FREEDOM OF INFORMATION POLICY AND PUBLICATION SCHEME

Blessed Edward Bamber Catholic Multi Academy Trust

VERSION: 1.0

ADOPTED: AUTUMN TERM 25

NEXT REVISION: AUTUMN TERM 27

Blessed Edward Bamber
Catholic Multi Academy Trust

Corinthians 4:2

Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.

Version Control

Date of last review	AUTUMN TERM 2025
Date of next review	AUTUMN TERM 2027
Review period	EVERY 2 YEARS
Policy Status	
Owner	
Approver	
Version	1.0

Previous versions

Version	Author	Date	Changes
1.0		Autumn 25	Created

This is a Trust-Wide Policy which applies to all academies within the Trust

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Freedom of Information Policy

Introduction

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 gives individuals the right to access official information from public bodies. Under the Act, any person has a legal right to ask for access to information held by the trust. They are entitled to be told whether the trust holds the information, and to receive a copy, subject to certain exemptions.

This policy should be reviewed in conjunction with the trust's Data Protection policy.

Requests for information

We will only accept a request for information if it meets the following criteria:

- It is in writing (this includes requests sent to our social media accounts)
- It states the name of the applicant
- It adequately describes the information requested

The trust will publish details of its procedures for dealing with requests for information within this policy, which includes the following:

- A contact address and email address
- A telephone number
- A named individual to assist applicants with their requests

Any requests will be completed no later than 20 school days, or 60 working days if this is shorter, from receipt of the request.
We will not comply where:

- We require further information to meet a freedom of information request, have informed the applicant of this requirement, but was not subsequently supplied with that further information.
- The information 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.
- A request for information is exempt under section 2 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.
- The cost of providing the information exceeds the appropriate limit.
- The request is vexatious.
- The request is a repeated request from the same person made within 60 consecutive working days of the initial one.
- A fee notice was not honoured.
- The requested information is not held by the school for the purposes of the school's business.

Where information is, or is thought to be, exempt, we will, within 20 school days, give notice to the applicant which:

- States that fact
- Specifies the exemption in question

If information falls within scope of a qualified exemption and the trust needs additional time to consider the

public interest test, the school may extend the deadline. In most cases, the extension will exceed no more than a further 20 school days; however, the actual length of the extension will be decided on a case-by-case basis.

Where a public interest test extension is required, the trust will write to the applicant to inform them of this, stating the following information:

- Which exemption(s) the extension relies on and why
- A revised deadline for when the applicant will receive their response
- Where a deadline has to be further extended, we will write to the applicant again.
- Requests for information that is not recorded by the school (e.g. requests for explanations, clarification of policy and comments on the school's business) will not be considered valid requests. In these cases, the applicant will be provided with an explanation of why their request will not be treated under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the school will respond to the applicant through other channels as appropriate.

The information provided to the applicant will be in the format that they have requested, where possible. Where it is not possible to provide the information in the requested format, we will assist the applicant by discussing alternative formats in which it can be provided.

The information provided will also be in the language in which it is held, or another language that is legally required.

If, under relevant disability and discrimination regulations, we are legally obliged to provide the information in other forms and formats, we will do so.

In some cases, a request may be dealt with under more than one access regime, e.g. if the request involves both information about the school and personal information, it will be dealt with under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Staff are made aware that it is a criminal offence to alter, deface, block, erase, destroy or conceal any information held with the intention of preventing disclosure following a request.

Charging fees and cost limits

We will not comply with any freedom of information request that exceeds the statutorily imposed appropriate limit of £450.
When determining whether the cost of complying with a Freedom of Information request is within the appropriate limit, we will take account only of the costs we reasonably expect to incur in relation to:

- Determining whether it holds the information.
- Locating the information, or a document which may contain the information.
- Retrieving the information, or a document which may contain the information.
- Extracting the information from a document containing it.
- Costs related to the time spent by any person undertaking any of the activities are to be estimated at a rate of £25 per person per hour.

We are not required to search for information in scope of a request until it is within the cost limit.

If responding to one part of a request would exceed the cost limit, we do not have to respond to any other parts of the request.

Where multiple requests for information are made within 60 consecutive working days of each other, either by a single person or by different persons who appear to be acting in concert, the estimated cost of complying with any of the requests is to be taken to be the total costs of complying with all of them.

We may, within 20 school days, give an applicant who has requested information from the school, a written notice stating that a fee is to be charged for the school's compliance.

Charges may be made for disbursements, such as the following:

- Production expenses, e.g. printing and photocopying
- Transmission costs, e.g. postage
- Complying with the applicant's preferences about the format in which they would like to receive the information, e.g. scanning to a CD

Fees charged will not exceed the total cost to the school of:

- Informing the person making the request whether we hold the information.
- Communicating the information to the person making the request.

Where a fee is to be charged, we will not comply unless the requested fee is paid within a period of three months, beginning with the day on which the fees notice is given to the applicant.

Providing advice and assistance

We will provide assistance for each individual on a case-by-case basis; examples of how we will provide assistance include the following:

- Informing an applicant of their rights under the Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Assisting an individual in the focus of their request, e.g. by advising of the types of information available within the requested category
- Advising an applicant if information is available elsewhere and how to access this information
- Keeping an applicant informed on the progress of their request

Where we wish to ask a different public authority to deal with a request by transferring it to them, this will only be done with the agreement of the applicant.

In order to provide assistance as outlined above, we will engage in the following good practice procedures:

- Make early contact with an individual and keep them informed of the process of their request.
- Accurately record and document all correspondence concerning the clarification and handling of any request.
- Give consideration to the most appropriate means of contacting the applicant, taking into account their individual circumstances.
- Discuss with the applicant whether they would prefer to receive the information in an alternative format, in cases where it is not possible to provide the information requested in the manner originally specified.
- Remain prepared to assist an applicant who has had their request denied due to an exemption.

We will give particular consideration to what level of assistance is required for an applicant who has difficulty submitting a written request. In circumstances where an applicant has difficulty submitting a written request, the school will:

- Make a note of the application over the telephone and then send the note to the applicant to confirm and return – the statutory time limit for a reply would begin here.
- Direct the individual to a different agency that may be able to assist with framing their request.

Where an applicant's request has been refused either because the information is accessible by other means, or the information is intended for future publication or research, we will, as a matter of good practice, will provide advice and assistance.

We will advise the applicant how and where information can be obtained, if it is accessible by other means.

Where there is an intention to publish the information in the future, we will advise the applicant of when this publication is expected.

If the request is not clear, we will ask for more detail from the applicant in order to identify and locate the relevant information, before providing further advice and assistance.

If we believe the applicant has not provided their real name, we will inform the applicant that the request will not be responded to until further information is received from the applicant.

If we are able to clearly identify the elements of a request, it will respond following usual procedures and will provide advice and assistance for the remainder of the request.

If any additional clarification is needed for the remainder of a request, the school will ensure there is no delay in asking for further information. Applicants are given two months to provide any requested clarification. If an applicant decides not to follow our advice and assistance and fails to provide clarification, we are under no obligation to contact the applicant again.

If we are under any doubt that the applicant did not receive the advice and assistance, we will re-issue it.

We are not required to provide assistance where an applicant's request is vexatious or repeated, as defined under section 14 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Applicants will also be informed of their right to complain to the ICO if they are still dissatisfied following the outcome of their request.

Freedom of Information Publication Scheme

Introduction

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 applies to Blessed Edward Bamber Catholic Multi Academy Trust. 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.

The school has adapted the Model Publication Scheme that has been prepared and approved by the Information Commissioners Office (ICO).

The scheme commits the school:

- 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 that is held by the trust and falls within the classifications below.
- 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 Blessed Edward Bamber Catholic Multi Academy 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.

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 function of the trust.

The service we offer

Advice and guidance, booklets and leaflets 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 the Trust, information will be provided on our trust 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 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 packing
- the costs directly incurred because 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 published schedule or schedules of fees which is readily available to the public.

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 the provision of the information.

Written Requests

Information held by the Trust 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.

Contact Details

If you require a paper version of any information, or want to ask whether information is available, please contact the trust reception by telephone, email, or letter. Contact details are set out below or you can visit the trust website.

Website: https://bebcmat.co.uk
Tel: 01253203260
Email: admin@bebcmat.co.uk
Address: 154 High Cross Road, Poulton-le-Fylde, FY6 8DA

To help us process requests quickly, any correspondence should be clearly marked “PUBLICATION SCHEME REQUEST”.

Monitoring, evaluation, and review

The trustee board will review this policy at least every two years and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the trust.

Annex 1: Guide to information available from the Trust under the Model Publication Scheme

Information to be published	How the information can be obtained (hard copy and/or website)	Cost
Class 1 – Who we are and what we do *Organisational information, structures, locations, and contacts* *This will be current information only*		
Who is in the trust	Website	Free of charge
Who is who on the Trustee Board and the basis of their appointment	Website	Free of charge
Instrument of Government	Hard copy	Schedule of charges
Contact details for the Principal and for the Trustee Board (named contacts where possible with telephone number and Email address (if used))	Website	Free of charge
Academy prospectus	Website	Free of charge
Annual Review	Website	Free of charge
Staffing structure	Hard copy	Schedule of charges
Academy sessions times and term dates	Website	No charge
Information to be published	**How the information can be obtained (hard copy and/or website)**	**Cost**
Class 2 – What we spend and how we spend it *Financial information relating to projected and actual income and expenditure, procurement, contracts, and financial audit* *Current and previous financial year as a minimum*		
Annual budget plan and financial statements	Hard copy	Schedule of charges
Capitalised funding	Hard copy	Schedule of charges
Additional funding	Hard copy	Schedule of charges
Procurement and projects	Hard copy	Schedule of charges
Pay policy	Hard copy	Schedule of charges
Staffing and grading structure	Hard copy	Schedule of charges
Trustees' allowances	Hard copy	Schedule of charges
Information to be published	**How the information can be obtained (hard copy and/or website)**	**Cost**
Class 3 – what our priorities are and how we are doing *Strategies and plans, performance indicators, auditors, audits, inspections, and reviews* *Current information as a minimum*		
Academy profiles Government supplied performance data The latest Ofsted report – Summary and Full Report	Hard copy Website	Schedule of charges Free of charge
Performance Management policy and	Hard copy	Schedule of charges

procedures adopted by the Trustee Board		
Academy Improvement Plans	Hard copy	Schedule of charges
Safeguarding policies and procedures	Website	Free of charge
Information to be published	**How the information can be obtained (hard copy and/or website)**	**Cost**
Class 4 – How we make decisions *Decision making processes and records of decisions* *Current and previous three years as a minimum*		
Admissions Policy/decisions (not individual admission decisions)	Website	Free of charge
Agendas of meetings of the governing Board and (if held) its sub-committees	Hard copy	Schedule of charges
Minutes of meeting (as above) – NB this will exclude information that is properly regarded as private to the meetings	Hard copy	Schedule of charges
Information to be published	**How the information can be obtained (hard copy and/or website)**	**Cost**
Class 5 – Our policies and procedures *Current written protocols, policies, and procedures for delivering our services and responsibilities* *Current information only*		
Trust policies including: Charging and remissions policy Health and Safety Staff conduct policy Discipline and grievance policies Equality and diversity (including equal opportunities) policies Staff recruitment policies	 Website Website Website Website Website Website Website	 Free of charge Free of charge Free of charge Free of charge Free of charge Free of charge Free of charge
Pupil and curriculum policies, including: Home-school agreement Curriculum Sex education Special education needs Accessibility Race equality Collective worship Careers education Pupil discipline	 Website Website Website Website Website Website Website Website Website	 Free of charge Free of charge Free of charge Free of charge Free of charge Free of charge Free of charge Free of charge Free of charge
Records management and personal data policies, including: Information security policies Records retention Data protection policies	 Website Website Website	 Free of charge Free of charge Free of charge
Charging regimes and policies	Website	Free of charge

This should include details of any statutory charging regimes. Charging policies should include charges made for information routinely published. They should clearly state what costs are to be recovered, the basis on which they are made and how they are calculated.		
Information to be published	**How the information can be obtained (hard copy and/or website)**	**Cost**
Class 6 – Lists and registers *Currently maintained lists and registers only*		
Curriculum circulars and statutory instruments	Hard copy	Schedule of charges
Disclosure logs	Hard copy	Schedule of charges
Asset register	Hard copy	Schedule of charges
Any information the school is currently legally required to hold in publicly available registers THIS DOES NOT INCLUDE THE ATTENDANCE REGISTER	Hard copy	Schedule of charges
Information to be published	**How the information can be obtained (hard copy and/or website)**	**Cost**
Class 7 – The service we offer *Information about the service we offer, including leaflets, guidance and newsletters produced for the public and businesses* *Current information only*		
Extra-curricular activities	Website	Free of charge
Out of academy clubs	Website	Free of charge
Academy publications	Website	Free of charge
Services for which the school is entitled to recover a fee, together with those fees	Website	Free of charge
Leaflets books and newsletters	Website	Free of charge

Schedule of Charges

This describes how the charges have been arrived at and should be published as part of the guide

Type of charge	Description	Basis of charge
Disbursement costs	Photocopying/printing @ 10p per A4 sheet (black and white)	Actual cost
	Photocopying/printing @ 30p per sheet A4 (colour)	Actual cost
	Postage	Actual cost of Royal Mail standard 2nd class
Statutory Fee		In accordance with relevant legislation