



Community Academies Trust Freedom of Information Policy



Approved by the Audit and Risk Committee of the Board of Directors on: 2nd
December 2024

Review date: December 2026



Education is for improving lives and for leaving your community and world better than you found it.

Contents

Introduction 3

Freedom of Information Publication Scheme..... 3

Method by which information under the Publication Scheme is made available..... 4

Freedom of Information Requests..... 4

Time limit for compliance with FOI requests..... 5

Procedure for dealing with a request 5

Responding to a Request 6

Dealing with vexatious or repeated requests 6

Appendix 1 - Community Academies Trust Guide to Information Available Under the Publication Scheme 7

Introduction

Community Academies Trust (CAT) is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI) as a public authority, and as such, must comply with any requests for information in accordance with the principles laid out in the Act.

This means that Community Academies Trust must hold and publish a FOI publication scheme, to communicate what information we make readily available to the public and where it can be found. It also means that schools within the trust must have procedures in place to publish information and respond to FOI requests.

Freedom of Information Publication Scheme

The Freedom of Information Act requires every public authority to have a publication scheme. The CAT scheme contained within this policy (Appendix 1) has been developed to ensure that all of our schools are as transparent as possible when it comes to the publication of information. Most of the information listed below is published routinely on the schools' websites and in their promotional material.

The publication scheme has the following aims:

- To proactively publish or otherwise make available as a matter of routine, information including environmental information, which is held by CAT and falls within the classification below
- To specify the information that is held by CAT 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 the scheme
- To produce and publish the methods by which the specific information is made routinely available so that it can easily be identified and accessed by members of the public
- To review and update regularly the information CAT makes available under the scheme
- To produce a schedule of fees charged for access to information which is made proactively available
- To make this publication scheme available to the public

The publication scheme and the material it covers will be readily available in hard copy from the trust. It is also available on the trust website and links to it can be found on school websites. This scheme conforms to the model publication scheme approved by the Information Commissioner's Office.

Approved by the Audit and Risk Committee of the Board of Directors on: 2nd
December 2024

Review date: December 2026

Method by which information under the Publication Scheme is made available

CAT 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, information will be provided on our website. Where it is impractical to make information available on our website or when an individual does not wish to access the information by this method, CAT will indicate how information can be obtained by other means and provide it by those means.

Information will be provided in the language in which it is held or in such other language that is legally required. Where CAT is legally required to translate 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.

Schedule of charges under the Freedom of Information Publication Scheme:

Type of charge	Description	Basis of charge
Disbursement cost	A4 black and white photocopying/printing @10p per sheet	Actual cost 10p
	A4 colour photocopying/printing @50p per sheet	Actual cost 50p
	Postage	Actual cost of Royal Mail standard 2 nd class

Where the cost of postage, printing or photocopying is below £10.00, we will not make a charge.

Where the cost of postage, printing or photocopying is over £10.00, the first £10.00 will be free of charge, after that we will charge the full estimated cost of postage and copying.

Before information is produced, we shall inform the requester of the total cost. The requester may wish to refine the request in order to reduce the cost and we would be happy to discuss this.

Freedom of Information Requests

Any request for any information from CAT schools or the trust is technically a request under the FOI act, whether or not the individual making the requests mentions the FOI act. However, the ICO has stated that routine requests for information (such as a parent requesting a copy of a policy) can be dealt with outside of the provisions of the Act.

Approved by the Audit and Risk Committee of the Board of Directors on: 2nd December 2024

Review date: December 2026



In all non-routine cases, if the request is simple and the information is to be released, then the individual who received the request can release the information, but must ensure that this is done within the timescale set out below. A copy of the request and response should then be sent to the trust central team via foi@catschools.uk

All other requests should be referred in the first instance to the CAT central team via foi@catschools.uk who may allocate another individual to deal with the request. This must be done promptly, and in any event within 3 working days of receiving the request.

When considering a request under FOI, the trust must bear in mind that release under FOI is treated as a release to the general public, and so once it has been released to an individual, anyone can then access it, and you cannot restrict access when releasing by marking the information 'confidential' or 'restricted'.

Time limit for compliance with FOI requests

CAT schools must respond as soon as possible, and in any event, within 20 working days of the date of receipt of the request. For CAT schools when calculating the 20 working day deadline, a 'working day' is a school day (one in which pupils are in attendance), subject to an absolute maximum of 60 normal working days (not school days) to respond.

Procedure for dealing with a request

When a request is received that cannot be dealt with by simply providing the information, it should be referred in the first instance to the Headteacher who may allocate another individual to deal with the request. If appropriate, the request can be forwarded to the trust central team who will seek further advice from the trust's legal team.

The first stage in responding is to determine whether or not the trust 'holds' the information requested. The trust will hold the information if it exists in computer or paper format. Some requests will require the trust to take information from different sources and manipulate it in some way. Where this would take minimal effort, the trust is considered to 'hold' the information, but if the required manipulation would take significant amounts of time, the requestor should be contacted to explain that the information is not held in the manner requested, and offered the opportunity to refine their request.

The second stage is to decide whether the information can be released, or whether one of the exemptions set out in the Act applies to the information. Common exemptions that may apply include:

- Section 40 (1) - the request is for the applicant's personal data. This must be dealt with under Article 15 of the GDPR
- Section 40 (2) - compliance with the request would involve releasing third party personal data, and this would be in breach of the GDPR principles detailed in the trust's Data Protection Policy

Approved by the Audit and Risk Committee of the Board of Directors on: 2nd December 2024

Review date: December 2026

- Section 41 - information that has been sent to the trust (but not the school's own information) which is confidential
- Section 21 - information that is already publicly available, even if payment of a fee is required to access the information
- *Section 22 - information that the trust intends to publish in the future*
- *Section 43 - information that would prejudice the commercial interests of the school and/or a third party*
- *Section 38 - information which may prejudice the effective detection and prevention of crime - such as the location of CCTV cameras*
- *Section 36 - information which, in the opinion of the Chair of the Board, would prejudice the effective conduct of the trust. There is a special form for this on the ICO's website to assist with the obtaining of the Chair's opinion.*

The sections mentioned in italic are qualified exemptions. This means that even if the exemption applies to the information, you also have to carry out a public interest weighting exercise, balancing the public interest in the information being released, as against the public interest in withholding the information.

Responding to a Request

When responding to a request where the trust has withheld some or all of the information, the trust must explain why the information has been withheld, quoting the appropriate section number and explaining how the information requested fits within that exemption. If the public interest test has been applied, this also needs to be explained.

The letter should end by explaining to the requestor how they can complain - either by reference to an internal review by a governor, or by writing to the ICO.

Dealing with vexatious or repeated requests

Should an applicant make a vexatious or repeated request for identical or substantially similar information, the trust will inform the applicant in writing that they will not fulfil the request. When responding in this manner we will offer assistance to the individual by indicating why they consider the request is vexatious or repeated.

Appendix 1 - Community Academies Trust Guide to Information Available Under the Publication Scheme

Information available	How the information can be obtained	Charge
Who we are and what we do. Organisational information, structures, locations and contacts. Current information only.		
Articles of Association	Community Academies Trust website. Companies House website.	No charge
School prospectus and curriculum	Individual school websites, links to which can be found on Community Academies Trust's website.	No charge
Names of governors and the basis on which they have been appointed, along with details of how to contact them via the school.	Community Academies Trust website.	No charge
School session times and term dates	Individual school websites, links to which can be found on Community Academies Trust's website.	No charge
Location and contact information	Individual school websites, links to which can be found on Community Academies Trust's website.	No charge

Approved by the Audit and Risk Committee of the Board of Directors on: 2nd December 2024 Review date: December 2026

Information available	How the information can be obtained	Charge
What we spend and how we spend it. Financial information about projected and actual income and expenditure, procurement, contracts and financial audit. Current and previous two years as a minimum.		
Financial statements	Community Academies Trust website.	No charge.
Capital funding	Electronic version available on request to enquiries@communityacademiestrust.org	No charge Paper copies are chargeable according to the schedule
Financial audit reports	Electronic version available on request to enquiries@communityacademiestrust.org	No charge Paper copies are chargeable according to the schedule
Procurement and contracts	Community Academies Trust website.	No charge
Pay policy	Electronic version available on request to enquiries@communityacademiestrust.org	No charge Paper copies are chargeable according to the schedule
Staff allowances and expenses	Policy available on Community Academies Trust website.	No charge
	Details of expenses paid to individual senior staff members available on request by email to enquiries@communityacademiestrust.org	No charge Paper copies are chargeable according to the schedule
Staff pay and grading structures	Available on request to enquiries@communityacademiestrust.org	No charge. Paper copies are chargeable according to the schedule
	Names and positions of staff and how they can be contacted can be found on individual school websites, links to which can be found on the Community Academies Trust website.	No charge.
Governors' allowances	Community Academies Trust website.	No charge.
	Details of expenses paid to governors can be obtained by emailing enquiries@communityacademiestrust.org	No charge. Paper copies are chargeable according to the schedule

Approved by the Audit and Risk Committee of the Board of Directors on: 2nd December 2024 Review date: December 2026

Information available	How the information can be obtained	Charge
What our priorities are and how we are doing. Strategies and plans, performance indicators, audits, inspections and reviews. Current information.		
Performance data supplied to the government	Individual school websites, links to which can be found on Community Academies Trust's website.	No charge.
Latest Ofsted report	Individual school websites, links to which can be found on Community Academies Trust's website.	No charge.
Performance management information	Available on request to enquiries@communityacademiestrust.org	No charge. Paper copies are chargeable according to the schedule
The school's future plans	Available on request to enquiries@communityacademiestrust.org	No charge. Paper copies are chargeable according to the schedule
Safeguarding and child protection	Community Academies Trust website.	No charge.

Information available	How the information can be obtained	Charge
Decision making processes and records of decisions. Current and previous three years.		
Admissions policy/decisions	Individual school websites, links to which can be found on Community Academies Trust's website.	No charge.
Minutes of meetings of the governing body and its committees	Electronic copies available on request to enquiries@communityacademiestrust.org	No charge. Paper copies are chargeable according to the schedule

Approved by the Audit and Risk Committee of the Board of Directors on: 2nd December 2024 Review date: December 2026

Information available	How the information can be obtained	Charge
Our policies and procedures Current written protocols, policies and procedures for delivering our services and responsibilities. Current information.		
School policies and other documents	Individual school websites, links to which can be found on Community Academies Trust's website.	No charge.
Records management and personal data policies	Community Academies Trust website.	No charge.
Equality and diversity	Community Academies Trust website.	No charge.
Policies and procedures for the recruitment of staff	Electronic copies available on request to enquiries@communityacademiestrust.org	No charge. Paper copies are chargeable according to the schedule
Charging regimes and policies	Community Academies Trust website.	No charge.

Approved by the Audit and Risk Committee of the Board of Directors on: 2nd December 2024 Review date: December 2026

Information available	How the information can be obtained	Charge
Lists and registers		
Current information.		
Curriculum circulars and statutory instruments	Individual school websites, links to which can be found on Community Academies Trust's website.	No charge.
Disclosure logs	Electronic copies available on request to enquiries@communityacademiestrust.org	No charge. Paper copies are chargeable according to the schedule
Asset register	Electronic copies available on request to enquiries@communityacademiestrust.org	No charge. Paper copies are chargeable according to the schedule
Any information the school is currently legally required to hold in publicly available registers	Electronic copies available on request to enquiries@communityacademiestrust.org	No charge. Paper copies are chargeable according to the schedule

Information available	How the information can be obtained	Charge
The services we offer Information about the services the school provides including leaflets, guidance and newsletters.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extra curricular activities • Out of school clubs • School publications • Services for which the school is entitled to recover a fee, together with those fees • Leaflets, books and newsletters 	Individual school websites, links to which can be found on Community Academies Trust's website.	No charge.