



Learning Link Multi-Academy Trust (LLMAT)

Freedom of Information Policy

(March 2021)

Mission - The Learning Link MAT will improve the life chances of all children and create a family of outstanding academies where world class leaders place children at the heart of everything.

Paul Harrison CEO September 2018

Date approved:

Approved by: LLMAT Trustees

Date for renewal:

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1 Purpose of Policy

The Trust and its academies will comply with:

- 1.1 The terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and any other relevant legislation to ensure requests for access to information held by the school are treated in a manner that is fair and lawful.
- 1.2 Information and guidance displayed on the Information Commissioner's website: <https://ico.org.uk/>
- 1.3 This policy should be used in conjunction with the Trust and academies' *Internet Use Policy* and *Data Protection Policy*.

2 Data Gathering and Storage

- 2.1 Information will only be gathered and stored for specified purposes.
- 2.2 In order to be able to respond to requests for information the Trust and its academies will implement effective records management policies to enable staff to identify whether data is held and, if it is, locate it quickly and easily.
- 2.3 The Trust and its academies' retention policies will be based on the guidance from the Information Commissioner's Office.

3 Dealing with Requests for Information

- 3.1 The Trust and its academies will assist applicants in making their request to have access to information held by the Trust and its academies.
- 3.2 Assistance will be given to applicants whose requests need to be transferred to another public authority (e.g. school, council, hospital).
- 3.3 The Trust and its academies will exercise its duty to confirm or deny the existence of requested data, subject to any exemptions that may apply.
- 3.4 The Trust and its academies will supply data requested within 20 working days (or in line with the Information Commissioner's current policy during school holidays), subject to any exemptions that may apply, and the estimated cost of complying with the request falling within the current defined charge limit.
- 3.5 The Trust will aim to deal with all requests for information within 20 working days, where possible,
- 3.6 If a response will take longer than 10 working days to respond an acknowledgement will be sent to the person making the request, informing them when the information will be supplied. We recognise this does to allow the Trust and its academies to exceed the overall 20 working day deadline.
- 3.7 The charge limit is currently £450, calculated at 18 hours work at a flat rate of £25 per hour. If the estimated cost of complying with the request does not exceed this amount the school is not entitled to make a charge for fulfilling the request.
- 3.8 A designated member of staff will be responsible for ensuring requests are fulfilled within the stipulated deadline and recording details of the request on the Trust and its academies' tracking database.

- 3.9 Persons requesting data will be supplied with a copy of our complaints procedure upon request. Any complaints regarding Freedom of Information requests must firstly be addressed by the Trust or its academies. If, once we have had opportunity to reconsider our decision, we believe the initial response was correct the applicant shall be entitled to take the matter to the Information Commissioner's Office.
- 3.10 Copies of data supplied will be retained for two years.

4 Applying Exemptions

- 4.1 A full list of exemptions can be found at the Information Commissioner's website. There are two types of exemption – absolute and qualified.
- 4.2 The decision to apply absolute exemptions will not be taken by individual members of staff but by a constituted group of at least three of the following: Trustee, Chair of Governors, Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher.
- 4.3 The decision to apply qualified exemptions will not be taken by individual members of staff but by a constituted group of at least three of the following: Chair of Governors, other governors, Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher. Even if the group decides information should not be disclosed, a public interest test will be carried out when applying qualified exemptions, to decide whether the public interest in disclosure outweighs the objection to disclosure. If it does the information must be disclosed.

5 Logging Requests Received

- 5.1 The Trust and its academies will keep a record of all requests received for monitoring purposes, noting:
- a) the date the request was received,
 - b) name and contact details of the person or organisation making the request;
 - c) the date the request was fulfilled or refused,
 - d) the reason for any exemption being applied,
 - e) the reason for any failure to meet the 20 day deadline.