



Freedom of Information Policy

Responsible for policy:

Policy Status:

Policy Review:

Chair of Directors:

CC2 Strategy, People and Organisational Development

Non Statutory

Biannually



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Definitions

In this **Freedom of Information Policy**, unless the context otherwise requires, the following expressions shall have the following meanings:

- i **'The Romero Catholic Academy'** means the Company named at the beginning of this **Freedom of Information Policy** and includes all sites upon which the Company is undertaking, from time to time, being carried out. The Romero Catholic Academy includes; **Corpus Christi, Good Shepherd, Sacred Heart, Blue Sky, SS Peter and Paul, St Gregory, St John Fisher, St Patrick, Cardinal Wiseman, Shared Services Team.**
- ii **'Romero Catholic Academy'** means the Company responsible for the management of the Academy and, for all purposes, means the employer of staff at the Company.
- iii **'Board'** means the board of Directors of the Romero Catholic Academy.
- iv **'Chair'** means the Chair of the Board or the Chair of the Local Academy Committee of the Academy appointed from time to time, as appropriate.
- v **'Governance Professional'** means the Governance Professional to the Board or the Governance Professional to the Local Academy Committee of the Academy appointed from time to time, as appropriate.
- vi **'Chief Executive Officer or CEO'** means the person responsible for performance of all Academies and Staff within the Multi Academy Company and is accountable to the Board of Directors.
- vii **'Diocesan Schools Commission'** means the education service provided by the diocese, which may also be known, or referred to, as the Birmingham Diocesan Education Service.
- viii **'Local Governing Body'** means the Governing Body of the School.
- ix **'Governing Body Representatives'** means the governors appointed and elected to the Local Governing Body of the School, from time to time.
- x **'Principal'** means the substantive Principal, who is the person with overall responsibility for the day to day management of the school.
- xi **'School'** means the school or college within The Romero Catholic Academy and includes all sites upon which the school undertaking is, from time to time, being carried out.
- xii **'Shared Services Team'** means the staff who work in the central team across the Company (e.g. HR/ Finance)
- xiii **'Vice-Chair'** means the Vice-Chair of the Local Governing Body elected from time to time.
- xiv **'School DPO'** means the Data Protection Officer responsible for all schools within The Romero Catholic Academy (Warwickshire Legal Services)
- xv **'Multi Academy Company or MAC'** refers to a group of schools that operate collaboratively under a single governing body.
- xvi **'Freedom of information or FOI'** refers to the right of individuals, organisation and the public to access information held by government and public institutions.
- xvii **'Subject Access Request or SAR'** refers to a legal right under general data protection regulations (GDPR) that allows individuals to request access to their own personal data held by organisations.

1. Introduction

The Romero Catholic Academy Company Registration Number 09702162, Publication Scheme for information available under the Freedom of Information Act 2000

The Romero Catholic Academy will promote a culture of openness and accountability through its Publication Scheme.

This policy reflects the latest guidance from the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) and incorporates requirements under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, Environmental Information Regulations 2004, and UK GDPR. It also aligns with the principles of transparency introduced under the Data Protection and Digital Information Bill (pending enactment).

2. Objectives

We acknowledge that under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, any person has a legal right to ask for access to information held by The Romero Catholic Academy or its individual academies. We aim to: -

- Provide assistance to anyone requesting information
- To make available a significant amount of routinely published information about the **Multi Academy Company** (here on known as the MAC)
- To make available, upon written request, other information not included in this publication scheme, and such requests are dealt with in a timely manner
- Tell enquirers whether or not we hold the information they are requesting unless exempted from this duty (the duty to confirm or deny)
- To improve public understanding of:
 - How we carry out our duties
 - How we make our decisions
 - How we spend our money
- To recognise the presumption of openness that underlies the Freedom of Information Act. We are committed to maintaining a well – managed records and information system in order to comply efficiently with requests and we will adopt a straight – forward approach to meeting requests for information.

We will ensure that all staff handling FOI requests receive appropriate training and updates to maintain compliance. We also commit to publishing an annual summary of FOI requests received and outcomes, to demonstrate accountability and openness.

3. Scope

This policy covers requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The policy does not cover enquiries or subject access requests (**SAR**) under the General Data Protection Regulation 2018. The policy outlines our approach to information requests, details of the Publication Scheme (and where it can be found) and how information requests will be handled. "Information" includes both hard copy and digital information.

This policy also applies to requests for environmental information under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004. Where requests overlap with personal data, the provisions of UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018 will apply.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

- **The Board of Directors** – is responsible for overseeing access to information and delegation to the appropriate Academy Principal and Local Governing Body for the individual academies or the Senior Leadership Team for the MAC.
- **The Academy Senior Leadership Team** – Day to day responsibility for the implementation of the Freedom of Information Policy, the provision of advice, guidance, publicity and interpretation of this policy for the MAC.
- **Local Governing Body** – To oversee and audit the implementation of the Freedom of Information Policy within their own academy.
- **Academy Principal** – Day to day responsibility for the implementation of the Freedom of Information Policy, the provision of advice, guidance, publicity and interpretation of this policy for their own individual academy.
- **Data Protection Champion (MAC)** – To oversee Data Protection and Freedom of Information responsibilities with the MAC and ensure compliance with the relevant legislation. To develop good practices that are compliant. To communicate internal policies and procedures and deliver up to date and relevant training. To handle data related queries or complaints, and log and respond to any Subject Access and Freedom of Information requests for both the MAC and the individual schools. To alert the organisation to any risks that may arise and liaise with the Information Commissioners Office (as necessary). Ensure that all FOI responses are logged in the MAC's central compliance register and retained for a minimum of 3 years for audit purposes.
- **Data Protection Officer (schools)** – To oversee Data Protection and Freedom of Information responsibilities within the school and ensure compliance with the relevant legislation. To become the subject matter expert regarding all matters relating to Data Protection and Freedom of Information. To be the point of contact between the school and the MAC Data Protection Officer cascading any training and updates and coordinating any Subject Access or Freedom of Information requests within the school. Maintain a local log of FOI requests and liaise with the MAC compliance team to ensure consistency and timely reporting.

5. Classes 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”. The classes of information that we undertake to make available are organised into seven broad topic areas:

Who we are and what we do

- Organisational information, structures, locations and contacts.

What we spend and how we spend it

- Financial information about projected and actual income and expenditure, procurement, contracts and financial audit.

What our priorities are and how we are doing

- Strategies and plans, performance and records of decisions.

Our policies and procedures

- Current written protocols, policies and procedures for delivering our services and responsibilities.

Lists and Registers

- Information held in registers required by law and other lists and registers relating to the MAC.

The services we offer

- Information about the services the MAC provides including leaflets, guidance and newsletters.

Information

Additional information that is not covered in the scheme can be requested in writing. However, this does not mean that the MAC is obliged to provide the information. In some cases, there will be a good reason why this information should not be made public, some or all of the information requested.

There are 4 reasons for not complying with a valid request for information under the Freedom of Information Act:

- The information is not held
- The cost threshold is reached (£450)
- The request is considered vexatious or repeated
- One or more exemptions apply

Many of the exemptions are intended to protect sensitive or confidential information. However, some exemptions are there simply to avoid the legal position where 2 pieces of law cover the same information requested, or where the information is already available by some other means. In addition, the Freedom of Information Act contains a number of exemptions that allows information to be withheld. In some cases, it will allow the MAC to refuse to confirm or deny whether it holds the information.

Some exemptions relate to a particular type of information, for instance, information relating to Government policy. Other exemptions are based on the harm that would arise or would likely arise from disclosure, e.g. if disclosure would be likely to prejudice a criminal investigation. There is also an exemption for personal data if releasing it would be contrary to the General Data Protection Regulation 2018.

A written refusal notice will be sent to any request that is partially or fully refused.

6. Procedures

How to request information

If you require a paper version/hard copy of any of the documents within the scheme, please contact the Multi Academy Company by telephone, email or letter.

Requests for information not published under this scheme must be made in writing. Contact details are set out below, or you can visit our website www.romeromac.com

Data Protection Champion

Email: admin@romeromac.com

Telephone: 02476 451888

Contact Address:

**The Romero Catholic Academy
C/O Cardinal Wiseman Secondary School
Potters Green Road
COVENTRY
CV2 2AJ**

To help us process your request quickly, please clearly mark any correspondence **“PUBLICATION SCHEME REQUEST”** (in CAPITALS please).

We will normally respond within 20 school days or 60 working days, whichever is shorter, in line with statutory requirements. For complex requests, we may extend the deadline by up to 20 additional working days, notifying the requester within the initial timeframe and explaining the reason for the extension.

Variations to timeline for schools

The Regulations state that the time for compliance will be whichever is the shorter period;

- 20 working days following the date of receipt, excluding any day which is not a school day (this effectively equates to a period of 20 school days); or
- 60 working days following the date of receipt.
- A ‘school’ day will be any day on which there is a session and the pupils are in attendance.
- ‘Working days’ exclude school holidays and ‘inset’ or training days where the pupils are not present.

Please visit: <https://ico.org.uk/media/for-organisations/documents/1165/time-for-compliance-foia-guidance.pdf>

If the information you’re looking for isn’t available via the scheme (and isn’t on our website), you can still contact the Multi Academy Company to ask if we have it.

Charges for information

The scheme has the purpose of making as much information readily available to the public at minimum inconvenience.

In line with the Fees Regulations (SI 2004/3244 Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations), The Romero Catholic Academy does not charge a fee for requests where the prescribed information retrieval costs are estimated to be less than £450. However, a charge may be made for disbursements e.g. postage, printing, computer discs, audio or video tapes, photocopying @ 10p per sheet of A4.

Further information and complaints

If you require further assistance or wish to make a complaint, then initially this should be addressed to:

The Academy Business Director

Email: admin@romeromac.com

Telephone: 02476 451888

Contact Address:

**The Romero Catholic Academy
C/O Cardinal Wiseman Secondary School
Potters Green Road
COVENTRY
CV2 2AJ**

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. This is the organisation that ensures compliance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and that deals with formal complaints. There is also a large amount of information on their website regarding the Freedom of Information Act. They can be contacted at:

Address:

**Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5Af**

Telephone: 01625 545745

Email: casework@ico.org.uk

Website: <http://ico.org.uk/>

7. Links to other policies

This Freedom of Information Policy is linked to our;

- Data Protection Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- [ICO FOI Guidance](#)
- [Environmental Information Regulations:](#)

8. Monitoring and Review

The Board of Directors delegate the implementation of this policy to the Academy Committee.

This policy will be reviewed biannually by CC2 Strategy, People and Organisational Development.