



## Freedom of Information (FOI)

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Author	Sarah Jones and Kerry Jordan-Daus
Scrutinised by (Trustee)	Gavin Sibbick
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### Background

Veritas MAT is committed to complying with and implementing the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act (2000) (the “FOI Act”) and related UK 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.

### 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 governed under the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK GDPR. Requests for access to such information will be governed in line with the requirements of this legislation.

### Dealing with Requests

Veritas MAT 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 school 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 test**. However, Veritas MAT is committed to providing a prompt service and every attempt will be made to provide the information earlier than the expiry of the **20 school day period, where possible**. Repeated or vexatious requests for information will be refused where we are satisfied that s.14 of the FOI Act applies. Veritas MAT may claim exemptions as appropriate, whilst maintaining a commitment to openness, scrutiny and the public interest. Veritas MAT 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. Veritas MAT reserves the right to refuse requests in accordance with s.12 of the FOI Act where the cost of locating, retrieving and editing (where necessary) the information would exceed the statutory maximum cost **(currently £450)**.

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

## **Relationship with the Data Protection Act 2018**

School is under a legal duty to protect personal data under the Data Protection Act. We will carefully consider our responsibilities under this Act and in accordance with s.40(2) of the FOI Act before releasing personal information about living individuals, including current and former employees and pupils.

## **Responsibilities**

School 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 Trust Board who will delegate those responsibilities to the Local Academy Committee and the Head Teacher where appropriate. Requests for information held by the central team of the MAT will be handled by the Governance Professional ([governanceprofessional@veritasmatt.co.uk](mailto:governanceprofessional@veritasmatt.co.uk)). Complaints regarding the use of this policy should be directed to the Trust Data Protection Officer: Oluyinka Oworu ([oluyinka.oworu@veritasmatt.co.uk](mailto:oluyinka.oworu@veritasmatt.co.uk)).

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.

### **Contact Details**

For advice and assistance please contact Veritas MAT Governance Professional: [governanceprofessional@veritasmat.co.uk](mailto:governanceprofessional@veritasmat.co.uk).

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 <https://ico.org.uk/>

Policy adopted by the Veritas MAT Trust Board and will be reviewed every three years, or earlier if required.

### **Freedom of Information Publication Scheme:**

**Please find the documents below which detail Veritas MAT's Publication Scheme.**

- **Link the Freedom of Information Publication Scheme**

Gov.Uk [Freedom of Information Code of Practice](#)