



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION Policy

Updated:	December 2015
Approved by:	LeAF Studio Local Governing Board
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Scheduled review date:	December 2018

Safeguarding and protecting our students and young people from harm is central to The LeAF Studio's ethos. We want to make sure that students and young people feel safe and cared for.

Learning and Achievement Federation

The Freedom of Information Act

For the purposes of this policy Elm Academy, Oak Academy and LeAF Studio will be referred to as LeAF.

RATIONALE

With effect from 1 January 2005 the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (which is referred to as FOIA in the rest of this document) came fully into force. LeAF is committed to openness and is clear and proactive about the information it makes public, but also recognises the need to protect sensitive information in certain circumstances. Even where certain exemptions apply, information will still be released if it is in the public interest to do so.

PURPOSE

LeAF is duty bound to provide advice and assistance to anyone requesting information. Requests can be made under either (a) Data Protection Enquiry (DPA), (b) Environmental Information Regulations Enquiry (EIR) or (c) Freedom of Information Enquiry (FOI). The scheme gives clear guidance to ensure that all employees at LeAF are able to comply with requests for information under FOI. To do this we must produce a publication scheme, setting out:

1. The classes of information which we publish or intend to publish;
2. The manner in which the information will be published; and
3. Whether the information is available free of charge or with payment.

The scheme covers information already published and information which is to be published in the future. All information in our publication scheme is either available on our website to download and print off or 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 publication scheme guides you to information which we currently publish (or have recently published) or which we will publish in the future. This is split into categories of information known as 'classes'. These are contained in section headed "Classes of Information Currently Published" in this scheme. The classes of information that we undertake to make available are organised into four broad topic areas:

1. Prospectuses – information published in each of the LeAF prospectuses.
2. Governors' Documents – information on governing body documents.
3. Students & Curriculum – information about policies that relate to students and LeAF curriculum.
4. Policies and other information related to LeAF - information about policies that relate to LeAF in general.

LeAF Prospectus and Policy documents held by LeAF can be viewed on the relevant LeAF website:

www.leaf.bournemouth.sch.uk

HOW TO REQUEST INFORMATION

1. If you require a paper version of any of the documents within the scheme, please contact LeAF by letter or email to Freedom of Information Officer, Duck Lane, Bournemouth, BH11 9JN (office@leaf.bournemouth.sch.uk). At the time of amending this policy, the Freedom of Information Officer is the Executive Principal.

To help process your request quickly, please clearly mark any correspondence "PUBLICATION SCHEME REQUEST" (in CAPITALS)

Any requests for Freedom of Information paperwork will be charged at cost for reprographics, paper and postage.

2. If the information you are looking for is not available via the scheme and is not on our website, you can still contact LeAF. Requests should be made in writing addressed to Freedom of Information Officer, Executive Principal's PA or by email to office@leaf.bournemouth.sch.uk, and include the enquirer's name and correspondence address with a description of the information requested.
3. On receipt of a request the designated person will:
 - Decide whether the request is a request under DPA, EIR or FOI
 - Decide whether LeAF holds the information or whether the request should be transferred to another body if the information is not held by LeAF
 - Provide the information if it has already been made public
 - Consider whether a third party's interests might be affected by disclosure and if so consult them
 - Consider whether any exemptions apply and whether they are absolute or qualified
 - Carry out a public interest test to decide if applying the qualified exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information
 - Consider whether the request is vexatious or repeated

2. Requests will be dealt with within twenty days excluding school holidays.

3. The FOI Act covers all information held and is retrospective.

4. The enquirer is entitled to be told whether LeAF holds the information (the duty to confirm or deny) except where certain exemptions apply.

5. The enquirer will be informed if the information is not held.

6. All information held by LeAF must be recorded legibly.

7. LeAF maintains well managed records and management information to aid LeAF meet requests.

8. LeAF will not wilfully conceal damage or destroy information in order to avoid answering an enquiry.

9. Expressions of dissatisfaction will be handled through LeAF's existing complaints procedure.

10. LeAF will maintain records in accordance with the Records Management Society of Great Britain – Local Government Group) Retention Guidelines for Schools.

11. LeAF will charge applicants a fee in accordance with the FOI Fees Regulations and may include disbursements for photocopying, postage and packaging and costs directly incurred as a result of viewing information. Information published on our website is free, although you may incur costs from your Internet Service Provider. If you do not have internet access, you can access our website using a local library or an Internet café.
12. Straightforward enquiries and single copies of information covered by this publication are provided free unless stated otherwise in section 13. If your request means that we have to do a lot of photocopying or printing, or pay a large postage charge, or is for a priced item such as some printed publications or videos we will let you know the cost before fulfilling your request. Where there is a charge this will be indicated by a £ sign in the description box. Where enquiries require further consideration or a written response, a charge will be made; LeAF will send the enquirer a fees notice, LeAF will not comply with the request until the fee has been paid.
13. LeAF will maintain a record of requests received, responded to and denied. The Governors will review the register annually.
14. If the request is made for a document that contains exempt personal information, LeAF will ensure that the personal information is removed by applying the redaction procedure.

RECORD RETENTION

We have a School Record Retention Document based on the guidelines issued by the Records Society of Great Britain.

FEEDBACK AND COMPLAINTS

We welcome any comments or suggestions you may have about the scheme. If you want to make any comments about this publication scheme or if you require further assistance or wish to make a complaint then initially this should be addressed to the Human Resources Manager via LeAF. If you are not satisfied with the assistance that you get or if we have not been able to resolve your complaint and you feel that a formal complaint needs to be made then this should be addressed to the Information Commissioner's Office. This is the organisation that ensures compliance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and that deals with formal complaints. They can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF or
Enquiry/Information Line: 01625 545 700
E Mail: publications@ic-foi.demon.co.uk
Website: www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk

CONCLUSION

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the DfE Freedom of Information Act 2000. Adherence to these guidelines will ensure that the governing body comply with the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/36/contents>