

All Saints Inter-Church Academy

Freedom of Information Policy



April 2026

1. Policy Statement

All Saints Inter-Church Academy (“the Academy”) is committed to openness, transparency and accountability in the way it conducts its business. We recognise our responsibilities under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) to make information available to the public, promote openness, and respond appropriately to requests for information we hold.

The Academy seeks to comply fully with the Act, whilst balancing these duties with our responsibility to protect confidential, personal, safeguarding-related and commercially sensitive information where appropriate.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All recorded information held by the Academy, regardless of format (paper files, electronic records, emails, audio, video, photographs, handwritten notes).
- Information created by, or held on behalf of, the Academy including that held by third-party contractors acting for the Academy.

This policy does not apply to requests for access to personal data, which are governed by the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 and should be treated as Subject Access Requests.

3. Legal Framework

This policy is informed by and complies with:

- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Environmental Information Regulations 2004
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR
- ICO codes of practice and guidance
- Academy Trust Handbook (in relation to governance, transparency and records management)

4. Publication Scheme

The Academy adopts the Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO) Model Publication Scheme for schools and academies.

Information covered by the scheme is routinely made available:

- On the Academy website, and/or
- On request via the Academy office

The publication scheme specifies the classes of information the Academy will publish, how it can be accessed, and whether a charge applies.

5. Making a Request

Requests must:

- Be made in writing (email or letter)
- State the name of the applicant
- Provide a correspondence address (postal or email)
- Clearly describe the information requested

Requests do not need to mention the Freedom of Information Act to be valid.

Verbal requests are not valid under FOIA but staff should assist requestors to submit a written request where possible.

6. Responding to Requests

The Academy will:

- Confirm whether the information is held
- Provide the information requested unless a lawful exemption applies
- Issue a response within 20 working days of receipt (or within statutory timescales under the Environmental Information Regulations)

Where clarification is required, the statutory timescale will be paused until clarification is received.

7. Exemptions

Information may be withheld where a statutory exemption applies, including but not limited to:

- Personal data (Section 40 FOIA)
- Safeguarding and child protection information
- Health and safety or security-sensitive information
- Legally privileged material
- Commercially sensitive or confidential information
- Information intended for future publication

Where information is withheld, the Academy will issue a written refusal notice stating:

- The exemption(s) relied upon

- Why the exemption applies
- Any public interest considerations (where relevant)
- The applicant's right to request a review

The Academy will also manage vexatious or repeated requests in line with ICO guidance.

8. Charges

Most requests are provided free of charge.

Where permitted under the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004, the Academy may charge for:

- Photocopying
- Printing
- Postage
- Requests exceeding the appropriate cost limit

Applicants will be notified in advance if a fee is payable and the request will be paused until payment is received.

9. Complaints

If an applicant is dissatisfied with the handling of their request, they may request an internal review.

- Requests for review should be made within 40 working days
- Reviews will be conducted by someone senior to, or independent of, the original decision-maker
- A response will normally be provided within 20 working days

If the applicant remains dissatisfied, they may complain to:

Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)

Wycliffe House

Water Lane

Wilmslow

Cheshire

SK9 5AF

www.ico.org.uk

10. Roles and Responsibilities

Trust Board

- Ensures the Academy complies with its statutory FOIA obligations

- Approves this policy and receives assurance regarding compliance

Headteacher

- Has overall operational responsibility for FOIA compliance
- Ensures appropriate systems, training and awareness are in place

Designated FOI Lead (where appointed)

- Coordinates responses to FOI requests
- Maintains a log of requests and outcomes
- Liaises with the ICO where required

All Staff

- Must promptly forward any FOI request to the Headteacher or FOI Lead
- Must not destroy or amend records subject to a request

11. Record Management

The Academy recognises that effective records management underpins FOIA compliance. The Academy will:

- Maintain accurate, up-to-date and accessible records
- Retain information in line with approved retention schedules
- Dispose of records securely and lawfully

No records will be altered or destroyed once an FOI request has been received.

12. Training and Awareness

Appropriate FOIA awareness will be provided to staff as part of induction and ongoing training, particularly for those roles most likely to receive requests.

13. Equality and Accessibility

The Academy will ensure that responses are accessible and reasonable adjustments are made where required under the Equality Act 2010.

14. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed:

- Every three years, or
- Earlier where there are changes in legislation, ICO guidance, or governance expectations