TOWERS SCHOOL
AND SIXTH FORM CENTRE

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION POLICY

Date Reviewed: May 2026
Next Review: May 2029
SLT Responsibility: Rob Gaygan
Approved By: Principal

THE TOWERS SCHOOL & SIXTH FORM CENTRE

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION POLICY – changes from previous versions

Audit Log		
Section of policy	**Update**	**Date**
All	None	May 2026

THE TOWERS SCHOOL & SIXTH FORM CENTRE

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION POLICY

The Towers School & Sixth Form Centre takes its responsibilities with regard to the management of the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 very seriously. This document provides the policy framework through which this effective management can be achieved and audited. It covers:

1. Scope of the policy
2. Responsibilities
3. Relationship with existing policies
4. Available Guidance
5. The Trust's Publication Scheme
6. Specific Requests for Information
7. Charges
8. Complaints
9. Exemption
10. Contacts

1. Scope of the Policy

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's Academies is made available to the public as a matter of course through a Publication Scheme;
- other information not included in the Publication Scheme is readily available on request and such a request is dealt with in a timely manner;
- and in cases where information is covered by an exemption, consideration is given as to whether or not the information should be released.

2. Responsibilities

The Trust recognises its corporate responsibility under the Act to provide a general right of access to information held. The person with overall responsibility for this policy is the Vice Principal - R.Gaygan.

The Data Protection Officer is responsible for drawing up guidance on freedom of information and promoting compliance with this policy in such a way as to ensure the easy, appropriate and timely retrieval of information.

Wherever possible, members of staff should receive an introductory briefing on the Freedom of Information Act procedures.

3. Relationship with existing policies

This policy has been formulated within the context of the following Trust and Academy documents:

- Data Protection Policy

4. Available Guidance

Guidance on the procedures necessary to comply with this Policy is available from the Data Protection Officer.

5. The Trust's Publication Scheme

The Trust's Publication Scheme is available from the academy on request. The Publication Scheme will specify:

- what information the Trust will make routinely available to the public as a matter of course;
- how it will do so, and,
- whether or not this information will be made available free of charge or on payment of a fee

6. Specific Requests for Information

Information not already made available in the Trust's Publication Scheme will be accessible from January 2011 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, and
- the right to receive the information (subject to exemptions)

These rights can be exercised by anyone – natural or legal persons, worldwide.

These specific requests for information not listed in the publication scheme will be dealt with by the Data Protection Officer.

Any request must be made in a permanent form (for example in writing or by email) and a charge may be made for dealing with any request. Requestors will not be entitled to information to which any of the exemptions in the Act applies.

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 Data Protection Officer.

The Trust must 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 is extended by up to 3 months until the fee is paid.

7. Charges

Unless otherwise specified information made available through the Trust's Publication Scheme will be free of charge.

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.

8. Complaints

The Data Protection Officer will co-ordinate any complaints received in respect of this policy.

The complaint should be addressed to the Data Protection Officer in the first instance. The complaint will be acknowledged immediately and every reasonable effort will be made to offer a more comprehensive reply within 21 days.

If the applicant is not satisfied with the reply then they should inform the Data Protection Officer within 21 days. The complaint will then be forwarded to the Principal and will be dealt with as appropriate.

If applicants are dissatisfied with the outcome of the Complaints Procedure they may seek an independent review from the Information Commissioner. Requests for review by the Information Commissioner should be made in writing to:

The Information Commissioner
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF
Tel. 01625-545-700 Fax. 01625-545-510

9. Exemptions under the Act

There are 23 exemptions under the Act, some exemptions where the public interest test applies, and others which are absolute exemptions. The full list of exemptions can be found at Appendix 1 of this policy.

The Trust may decide that some information it holds could be regarded as exempt information under the Act. Where a request is made for information which includes exemptions the Trust will consider the prejudice test and the public interest test, and may in some circumstances withhold the requested information.

10. Contacts

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Kennington
Ashford
TN24 9AL

FOI - ABSOLUTE EXEMPTIONS

Exemptions where the public interest test does not apply:

Section 21 - Information accessible by other means
Section 23 - National Security - Information supplied by, or relating to, bodies dealing with security matters (a certificate signed by a Minister of the Crown is conclusive proof that the exemption is justified. There is a separate appeals mechanism against such certificates)
Section 32 - Court Records
Section 34 - Parliamentary Privilege - a certificate signed by the Speaker of the House, in respect of the House of Commons, or by the Clerk of the Parliament, in respect of the House of Lords is conclusive proof that the exemption is justified.
Section 36 - Effective Conduct of Public Affairs - so far as relating to information held by the House of Commons or the House of Lords
Section 40: Personal Information - where the applicant is the subject of the information. The applicant already has the right of ‘subject access' under the Data Protection Act 1998; where the information concerns a third party and disclosure would breach one of the data protection principles
Section 41 - Information provided 'In Confidence'
Section 44 - Prohibitions on disclosure - where a disclosure is prohibited by an enactment or would constitute contempt of court.

FOI - QUALIFIED EXEMPTIONS

Exemptions where the public interest test applies:

Section 22: Information Intended For Future Publication
Section 24: National security (other than information supplied by or relating to named security organisations, where the duty to consider disclosure in the public interest does not apply)
Section 26: Defence
Section 27: International relations
Section 28: Relations within the United Kingdom Section
29: UK Economic Interests
Section 30: Investigations And Proceedings Conducted By Public Authorities
Section 31: Law Enforcement
Section 33: Audit Functions Section
35: Formulation of government policy and Ministerial Communications
Section 36: Prejudice to effective conduct of public affairs (except information held by the House of Commons or the House of Lords)
Section 37: Communications with Her Majesty, the Royal Family or concerning honours
Section 38: Health And Safety
Section 39: Environmental Information - as this can be accessed through the Environmental Information Regulations
Section 40: Personal information relating to a third party access request
Section 42: Legal Professional Privilege
Section 43: Commercial Interests