



**COAST**  
ACADEMIES

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*Freedom of  
Information Policy*

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## 1. SCOPE OF THIS POLICY

This policy covers requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (**FOIA**). It also covers enquires relating to matters under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004, namely enquiries about air, water, land, natural sites, built environment, flora and fauna, health and any decisions and activities affecting any of these.

This policy does not cover enquiries or subject access requests under the Data Protection Act 1998 i.e. where the enquirer asks to see what personal information Coast Academies Multi Academy Trust (the trust) holds about them. These enquiries will be dealt with under the Data Protection Policy.

This policy outlines our approach to information requests, details of the Publication Scheme and how information requests will be handling. "Information" includes both hard copy and digital information, including email.

## 2. GENERAL APPROACH TO FOI

The trust acknowledges that, under FOIA, any person has a legal right to ask for information held by the trust or its academies. We recognise our duty to:

- Provide advice and assistance to anyone requesting information
- Tell enquirers whether or not we hold information that are requesting unless exempted from this duty (the duty confirm or deny)
- Provide access to the information we hold, subject to legal exemptions, in accordance with the procedures laid down in part 4 of this policy.

We recognise the presumption of openness that underlies the FOIA. We are committed to maintaining a well-managed records management and information system in order to comply efficiently with requests and we will adopt a straightforward approach to meeting requests for information.

The Board of Directors of the trust is responsible for overseeing access to information and delegation to the appropriate governing body. Day-to-day responsibility for the implementation of this FOIA policy and the provision of advice, guidance, publicity and interpretation of this policy is delegated to the Head Teacher/Head of School of each academy and the CEO of the trust. We will also ensure that all staff are aware of this policy and know that all requests for information should be passed without undue delay to the Head Teacher/Head of School of the relevant academy or the CEO of the trust.

We acknowledge that wilfully concealing, damaging or destroying information in order to avoid answering an enquiry is an offence and we will take all reasonable steps to ensure that the records that are subject to a request for information are not deleted or amended by anyone within the trust.

## 3. PUBLICATION SCHEMES

Information which the trust and it's academies routinely make available to the public is included in our Publication Schemes. The Publication Schemes are based on the model scheme approved by the Information Commissioner.

The Board of Directors of the trust is responsible for collating and publicising its own Publication Scheme about the work of the trust. A copy of the trust Publication Scheme is attached at **Annex A**

The academies have delegated responsibility from the Board of Directors to collate and publish their own Publication Scheme relating to the work of their individual academy.

The respective Publication Schemes and the materials covered in those schemes will be available from the trust offices and on the trust's website [www.coastacademies.org.uk](http://www.coastacademies.org.uk)

#### 4. REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION – MAKING A REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

The trust and its academies will only deal with valid FOIA requests for information under this policy. A valid FOIA request must:

- Be in writing (includes letter, email or fax)
- State the enquirers name and correspondence address (includes email addresses)
- Describe the information requested – there must be enough information to be able to identify and locate the information
- No be a request falling under the Data Protection Act (i.e. be a request for information about yourself or your child)

In order for your request to be dealt with as quickly and efficiently as possible, you should submit your request be letter to the Head Teacher/Head of School or the CEO of the trust. This can be delivered by post or by hand at the reception desk. Contact details for the Head Teacher/ Head of School or the CEO of the trust can be found at the bottom of the relevant Publication Scheme.

#### 5. TIMESCALES FOR RESPONDING TO REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

- We will endeavour to deal with your request promptly and certainly within the legally prescribed limit of 20 school days i.e. excluding weekends and school holidays. Where the 20<sup>th</sup> day to respond to a request is during a non-school day, we have up to 60 days to respond.
- The response time will start from the rime the request is received. Where further information is required from you before we can deal with your request, we shall contact you as soon as practicable using the correspondence address provided. We do not have to deal with your request until the further information is received. Where a fee is to be made (see below), we are also not required to deal with your request until payment has been received. If you choose to pay any fee by cheque the fee will not be regarded as having been received until the day the cheque is cleared. The 20 school days countdown will only begin or restart once the further information and/or payment has been received.
- If a qualified exemption applies (see below) and we need more time to consider the public interest test, we will send you a response within 20 school days stating that an exemption applies and giving you estimate of the date by which a decision on the public interest test will be made. This will normally take 10 working days.

## 6. CHARGES RELATING TO REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

We follow the Department for Education recommendation that academies should ordinarily charge for dealing with requests for information to recover the costs to academy resources that would otherwise support teaching and learning.

We are not required to comply with a request for information where we estimate that the cost of compliance will exceed £450. In estimating the cost of compliance we are entitled to consider:

- Prescribed costs i.e. the costs we reasonably expect to incur in determining whether we hold the information; locating the information or a document containing it; and extracting the information from a document containing it. This includes staff time at £25 per hour (excluding time needed to consider whether the information requested is exempt from disclosure or in redacting documents).
- Communication costs i.e. costs we expect to directly and reasonably incur in informing you whether we hold the information and communicating the information to you, including reproducing any document containing the information (e.g. printing/photocopying/postage\_
- We acknowledge that wilfully concealing, damaging or destroying information in order to avoid answering an enquiry is an offence and we will take all reasonable steps to ensure that records that are subject to a request for information are not deleted or amended by anyone within the trust.
- If our estimated cost of complying with your request does not exceed £450, we will advise you accordingly and advise what, if any, information can be provided for under £450 and/or suggest a narrowed version of your request that could be handled within this limit. Should you wish us to provide the information as initially requested, we are entitled to charge:
  - The estimated costs of compliance with the request
  - The actual communication costs **and**
  - Staff time, at £25 per hour per person, spent on the activities included under communication costs.
- If a fee is payable, we will notify you as soon as practicable (the “fees notice”). The fee notice will state the amount we charge and advise you how you can pay. If we do not receive payment within three months of issuing you with the fees notice, we are no longer obliged to respond to your request.

## 7. RIGHT TO REFUSE TO COMPLY WITH A REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

There are only four reasons we may refuse to comply with a valid request for information under FOIA:

- **The information is not held by us**  
Once we have received your request, we will ascertain whether we hold the information requested. “Holding” information means information relating to the business of the trust of an academy that we have created, received from another body or person, or is held by another body on our behalf. If, after reasonable enquiry we are unable to confirm that we do not hold the information requested, we will advise you accordingly using the correspondence address provided.
- **The cost threshold is reached £450**  
See ‘Charges relating to requests for information’ above.

- **The request is considered vexatious or repeated**

There is no obligation on us to comply with vexatious requests. This is a request designed to cause inconvenience, harassment or expense rather than to obtain information, and would require a substantial diversion of resources or would otherwise undermine our work.

- **One or more of the exemptions apply**

There are more than 20 exemptions. They are set out in **Annex B**. Where the potential exemption is a qualified exemption, we will also consider the public interest test to identify if the public interest in applying the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing it.

Each case will be considered on its merits and we will maintain records on any refusals made and the reason for them. Records will be maintained for 5 years in accordance with statutory guidance.

If we refuse to provide information, we will notify you in writing explaining:

- The fact that we cannot provide the information asked for
- Which exemption (s) we believe apply
- Why the exemption (s) apply to this enquiry (if it is not self-evidence)
- Reasons for refusal if based on cost of compliance
- In the case of qualified exemptions, how we have applied the public interest test, specifying the public interest factors taken into account before reaching the decision
- Reasons for refusal on vexatious or repeated grounds
- The internal complaints procedure

## **8. THE DUTY TO CONFIRM OR DENY.**

A person applying for information has the right to be told if the information requested is held, and if that is the case to have the information sent (subject to any of the exemptions). We do not have to confirm or deny if:

- The exemption is an absolute exemption, or
- In the case of qualified exemptions, confirming or denying would itself disclose exempted information.

## **9. CONSULTATION WITH THIRD PARTIES**

Consultation with third parties may be required if their interests could be affected by release of the information requested, and any such consultation may influence the decision. Consultation will be necessary where:

- Disclosure of information may affect the legal rights of a third party, such as the right to have certain information treated in confidence or rights under Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights
- The views of the third party may assist us to determine if information is exempt from disclosure
- The views of the third party may assist us to determine the public interest test.

## 10. REDACTION

If a request is made for a document which contains exempt information (for example, it contains personal information about a third party whose release to a third party would breach the Data Protection Act), the document may be issued by blanking out the relevant exempt information. This process is known as redacting.

The general procedure for redaction is:

- The exempt information will be masked and then photocopied so nothing shows through
- An annotation will be provided in the margin against each redaction, stating which exemption and section of the Act applies

## 11. COMPLAINTS

Any complaint or complaints will be dealt with through our normal complaints procedure.

If on investigation our original decision is upheld, then you have the right to appeal to the Information Commissioners Office. Appeals should be made in writing to:

Complaints Resolution  
Information Commissioners Office  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF

## ANNEX A

### Publication Scheme for Coast Academies

#### **Introduction: what is a Publication Scheme and why has it been developed?**

The Board of Directors of the trust is responsible for collating and publicising its own Publication Scheme about the work of the trust. The academies run by the trust have delegated responsibility from the Directors to collate and publish their own Publication Scheme relating to the work of their individual academy

This Publication Scheme commits us to make information available to the public as part of our normal business activities.

This Scheme commits the trust 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 classes of information below
- Specify the information which is held by us and falls within the classes of information below
- Proactively publish or otherwise make available as a matter of routine, information in line with the statements contained within this scheme
- 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
- Review and update on a regular basis the information we make available under this scheme
- Produce a schedule of any fees charged for access to information which is made proactively available
- Make the Publication Scheme available to the public

The classes of information include:

- **Who we are and what we do** – Organisational information, locations, 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 are 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, consultation
- **Our policies and procedures** - current written protocols for delivering our functions and responsibilities
- **Lists and Registers** – Information held in registers by law and other lists and registers relating to the functions of the trust
- **The service we offer** – Advice and guidance, booklets and leaflets, transactions 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 FOIA, 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 it is difficult to access for similar reasons.

### **The method by which information published under this Publication Scheme will be made available**

Where it is within our capability, information will be provided on our website [www.coastacademies.org.uk](http://www.coastacademies.org.uk) Where it is impracticable to make information available on the website, this Scheme sets out how the information can be obtained.

Where you cannot or do not wish to access the information via the specified means, you should contact the trust to discuss alternative means of viewing the information. In exceptional circumstances information may be available only by viewing in person. You should contact the trust to make an appointment to view the information which we will endeavour to accommodate 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. If we are legally required to translate the information, we will do so. Obligations under disability and discrimination legislation to provide information in other forms and formats will be adhered to when providing information in accordance with the Scheme.

### **Charges which may be made for information published under this Scheme**

The purpose of the Scheme is to make the maximum amount of information readily available at minimum inconvenience and cost to the public. Material which is published and accessed on a website will be provided free of charge. Charges may be made for actual disbursements incurred such as:

- Photocopying
- Postage and packaging
- The costs directly incurred as a result of viewing information.

Charges may also be made for information provided under this Scheme where they are legally authorised, they are justified in all the circumstances and are in accordance with a published schedule of fees in this Publication Scheme. If a charge is to be made, confirmation of the payment due will be given before the information is provided. Payment will be requested prior to provision of the information.

### **Written Requests**

Information held by us that is not published under this Scheme can be requested in writing, when it's 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 us:

Ken Kies  
Chief Executive Officer  
Coast Academies

C/O Eden Park Primary School  
 Eden Park  
 Brixham  
 TQ5 9NH

Website: [www.coastacademies.org.uk](http://www.coastacademies.org.uk)

To help us process requests quickly, any correspondence should be clearly marked "Publication Scheme Request"

**Guide to Information Available from Coast Academies Trust.**

Information to be published	Information Obtained From	Cost
<b>Class 1 – who we are and what we do</b>		
<b>Organisational information, structures, locations and contacts</b>		
<b>This will be current information only</b>		
Memorandum and articles of association	Website	No cost
Master funding agreement	Website	No cost
Annual return	Website	No cost
List of names of the Members and Directors of the trust	Website	No cost
Staffing Structure – names of key personnel	Website	No cost
Contact details for the CEO and the Board of Directors	Website	No cost
Location and contact information – address and telephone number	Website	No cost
<b>Class 2 – what we spend and how we spend it</b>		
<b>Financial information relating to the projected and actual income and expenditure, procurement, contracts and financial audit</b>		
<b>Current and previous two financial years as a minimum</b>		
Annual budget plan and financial statements	Hard copy requested from the trust office	Schedule of charges
Annual Accounts (published 31 May yearly)	Website	No cost
'Value for Money statement' from the Head of Finance and Operations, explaining how the trust secured value for money during the financial years	Website	No cost
Capital funding – details of capital funding allocated to the trust along with information on related building projects and other capital projects	Hard copy requested from the trust office	Schedule of charges
Additional funding – income generation schemes and other sources of funding	Hard copy requested from the trust office	Schedule of charges
Procurement and contracts – details of procedures used for the acquisition of goods and service and details of contracts that have gone through a formal tendering process	Hard copy requested from the trust office	Schedule of charges
Staffing and grading structure	Hard copy requested from the trust office	Schedule of charges

Pay Policy – a statement of the MAT’s policy on procedures regarding teachers’ pay	Hard copy requested from the trust office	Schedule of charges
Directors’ allowances – details of allowances and expenses that can be claimed or incurred	Hard copy requested from the trust office	Schedule of charges
<b>Class 3 – what our priorities are and how we are doing (Strategies, plans, performance indicators, audits, inspections and reviews)</b> <b>This will be current information only</b>		
Trust profile including a statement of our ethos and values	Website	No Cost
Appraisal Policy and Procedures	Hard copy requested from the trust office	No Cost
Coast Improvement Plan	Hard copy requested from the trust office	Schedule of charges
Safeguarding Policy and procedures	Website	No Cost
<b>Class 4 – How we make decisions (Decision making process and records of decisions)</b> <b>Current and previous three years as a minimum</b>		
Agendas of Main meetings and (if held) it’s sub committees	Hard copy requested from the trust office	Schedule of charges
Minutes of meetings - NB this will exclude information that is considered to be private	Hard copy requested from the trust office	Schedule of charges
<b>Class 5 – Our policies and procedure (Current written protocols, policies and procedures for delivering our services and responsibilities)</b> <b>Current information only</b>		
Main Board/MAT wide policies including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Charging and remissions policy</li> <li>• Health and Safety</li> <li>• Complaints procedure</li> <li>• Staff conduct policy</li> <li>• Discipline and grievance policies</li> <li>• Information request handling policy</li> <li>• Equality and diversity (including equal opportunities) policies</li> <li>• Staff recruitment policies</li> </ul>	Hard copy requested from the trust office	Schedule of charges
Records Management and personal data policies including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information security policies</li> <li>• Records retention, destruction and archive policies</li> </ul>	Hard copy requested from the trust office	Schedule of charges
Charging regimes and policies 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	Hard copy requested from the trust office	Schedule of charges

Equality and diversity (Policies, schemes, statements, procedures and for the recruitment of staff and details of vacancies	Hard copy requested from the trust office	Schedule of charges
<b>Class 6 – Lists and Registers</b>		
Asset register	Hard copy requested from the trust office	Schedule of charges
Any information the trust is currently legally required to hold in publicly available registers	Website or Hard copy requested from the trust office	No cost if website obtained. Schedule of charges if requested
Leaflets, booklets and newsletters	Websites – no charge	No cost
<b>Schedule of charges</b>		
Type of Charge	Description	Basis of charge
Disbursement of cost	Photocopying/printing @5pence per sheet (black and white)	Actual cost incurred
	Photocopying/printing @ 15 pence per sheet	
	Postage	Cost of Royal Mail – receipt provided
Statutory fee		In accordance with the relevant legislation

## ANNEX B – EXEMPTIONS

There are two general categories of exemptions:-

1. **Absolute:** where there is no requirement to confirm or deny that the information is held, disclose the information, or consider the public interest test
2. **Qualified:** where, even if an exemption applies, there is a duty to consider the public interest in disclosing information

Even when an exemption applies:

- We will still provide you with reasonable advice and assistance, including suggesting an amended version of your request
- We can decide to ignore the exemption and release the information taking into account all the facts of the case

### ABSOLUTE EXEMPTIONS

Those, which are most likely to be used, are marked with \*:

1. **\*Information accessible to the enquirer by other means\*** If information is reasonably accessible to the enquirer by a route other than the FOIA, it is exempt information. This is the case even if the enquirer would have to pay for the information under that alternative route. This exemption will include cases where the information is available via the Publication Scheme or under other legislation, such as the Data Protection Act 1998
2. **\*Personal Information\*** Where enquirers ask to see information about themselves, this is exempt under the Act because it is covered by the Data Protection Act
3. **\*Court records\*** this applies to information related to proceedings in a court or tribunal or served on a public authority for the purposes of proceedings.
4. **\*Information provided in confidence\*** this relates to information obtained from a person if its disclosure would constitute a contempt of court or where it is incompatible with any EC obligation
5. **\*Prohibitions on disclosure\*** information is exempt where its disclosure is prohibited under any legislation by order of a court or where it would constitute a contempt of court where it is incompatible with EC obligation
6. **Information dealing with security matters** this applies to information directly or indirectly dealing with matters relating to national security, such as GCHQ, MI5, MI6
7. **Parliamentary Privilege** this exempts information if it is required for the purpose of avoiding infringement of the Parliamentary privilege
8. **Prejudice to the effective conduct of public affairs** this relates to the maintenance of the collective responsibility of Ministers.

### QUALIFIED EXEMPTIONS

Where a qualified exemption applies, there is an additional duty to consider the public interest in confirming or denying that the information exists and in disclosing information.

Those which are most likely to be used are marked with an \*:

1. **\*Personal information** Where the information concerns a third party, it is exempt if its disclosure would contravene the Data Protection Act 1998, or the data protection principles; or

of the person to whom the information relates would not have a right of access to it because it falls under one of the exemptions to the Data Protection Act 1998. The duty to confirm or deny does not arise in relation to this information if doing so would be incompatible with any of the above

2. **\*Legal professional privilege\*** Legal professional privilege covers any advice by legal advisers, solicitors and barristers especially with regard to potential litigation. Generally such information will be privileged. This exemption covers all such information where a claim to legal professional privilege can be maintained in legal proceedings. The duty to confirm or deny does not arise where to do so would involve the disclosure of such information.
3. **\*information intended for future publication\*** if at the time the request was made, information is held with a view to publication, then it is exempt from disclosure if it is reasonable that it should not be disclosed until the intended date of publication. This could apply for instance to statistics published at set intervals, for example annually or where information is incomplete and it would be inappropriate to publish prematurely. Note the following:-
  - a. **The intended publication does not have to be by the trust, it can be another person or body on behalf of the trust**
  - b. **The date of publication does not have to be known, it could be at some future date (although it is recommended that some idea of a likely date is given)**
  - c. **The duty to confirm or deny does not apply if to do so would involve the disclosure of any relevant information.**
4. **\*investigations and proceedings conducted by public authorities\*** Information is exempt if it has at any time been held by us for the purposes of criminal investigations or proceedings, such as determining whether a person should be charged with an offence or whether a charged person is guilty, or investigations which may lead to a decision to institute criminal proceedings. The duty to confirm or deny does not apply to such information.
5. **\*Law enforcement\*** Investigations and Proceedings may be exempt under this exemption in the event that disclosure would, or would be likely to, prejudice the following among others:
  - a. **The prevention or detection of crime**
  - b. **The apprehension or prosecution of offenders**
  - c. **The administration of justice**
  - d. **The exercise of functions such as ascertaining if a person has broken the law, is responsible for improper conduct, whether circumstances justify regulatory action, ascertaining a person's fitness or competence in relation to their profession, ascertaining the cause of an accident or protecting or recovering charities or its properties**
  - e. **Any civil proceedings brought by us or on our behalf which arise out of an investigation carried out for any purposes mentioned above.**
  - f. **The duty to confirm or deny does not arise where prejudice would result to any of these matters.**
6. **\*Health and Safety\*** information is exempt if its disclosure would or would be likely to endanger the safety or physical mental health of any individual. The duty to confirm or deny does not arise where prejudice would result.
7. **\*Commercial Interests\*** information is exempt if it constitutes a trade secret or would be likely to prejudice the commercial interests of any person or body (including the trust or its academics)
8. **\*Environmental information\*** information is exempt under FOIA where it is covered by the Environmental Information Regulations. Environmental information can cover information relating to: air, water, land, natural sites, built environment, flora and fauna and health.

However, such requests will normally be dealt with under similar principles to those set out in the policy.

9. **Audit Functions** Information is exempt if its disclosure would, or would be likely to, prejudice the exercise of an authority's functions in relation to the audit of the accounts of other public authorities. It does not apply to internal audit reports.
10. **Formulation of government policy** information held is exempt information if it relates to the formulation or development of government policy, ministerial communications, advice by Law Officers (e.g. Attorney General) and the operation of any ministerial private office.
11. **National security** information is exempt for the purposes of safeguarding national security
12. **Defence** information is exempt if its disclosure would prejudice the defence of the UK
13. **International relations** Information is exempt if its disclosure would or would be likely to, prejudice relations between the UK and any other state, international organisation
14. **Relations within UK** Information is exempt if its disclosure would or would be likely to prejudice relations between any administration in the UK i.e. the Government, Scottish Administration, Northern Ireland Assembly, or National Assembly of Wales
15. **The economy** information is exempt if its disclosure would, or would be likely to, prejudice the economic or financial interests of the UK
16. **Prejudice to the conduct of public affairs** information likely to prejudice the maintenance of the convention of the collective responsibility of Ministers or likely to inhibit the free and frank provision of advice or exchange of views
17. **Communications with the Queen** information is exempt if it relates to communications with the Queen, the Royal Family or Royal Household or if it relates to the award of honours. The duty to confirm or deny does not arise where this exemption applies.

## **PUBLIC INTEREST TEST**

Having established that a qualified exemption(s) definitely applies to a particular case, we are then required to carry out a public interest test to identify whether the public interest in applying the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing it. Unless it is in the public interest to withhold the information, we are required to release it.

What is in the public interest is not necessarily the same as that which may be of interest to the public. It may be irrelevant that a matter may be the subject of public curiosity.

Factors that might be taken into account when weighing the public interest include:

### For disclosure

1. is disclosure likely to increase access to information held by us
2. is disclosure likely to give the reasons for a decision or allow individuals to understand decisions affecting their lives or assist them in challenging those decisions?
3. Is disclosure likely to improve our accountability and transparency in the use of public funds and help to show that we can obtain value for money?
4. Is disclosure likely to contribute to public debate and assist the understanding of existing or proposed policy?
5. Is disclosure likely to increase public participation in decision-making?
6. Is disclosure likely to increase public participation in political processes in general?
7. Is disclosure likely to bring to light information affecting public safety?
8. Is disclosure likely to reduce further enquiries on the topic?

### Against disclosure

9. Is disclosure likely to distort public reporting or be misleading because it's incomplete?
10. Is premature disclosure likely to prejudice fair scrutiny, or release sensitive issues still on the internal agenda or evolving?
11. Is disclosure likely to cause unnecessary public alarm or confusion?
12. Is disclosure likely to seriously jeopardise our legal or contractual position?
13. Is disclosure likely to infringe other legislation e.g. Data Protection Act?
14. Is disclosure likely to create a controversial precedent on the release of information or impair our ability to obtain information in the future?
15. Is disclosure likely to adversely affect out proper functioning and discourage openness in expressing opinions?
16. If a large amount of information on the topic has already been made available, would further disclosure shed any more light or serve any useful purpose?

In considering the above, we acknowledge that:

1. Potential or actual embarrassment to, or loss of confidence, to the trust and it's academies, staff or governors is NOT a valid factor
2. The fact the information is technical, complex to understand and may be misunderstood may not of itself be a reason to withhold information
3. The potential harm of releasing information will reduce over time and will therefore be considered at the time the request is made rather than by reference to when the relevant decision was originally taken
4. The balance of public interest in disclosure cannot always be decided on the basis of whether the disclosure of particular information would cause harm, but on certain higher order considerations such as the need to preserve confidentiality of internal discussions
5. A decisions not to release information may be perverse i.e. would a decision to withhold information because it is not in the public interest release it, itself result in harm to public safety, the environment or a third party?

Where the balance of the public interest lies in disclosure or the factors are equally balanced, we will normally favour disclosure and the information requested made available.