

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT POLICY AND PUBLICATION SCHEME



**Resilience
Multi Academy
Trust**

Summary	Freedom of Information Act Policy and Publication Scheme
Responsible Person/Author:	Data Protection Officer
Applies to: (please circle/delete as appropriate)	Colleagues <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Student <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Community <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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Document Control

Date	Version	Action	Amendments
28.07.24	2	Policy amended	Policy amended following adoption of precedent
13.04.25	3	Policy amended	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rebranded • Amended Introduction • Definitions section added • Amendments to procedure for handling requests • Clarifying when we do not need to provide a response. • Specify common exemptions • Costs information expanded • Fees section expanded • Details of how we respond to a FOI request added • Providing advice and assistance section added • Vexatious requests section added • Internal review procedure amended • Amendments to the publication scheme

Contents

Document Control.....	2
Introduction.....	3
Definitions	3
Requests for Information.....	4
Procedure for handling FOIA requests.....	4
Not providing a response.....	5
Exemptions	5
Costs.....	6
Charging Fees.....	6
Responding to a FOIA request.....	7
Providing advice and assistance	7
Vexatious requests.....	8
Internal Review Procedure	8
Publication Scheme	9
Other Documents.....	11

Introduction

1. This policy is intended to clearly set out RMAT requirements under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the FOIA)
2. The FOIA places legal obligations on public authorities to provide members of the public with access to recorded information held by public authorities and to proactively publish certain information.
3. As a public authority, RMAT is obliged to comply with the requirements of the FOIA by responding to requests for information and proactively publishing information. This policy sets out how RMAT will comply with its obligations under the FOIA.
4. This policy does not cover enquiries or subject access requests under the Data Protection Act 2018 or the UK General Data Protection Regulation i.e. where the enquirer asks to see what personal information RMAT holds about them. These enquiries will be dealt with under the Data Protection and Information Governance Policy which can be found on RMAT's and Academy websites.

Definitions

5. For the purposes of this policy, the following terms have the following meanings:
 - **ICO** means the Information Commissioner's Office, the UK'S data protection regulator

- **Information** is defined in the FOIA as “any item of recorded material held by or on behalf of a public authority in paper or electronic form.”
- **Academy day** means any day on which there is a session, and students are in attendance. Academy holidays and inset or training days are excluded from the definition of ‘academy

Requests for Information

6. Any person can make a freedom of information request for information that RMAT holds. The request must be in writing (which can include email) and state the requestor’s name and correspondence address (including email address). It should clearly describe the information being requested with enough detail to enable us to identify and locate the information. We would request however that any request is made in writing as set out below.
7. Please help us to provide your information as quickly as possible by sending the request to amarham@rmat.uk or DPO@rmat.uk or by post to:

DPO, RMAT
The Featherstone Academy
Pontefract Road, Featherstone
Pontefract
West Yorkshire, WF7 5AJ
8. If anyone has any concerns or complaints about this freedom of Information policy or RMAT’s publication scheme, they should contact the Data Protection Officer on the contact details above.

Procedure for handling FOIA requests

9. If the freedom of information request is sent to RMAT seeking information from RMAT, a response will be provided as soon as possible but in any event within 20 working days (which excludes public holidays) following the date of receipt. However, where the request has been sent to an Academy within RMAT seeking information from the Academy, the Academy will seek to respond within 20 academy days (or 60 working days, if shorter) for information provided under FOIA.
10. When responding to the FOIA request, RMAT must:
 - Confirm whether the information requested is held by RMAT or the academy.
 - Provide a copy of the information requested (subject to exemptions set out below)
 - Provide details of the internal review procedure
 - Explain the right to make a complaint to the ICO

Not providing a response

11. There are certain circumstances where RMA or one of its academies will not be required to provide a response to a FOIA request:
- RMA or the academy reasonable requires further information to clarify the request and has informed the requester of the need for clarification but has not received a response.
 - The information is no longer readily available as it is contained in files that have been placed in archive storage, or it is difficult to access for similar reasons.
 - The information requested is exempt from disclosure under section 2 of the FOIA
 - The cost of providing the information exceeds the appropriate limit
 - The request is vexatious
 - The request is a repeated request from the same person.
 - A fee notice has not been paid.

Exemptions

12. Where the information requested is held by RMA, RMA or the Academy will need to consider whether the information can be released or whether the disclosure is exempt under the FOIA.
13. Common exemptions that may be applicable to RMA or the Academy include:
- Section 21 – The information requested is already publicly available.
 - Section 22 – The information requested is information which RMA/the Academy intends to publish at a later date.
 - Section 31 – The information requested could prejudice the effective detection and prevention of crime.
 - Section 36 – The information requested is information which in the opinion of the Chair of the Board of Trustees would prejudice the effective conduct of RMA or its academies.
 - Section 38 – The information that could prejudice the physical health, mental health or safety of an individual.
 - Section 40(1) – The request is for the requester’s personal data. This request should be dealt with as a ‘subject access request’ in accordance with RMA’s Data Protection and Information Governance Policy.

- Section 40(2) – The information requested contains personal data of a third party and the disclosure would breach one of the data protection principles.
 - Section 41 – The information requested is information which has been provided to RMA or the Academy in confidence.
14. Some of the above exemptions are ‘qualified exemptions. This means that RMA must consider whether there is an overarching public interest in disclosing the information, even if an exemption applies.
15. We will inform you if one or more of these apply in any decision notice.

Costs

16. RMA or its academies is not obliged to provide information where complying with the FOIA request exceeds the cost limit set out by Regulation 4 of the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004. The cost limit is currently set at £450, which is equivalent to 24 staff hours.
17. When estimating how long it will take to comply with a FOIA request, RMA and its academies can only consider the following activities:
- Determining whether we hold the information.
 - Finding the requested information, or records containing the information.
 - Retrieving the information or records; and
 - Extracting the requested information from records.
18. When estimating the amount of time, it will take to comply with a FOIA request, RMA or its academies cannot consider the time needed to decide whether exemptions apply, to redact exempt information, or to carry out the public interest test.
19. Where the costs and resources of removing or redacting exempt information are likely to place a disproportionate burden on staff, RMA may consider whether the request is vexatious.
20. Where the cost limit applies, we will explain how to refine the request to bring it within the cost limit and why the costs limit has been exceeded.

Charging Fees

21. In certain circumstances, RMA and its academies are permitted to charge a fee for certain costs in complying with a request. This includes charging for communication costs such as photocopying, printing and postage.

22. Where we decide to charge a fee, we will send notice to the requester within 20 academy days (or 60 working days if this is shorter) giving the requester notice that a fee is to be charged for RMAT/its academies compliance with the request.
23. Where we charge a fee, we **do not** need to comply with the request until the fee is paid.
24. Details of our charging policy are set out in Table 1.

Table 1: Charging Policy

Type of Charge	Charge	Basis of Charge
Disbursement Costs	Black and White Photocopying/Printing	10p per sheet
	Colour Photocopying/Printing	15p per sheet
	Other items	Actual cost
	Postage	Actual cost of Royal Mail 2 nd Class postage
Prescribed Costs	Finding, sorting and editing of materials	Charged in full for requests more than £450 at a standard rate of £25 per hour

Responding to a FOIA request

25. RMAT or its academies will respond to a FOIA request within 20 school days (or 60 working days if this is shorter) by:
- Confirming whether RMAT or its academy holds the information requested.
 - Providing a copy of the information held by RMAT or its academy unless an exemption applies.
 - Explaining why any information has been withheld or redacted including explaining how the information requested falls within the exemption relied upon.
 - Explaining if the public interest test has been applied, if it has.
 - Providing details of the right to an internal review and
 - Providing details of the right to make a complaint to the ICO.
26. If the requester asks for information to be provided in a specified format, RMAT/the Academy will provide a response in that format where it is reasonable to do so.

Providing advice and assistance

27. The FOIA places obligations on RMAT and its academies to provide advice and assistance to individuals who make or are thinking of making a FOIA request.

28. RMAT or its academies may offer advice and assistance in the following circumstances:
- Where we have reason to believe the requester has not provided their real name, we will request it.
 - Where the request is ambiguous, we will seek clarification on the request by asking for further information to help identify and locate the information requested.
 - Where the request would exceed the appropriate limit, we will provide the requester with advice and assistance to help them reframe the request in a way which would bring it within the appropriate limit.
 - Where the information requested is available elsewhere, we will direct the requester of where to access the information.
29. RMAT or its academies are not obliged to provide advice and assistance where the request is vexatious or repeated.

Vexatious requests

30. Requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis to determine whether they are vexatious. Considerations will include:
- The burden on RMAT or its academies.
 - The motive of the requester.
 - The value or serious purpose of the request; and
 - Any harassment or distress of and to staff.
31. Where a request is considered to be vexatious, RMAT or its academies will notify the requester that the request is being refused and inform the requester of their right to request an internal review and make a complaint to the ICO. There may be certain circumstances where it would not be appropriate to provide a full explanation of the reasons why the request is being refused if the response would only encourage follow up requests or correspondence.

Internal Review Procedure

32. If a requester is unhappy about the way in which RMAT or its academies has handled their request, they are able to request an internal review. All responses to FOIA requests should provide the requester with details of how to request an internal review.
33. Request for an internal review should be submitted within 20 academy days of receipt of the Academy's response to the FOIA request.

34. The Data Protection Officer will usually conduct the internal review unless they are unavailable. If the Data Protection Officer is unavailable, another member of staff will be appointed to conduct the internal review.
35. The internal review process will review the way in which the request was dealt with and will either uphold or overturn the original decision. The requester will be notified of the outcome within 20 academy days of receipt of the request for an internal review. If it becomes clear at any stage of the internal review process that RMAT or its academies will be unable to provide a response within this period, it should notify the requester of the delay.
36. If you are not satisfied with any assistance provided or are not satisfied with the outcome of the internal review process or the way we have dealt with your request, a complaint can be made to the ICO by contacting Information Commissioners Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5A, telephone: 0303 123 1113, website: www.ico.org.uk

Publication Scheme

37. RMAT is required to adopt and maintain a publication scheme which specifies the information which it will publish on RMAT's or its academy websites and whether the information will be available free of charge or there is a fee to access the information.
38. If you require a paper version of any information set out in this publication scheme please contact the Data Protection Officer by email amarham@rmat.uk or DPO@rmat.uk or by post to:

DPO, RMAT
The Featherstone Academy
Pontefract Road, Featherstone
Pontefract
West Yorkshire, WF7 5AJ

Table 2: Class 1 - Who we are and what we do (Applies to current information only)

Information to be Published	How the Information can be obtained
Academy Prospectus (If Any)	Academy Website
Academy session times and term dates	Academy Website
Articles of Association	RMAT Website/Companies House Website
Contact details for the Chief Executive and Chair of the RMAT Board	RMAT Website
Contact details for the Academy Principal and Local Review Board	Academy Website
Ethos and Values	RMAT Website
Gender Pay Gap reporting	RMAT Website
Location and contact information	Academy Website
Staffing Structure	Hard Copy
Who's who in RMAT and its Academies.	RMAT Website / Academy Websites

Information to be Published	How the Information can be obtained
Who's who on the RMAT Board and the basis of their appointment	RMAT Website

Table 1: Class 2 - What we spend and how we spend it (current and previous 2 financial years)

Information to be Published	How the Information can be obtained
Academy session times and term dates – Details of academy times, holidays and term dates	Academy Website
Annual financial statements including capital funding and income generation	RMAT Website
Executive pay – Details of the number of employees whose salary and related benefits exceeded £100,000 during the previous academic year	RMAT Website
PE and Sport Premium – Details of the amount of premium received, a breakdown of how it will be spent, impact and how improvement will be sustained.	Primary Academy Websites
Procurement and Contracts	Hardcopy
Pupil Premium Strategy – Details of how the Academy is spending its pupil premium funding and education outcomes disadvantaged students are achieving.	Academy website
Staff and Trustee expenses – Expenses, Gifts and Hospitality Policy	Hardcopy

Table 2: Class 3 - What our priorities are and how we are doing. (Current information as a minimum)

Information to be Published	How the Information can be obtained
Examination results	Academy website/ Government website
Future plans – Details of any major proposals on future plans or consultations	RMAT website/ Academy website
Latest Ofsted report	Academy website/ Ofsted website
SEND Information report – Details of report prepared in accordance with section 69 of the Children and Families Act 2014	Academy website

Table 3: Class 4 - How we make decisions (current and previous 3 years)

Information to be Published	How the Information can be obtained
Admissions Policy	Academy Website
Agendas of meetings of the RMAT Board or its committees	Hardcopy
Minutes of meetings (as above). This will exclude information that is properly regarded as private to the meetings	Hardcopy
RMAT Board and its Committees Terms of Reference	Hard copy

Table 4: Class 5 - Our policies and procedures (Applies to current information only)

Information to be Published	How the Information can be obtained
Policies including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access Provider Policy (Careers Programme) • Charging and Remissions Policy • Complaints Policy • Data Protection and Information Governance Policy • Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Policy • Freedom of Information Act Policy and Publication Scheme • Health and Safety Policy • Home School Agreement • Positive Discipline (Behaviour) Policy • Relationships and Sex Education Policy • Remote Education Policy • Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy • Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy • Uniform Policy 	Academy Website

Table 5: Class 6 - Lists and Registers (Applies to current information only)

Information to be Published	How the information can be obtained
Information RMAT is legally required to maintain in lists and registers.	Hardcopy available on request subject to certain exemptions under the FOIA 2000

Table 6: Class 7 - The services we offer

Information to be Published	How the information can be obtained
Academy publications	Hardcopy
Extra-curricular activities and out of school clubs	Hardcopy
Leaflets, Books and newsletters	Hardcopy
Services for which the academy is entitled to recover a fee together with the details of those fees	Hardcopy

Other Documents

39. This policy should be read in conjunction with the following RMAT Policies:

- Data Protection and Information Governance Policy and
- Records Management Policy