from the Trust in writing. The Trust will consider any request for information in a fair and reasonable manner and deal with any complaints swiftly. However, in the event that a requester is dissatisfied with any element of the way the Trust has handled a request then the dispute will be resolved through the Information Commissioners Office (ICO).

In line with ICO approved good practice Tudhoe Learning Trust has adopted and will comply with the ICO Model Publication Procedure:

This publication scheme commits the Trust 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. 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:

- To proactively publish or otherwise make available as a matter of routine, information, including environmental information, which is held by the Trust and falls within the classifications below.
- To specify the information which is held by the Trust 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 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 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 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 authority.
- 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 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 a public authority, 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 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 is 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 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
- postage and packaging
- the costs directly incurred as a result of viewing information

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 public authority.

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 a public authority 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.

Any fee the Trust charges will be proportionate, reasonable and every effort will be made to keep charges to a minimum.

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More information about freedom of information requests can be found here:

<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-freedom-of-information/>