

Freedom of Information Policy

Policy Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

This policy is effective for all academies within The Mead Educational Trust, the Teaching School, the SCITT and all other activities under the control of the Trust and reporting to the Trust Board.

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Revision History:

Version	Date	Author	Summary of Changes:
1.0	August 2017	CJO	New policy.
2.0	November 2018	CBR	Updated references to TMET and contact details.
3.0	June 2020	EMA	The addition of 3. Freedom of Information Publication Scheme, to include the schemes adopted by the Trust and in place at each academy and updated contact details for FOI requests.

Freedom of Information Policy

1. Introduction

TMET, along with all other public authorities, must comply with the Freedom of Information Act. The Act was created as an initiative to increase openness and transparency in Government, with the Freedom of Information Act passed on 30 November 2000.

The Act obliges organisations covered by it to publish certain information about their activities and, additionally, to make any other information (with a number of statutory exceptions) available upon request.

2. Scope

This policy is intended to cover all records created in the course of the business of TMET. This includes email messages and other electronic records.

This policy applies to all TMET employees, including temporary, casual or agency staff and contractors, consultants and suppliers working for, or on behalf of, TMET.

3. Freedom of Information Publication Scheme

The Freedom of Information Act requires every public authority to have a publication scheme, which is approved by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), and to publish information covered by the scheme.

The scheme must set out the public authority's commitment to make certain classes of information routinely available, such as policies and procedures, minutes of meetings, annual reports and financial information.

To help schools do this the ICO has developed a model publication scheme. The Trust has adopted the ICO version designed for academies. Each academy has an individually tailored publication scheme published on their website, alongside the [ICO model publication scheme guidance](#) as required.

The publication schemes are monitored annually by the Trust.

4. Requesting information

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 provides public access to information held by public authorities. It does this in two ways:

- public authorities are obliged to publish certain information about their activities; and
- members of the public are entitled to request information from public authorities.

Under the second provision of the Act, the right to request information, anyone may make a request in writing for recorded information held by TMET or its academies. A request for information not included already published must be made in writing to:

Email:

info@tmet.uk

Post:

Emma Matthews
TMET
The Mead Centre
343 Gipsy Lane
Leicester
LE4 7DD

Requests for information will be met within **20 working days** of receipt. Requests for information that require TMET to complete a public interest test will be met within **40 working days** of receipt.

5. Transferring requests for information

Should a request for information relate to Leicester City Council, TMET will acknowledge to the requester that the request relates to Leicester City Council and refer the requester to Leicester City Council, who will process this request for information, within **10 working days** of receipt.

6. Subject access requests

Please refer to TMET's Subject Access Request Procedure.

7. Exemptions

The Freedom of Information Act contains 23 exemptions whereby information can be withheld. TMET may choose to withhold information if it falls within the scope of one or more of these exemptions. Where a request is made for information that includes exemptions, TMET will apply a public interest test before deciding whether to disclose the information.

Where information is withheld under an exemption TMET will, in most cases, inform the applicant as to why the information is being withheld, citing the exception.

8. Vexatious requests

The Act allows TMET to refuse any requests that have the potential to cause a disproportionate or unjustified level of disruption, irritation or distress.

Decisions on whether a request is vexatious will be taken by the Chief Executive Officer with the assistance of legal advice where necessary.

9. Record keeping

All Freedom of Information requests will be logged and tracked by TMET. This will aid identification of repeat, similar or vexatious requests.

10. Complaints

Applicants dissatisfied with TMET's response to a request, including appeals against decisions to withhold information, may complain through TMET's complaints procedure.

If, after exhausting TMET's complaints procedure, you are still dissatisfied with the outcome, you may refer the matter to the Information Commissioner.

Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.