

OWLCOTES MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST

Freedom of Information Policy



October 2019
Reviewed: March 2024

About Owlcotes Multi-Academy Trust (OMAT)

OMAT is committed to the development of inclusive Owlcotes Multi-Academy Trusts, sharing a common purpose to provide excellent education and improve outcomes for pupils.

OMAT strives to provide high-quality education for all children within our local communities by inspiring innovation, creativity and aspiration through an enriched curriculum.

OMAT is committed to the principles of co-operation, collaboration and sharing best practice with a strong focus on staff development.

OMAT is also committed to the preservation of the unique identity of all Owlcotes Multi-Academy Trusts within the trust: each Owlcotes Multi-Academy Trust will have a Local Governing Board (LGB) which is involved in decision making at Owlcotes Multi-Academy Trust level, with autonomy to make decisions for its own Owlcotes Multi-Academy Trust – in line with the scheme of delegation.

All trustees and any Owlcotes Multi-Academy Trusts joining must agree to share and uphold all of these principles now and in the future.

Freedom of Information Policy

1. Background

Owlcotes Multi-Academy Trust is committed to complying with and implementing the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act (2000) and related legislation. This provides a general entitlement to any person to be able to access information held by the Trust and its Owlcotes Multi-Academy Trusts, subject to exemptions and conditions defined in law.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all information held by Owlcotes Multi-Academy Trust and its Owlcotes Multi-Academy Trusts 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 still governed under the Data Protection Act 1998. Requests for access to such information will be governed in line with the requirements of this legislation. For OMAT's procedure in regard to Subject Access Requests, please consult the Owlcotes Multi-Academy Trust Data Protection Policy.

3. Dealing with Requests

Owlcotes Multi-Academy Trust's Data Protection Officer 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 working days from the date of request. The first working day is the day after the request was received. This will be extended in specific

circumstances on legal advice in connection with the public interest test. Any requests received will be acknowledged within 3 working days.

Repeated or vexatious requests for information will be refused. Owlcotes Multi-Academy Trust reserves the right to claim exemptions as appropriate whilst maintaining a commitment to openness, scrutiny and the public interest.

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. Owlcotes Multi-Academy Trust reserves the right to refuse requests where the cost of locating, retrieving and editing (where necessary) the information would exceed the statutory maximum (currently £450).

Owlcotes Multi-Academy Trust recognises that requests for environmental information may be made over the telephone and that different exemptions apply.

4. Adopting and Maintaining Publication Schemes

Owlcotes Multi-Academy Trust has adopted a Publication Scheme in accordance with Section 19 of the Freedom of Information Act and is committed to updating and maintaining it to keep it current and relevant. The Publication Scheme contains many of the documents, policies, plans and guidance which are regularly asked for. Material contained within the publication scheme, and a copy of the scheme itself, will be readily available. Where charges are applied these will be stated in the Scheme. The scheme can be accessed in Owlcotes Multi-Academy Trust on request. Owlcotes Multi-Academy Trust staff will give advice and assistance on how to use the scheme as appropriate.

5. Relationship with the Data Protection Act 1998

Owlcotes Multi-Academy Trust is under a legal duty to protect personal data under the Data Protection Act 1998. We will carefully consider our responsibilities under this Act before releasing personal information about living individuals, including current and former employees and pupils.

6. Responsibilities

Owlcotes Multi-Academy Trust 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 Owlcotes Board of Trustees who will delegate those responsibilities to the Data Protection Officer. Complaints regarding the use of this policy should be directed to the individual school Local Governing Board or the full MAT Board of Trustees.

All Owlcotes Multi-Academy Trust 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.

7. Contact Details

For advice and assistance please contact Joe Wilson, OMAT Data Protection Officer, at info@owlcotesmat.org or 0113 8874523.

This Freedom of Information Policy was adopted by Owlcotes Multi-Academy Trust on 31/10/2020

Chair of Trustees: Mrs Judith Norfolk		
Signature:		Judith Norfolk:
Frequency of review:	3 years	
To be reviewed by:	FRAC	
To be approved by:	OMAT Full Board	
Date of next review:	March 2027	

REVIEW RECORD

Date of review	Reason for review	Date of next review
13/10/2022	Agreed review schedule.	October 2025

Name:		Signature:	
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on behalf of OMAT Full Board

Date of review	Reason for review	Date of next review
21/03/2024	Updated DPO contact details.	March 2027

Name:		Signature:	
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on behalf of OMAT Full Board

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Name:		Signature:	
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on behalf of OMAT Full Board