

## Freedom of Information Policy & Publication Scheme

Revised: February 2022

This policy is due for review in February 2023

### Mission Statement

Ours is a community of learning, where secure partnerships create opportunities for students, staff, governors, parents and carers alike to participate and grow to become intellectually, emotionally and socially *fit for life*.

### 1 Background

Cedars Academy is committed to complying with and implementing the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act (2000) and related legislation. This provides a general entitlement to any person to be able to access information held by school, subject to exemptions and conditions laid down by law.

### 2 Scope

This policy applies to all information held by school regardless of how it was created or received. It applies irrespective of the media on which the information is stored and whether the information is recorded on paper or held electronically. The Act's powers are fully retrospective and thus information is accessible no matter how old it may be. Similarly, information in draft form will also be accessible under the Act.

It should be noted that access to personal information (that is information from which a living individual can be identified) is still governed under the Data Protection Act 1998. Requests for access to such information will be governed in line with the requirements of this legislation.

### 3 Aims and objectives: Mission Statement

Ours is a community of learning, where secure partnerships create opportunities for students, staff, governors, parents and carers alike to participate and grow to become intellectually, emotionally and socially *fit for life*.

The Academy aims to:

- Enable every child to fulfil their learning potential, with education that meets the needs of each child
- Help every child develop the skills, knowledge and personal qualities needed for life and work.

This publication scheme is a means of showing how we are pursuing these aims.

#### **4 Dealing with Requests**

Cedars Academy will offer advice and assistance to anybody wishing to make a request for information. We are committed to dealing with requests within statutory guidelines, which means that a response will be made no more than 20 working days from the date of request and more speedily if possible. This will be extended in specific circumstances on legal advice in connection with the public interest. However, Cedars Academy is committed to providing a prompt service and every attempt will be made to provide the information earlier than the expiry of the 20 working day period. Repeated or vexatious requests for information will be refused. The Academy will claim exemptions as appropriate whilst maintaining a commitment to openness, scrutiny and the public interest. Cedars Academy will put in place an appropriate procedure for measuring the public interest when considering a qualified (also known as “non- absolute”) exemption which requires such a test.

Any request in writing will be considered a Freedom of Information request including those received by email and fax. There is no need for requests to indicate that they are made under the Act and all requests will be dealt with under this policy. The Academy reserves the right to refuse requests where the cost of locating, retrieving and editing (where necessary) the information would exceed the statutory maximum (currently £450).

The Academy recognises that requests for environmental information may be made over the telephone and that different exemptions apply.

#### **5 Adopting and Maintaining Publication Schemes**

Cedars Academy has adopted a Publication Scheme (see below) in accordance with Section 19 of the Freedom of Information Act and is committed to updating and maintaining it to keep it current and relevant. The Publication Scheme contains many of the documents, policies, plans and guidance which are regularly asked for. Material contained within the publication scheme, and a copy of the scheme itself, will be readily available. Where charges are applied these will be stated in the Scheme. The scheme can be accessed in school on request. Academy staff will give advice and assistance on how to use the scheme as appropriate.

#### **6 Relationship with the Data Protection Act 1998**

Cedars Academy is under a legal duty to protect personal data under the Data Protection Act 1998. We will carefully consider our responsibilities under this Act before releasing personal information about living individuals, including current and former employees and pupils.

#### **7 Responsibilities**

Cedars Academy has a responsibility to make information available in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act. Responsibility for compliance with this and related policies will rest with the Governing Body who will delegate those responsibilities to the Head Teacher. Complaints regarding the use of this policy should be directed to the Governing Body.

All school staff have a responsibility to ensure that any request for information they receive is dealt with under the Act and in compliance with this policy. They are also responsible for good information handling practice and for implementing records, management policies and procedures as appropriate to their post.

## 8 Contact Details

For advice and assistance please contact the Head Teacher. Further advice and information about the Freedom of Information Act, including full details of exemptions and advice on the public interest test, is available from the Information Commissioner's website at [www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk](http://www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk)

## 9 Publication Scheme

Below is Cedars Academy Publication Scheme on information available under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

The governing body is responsible for maintenance of this scheme.

### 9.1 Introduction: What a publication scheme is and why it has been developed?

One of the aims of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (which is referred to as FOIA in the rest of this document) is that public authorities, including all maintained schools, should be clear and proactive about the information they will make public. To do this we must produce a publication scheme, setting out:

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

The scheme covers information already published and information which is to be published in the future. All information in our publication scheme is on our website to download and print off or is 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.

### 9.2 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 6 of this scheme. The classes of information that we undertake to make available are organised into four broad topic areas:

- School Prospectus - information published in the school prospectus
- Information relating to the school and governing body – information published on the school website and in other governing body documents.
- Pupils & Curriculum – information about policies that relate to pupils and the school curriculum.
- School Policies and other information related to the school – information about policies that relate to the school in general.

### 9.3 How to request information

If you require a paper version of any of the documents within the scheme, please contact the school by telephone, email, fax or letter. Contact details are set out below:

**Contact Address:** Cedars Academy, Ivy Lane, Low Fell, Gateshead , NE9 6QD

**Contact Tel:** 0191 4874595

**E-mail:** [enquiries@cedarsacademy.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@cedarsacademy.org.uk)

**Website:** [cedarsacademy.org.uk](http://cedarsacademy.org.uk)

### 9.4 Paying for information

Information published on our website is free, although you may incur costs from your Internet service provider. If you don't have Internet access, you can access our website using a local library or an Internet café.

Single copies of information covered by this publication are provided free unless stated otherwise in section 6. 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.

### 9.5 Classes of Information Currently Published

**9.5.1 School Prospectus (Our Offer):** this section sets out information published in the school prospectus. The statutory contents of the school prospectus are as follows, (other items may be included in the prospectus at the school's discretion):

- information about the implementation of the governing body's policy on pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and any changes to the policy during the last year
- a description of the arrangements for the admission of pupils with disabilities;
- details of steps to prevent disabled pupils being treated less favourably than other pupils;
- details of existing facilities to assist access to the school by pupils with disabilities;
- the accessibility plan covering future policies for increasing access by those with disabilities to the school

**9.5.2 Instrument of Government: Information related to the school and other information relating to the governing body** – this section sets out information published and in other governing body documents.

- The name of the school
- The category of the school
- The name of the governing body
- The manner in which the governing body is constituted
- The term of office of each category of governor if less than 4 years
- The name of anybody entitled to appoint any category of governor
- Details of the Trust
- The date the instrument takes effect

- Minutes of meeting of the governing body and its committees

### 9.5.3 Curriculum & Pupils Policies

This section gives access to information about policies that relate to pupils and the school curriculum:

- Home-school agreement
- Statement of the school's aims and values, the school's responsibilities, the parental responsibilities and the school's expectations of its pupils - for example homework arrangements
- Curriculum Policy Statement on following the policy for the secular curriculum subjects and religious education and schemes of work and syllabuses currently used by the school
- Sex Education Policy - statement of policy with regard to sex and relationship education
- Special Education Needs Policy - information about the school's policy on providing for pupils with special educational needs
- Accessibility Plans - plan for increasing participation of disabled pupils in the school's curriculum, improving the accessibility of the physical environment and improving delivery of information to disabled pupils
- Equality and Diversity Policy - statement of policy for promoting race equality Freedom of Information policy September 2015
- Collective Worship - statement of arrangements for the required daily act of collective worship
- Child Protection Policy - statement of policy for safeguarding and promoting welfare of pupils at the school
- Behaviour and anti-bullying policy - statement of general principles on behaviour and discipline and of measures taken by the Academy to prevent bullying

### 9.5.4 School Policies and other information related to the school

This section gives access to information about policies that relate to the school in general:

- Published reports of Ofsted referring expressly to the school
- Published report of the last inspection of the school and the summary of the report
- Post-Ofsted inspection action plan - a plan setting out the actions required following the last Ofsted inspection.
- Charging and Remissions Policies - A statement of the school's policy with respect to charges and remissions for any optional extra or board and lodging for which charges are permitted, for example school publications, music tuition, trips
- School session times and term dates - details of school session and dates of school terms and holidays can be found on the school website
- Health and Safety Policy and risk assessment - statement of general policy with respect to health and safety at work of employees (and others) and the organisation and arrangements for carrying out the policy
- Complaints procedure - statement of procedures for dealing with complaints
- Performance Management of Staff - statement of procedures adopted by the governing body relating to the performance management of staff and the annual report of the head teacher on the effectiveness of appraisal procedures

- Staff Conduct, Discipline and Grievance - statement of procedure for regulating conduct and discipline of school staff and procedures by which staff may seek redress for grievance.

### 10 Feedback and complaints

We welcome any comments or suggestions you may have about the scheme. If you want to make any comments or if you require further assistance or wish to make a complaint then initially this should be addressed to Martin Flowers, Headteacher, Cedars Academy, Ivy Lane, Low Fell, NE9 6QD.

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 (ICO)**. This is the organisation that ensures compliance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and that deals with formal complaints. They can be contacted as follows:

**ICO helpline:** open between the hours of 9.00am and 5.00pm, Monday to Friday. 08456 306060 01625 54 57 45

Enquiry/Information Line: 01625 545 700

Fax: 01625 524510

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

By email: [notification@ico.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:notification@ico.gsi.gov.uk)

Website: [www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk](http://www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk)

**For Review: February 2023**

**UNCRC Reference: Article 16**