

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION POLICY

Statement of intent

As an educational provider, the ALP has an obligation to publish a freedom of information statement, outlining how we will meet our duties under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and associated regulations. The development and effective implementation of this policy fulfils that requirement.

More specifically, this policy outlines:

- How our schools will respond to requests from individuals for access to information held about them. (See ALP Data Protection Policy for information on Subject Access Requests SAR.)
- Our schools' policy and procedures for the release and publication of private data and public records.
- Our schools' policy and procedures for providing applicants with advice and assistance throughout the duration of their requests.

It also clarifies our position regarding the appropriate limit to the costs incurred by the school in obtaining any requested information, and on charging fees for its provision.

1. Legal framework

1.1. This policy has due regard to the following legislation:

- The Data Protection Act 1998.
- The Freedom of Information Act 2000.
- The Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004.

1.2. This policy also has due regard to guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Information Commissioner's Office 'Model publication scheme' 2016.
- Information Commissioner's Office 'Duty to provide advice and assistance (section 16)' 2016
- Ministry of Justice 'Lord Chancellor's Code of Practice on the management of records issued under section 46 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000' 2009.

1.3. This policy will be viewed in conjunction with the following other school policies:

- ALP Data Protection Policy.
- ALP CCTV Policy.

2. Accepting requests for information

2.1. The ALP will only accept a request for information which meets all of the following criteria:

- It is in writing.
- It states the name of the applicant and an address for correspondence.
- It describes the information requested.

2.2. A request will be treated as made in writing if it meets all of the following requirements:

- It is transmitted by electronic means.
- It is received in legible form.
- It is capable of being used for subsequent reference.

2.3. The ALP will publish this policy on the schools' website

3. General right of access to information held by the school

3.1. Provided that the request complies with section 2 of this policy, the ALP will, no later than 20 working days from receipt of the request, comply with its duty to:

- Confirm or deny to any person making a request for information to the school, whether it holds information of the description specified in the request.
- Provide the documentation, if the school confirms that it holds the requested information.

3.2. The ALP will not comply with section 3.1 of this policy where:

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- The ALP reasonably requires further information to meet a freedom of information request, has informed the applicant of this requirement, but was not subsequently supplied with that further information.
 - The information is no longer readily available as it is contained in files that have been placed in archive storage or is difficult to access for similar reasons.
 - A request for information is exempt under Section 2 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.
 - The cost of providing the information exceeds the appropriate limit.
 - The request is vexatious.
 - The request is a repeated request from the same person made within 60 consecutive working days of the initial one.
 - A fee notice was not honoured.
- 3.3. Where information is, or is thought to be, exempt, the ALP will, within 20 working days, give notice to the applicant which:
- States the fact.
 - Specifies the exemption in question.
- 3.4. The information provided to the applicant will be in the format that they have requested, where possible.
- 3.5. Where it is not possible to provide the information in the requested format, the school will assist the applicant by discussing alternative formats in which it can be provided.
- 3.6. The information provided will also be in the language in which it is held, or another language that is legally required. If the school is required to translate any information, it will do so.
- 3.7. If, under relevant disability and discrimination regulations, the school is legally obliged to provide the information in other forms and formats, it will do so.

4. The appropriate limit

- 4.1. The ALP will not comply with any freedom of information request that exceeds the statutorily imposed appropriate limit of £450.
- 4.2. When determining whether the cost of complying with a freedom of information request is within the appropriate limit, the school will take account only of the costs we reasonably expect to incur in relation to:
- Determining whether it holds the information.
 - Locating the information, or a document which may contain the information.
 - Retrieving the information, or a document which may contain the information.
 - Extracting the information from a document containing it.
 - Costs related to the time spent by any person undertaking any of the activities outlined in section 4.2 of this policy on behalf of the ALP, are to be estimated at a rate of £25 per person per hour.
- 4.3. Where multiple requests for information are made to the school within 60 consecutive working days of each other, either by a single person or by different persons who appear to be acting in concert, the estimated cost of complying with any of the requests is to be taken to be the total costs to the school of complying with all of them.

5. Charging fees

- 5.1. The ALP may, within 20 working days, give an applicant who has requested information from one of the schools, a written notice stating that a fee is to be charged for the school's compliance.
- 5.2. Charges may be made for disbursements, such as the following:
- Photocopying.
 - Postage and packaging.
 - Costs directly incurred as a result of viewing information.
- 5.3. Fees charged will not exceed the total cost to the school of:
- Informing the person making the request whether we hold the information.
 - Communicating the information to the person making the request.
- 5.4. Where a fee is to be charged, the ALP will not comply with section 3 of this policy unless the requested fee is paid within a period of three months, beginning with the day on which the fees notice is given to the applicant.

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- 5.5. The ALP will not take into account any costs which are attributable to the time spent by persons undertaking any of the activities mentioned in section 5.3 above.
 - 5.6. When calculating the 20th working day in which to respond to a freedom of information request, the period beginning the day on which the fee notice is given to the applicant and ending with the day on which the fee is received, will be disregarded.

6. Means by which communication is to be made

- 6.1. Where, on making a request for information, the applicant expresses a preference for communication by any one of the following means, the ALP will, as far as is practicable, give effect to that preference:
 - The provision to the applicant of a copy of the information in permanent form or in another form acceptable to the applicant.
 - The provision to the applicant of a reasonable opportunity to inspect a record containing the information.
 - The provision to the applicant of a digest, or summary of the information, in permanent form or in another form acceptable to the applicant.
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7. Providing advice and assistance

- 7.1. The ALP will meet its duty to provide advice and assistance, as far as is reasonable, to any person who proposes to make, or has made, requests for information to the schools.
- 7.2. The ALP may offer advice and assistance in the following circumstances:
 - If an individual requests to know what types of information the school holds and the format in which it is available, as well as information on the fees regulations and charging procedures.
 - If a request has been made, but the school is unable to regard it as a valid request due to insufficient information, leading to an inability to identify and locate the information.
 - If a request has been refused, e.g. due to an excessive cost, and it is necessary for the school to assist the individual who has submitted the request.
- 7.3. The ALP will provide assistance for each individual on a case-by-case basis; examples of how the ALP will provide assistance include the following:
 - Informing an applicant of their rights under the Freedom of Information Act 2000
 - Assisting an individual in the focus of their request, e.g. by advising of the types of information available within the requested category
 - Advising an applicant if information is available elsewhere and how to access this information
 - Keeping an applicant informed on the progress of their request
- 7.4. In order to provide assistance as outlined above, the ALP will engage in the following good practice procedures:
 - Make early contact with an individual and keep them informed of the process of their request.
 - Accurately record and document all correspondence concerning the clarification and handling of any request.
 - Give consideration to the most appropriate means of contacting the applicant, taking into account their individual circumstances.
 - Discuss with the applicant whether they would prefer to receive the information in an alternative format, in cases where it is not possible to provide the information requested in the manner originally specified.
 - Remain prepared to assist an applicant who has had their request denied due to an exemption.
- 7.5. The ALP will give particular consideration to what level of assistance is required for an applicant who has difficulty submitting a written request.
- 7.6. In circumstances where an applicant has difficulty submitting a written request, the school will:
 - Make a note of the application over the telephone and then send the note to the applicant to confirm and return – the statutory time limit for a reply would begin here.
 - Direct the individual to a different agency that may be able to assist with framing their request.NB. This list is not exhaustive and the ALP may decide to take additional assistance measures that are appropriate to the case.
- 7.7. Where an applicant's request has been refused either because the information is accessible by other means, or the information is intended for future publication or research, the ALP, as a matter of good practice, will provide advice and assistance.
- 7.8. The ALP will advise the applicant how and where information can be obtained, if it is accessible by other means.

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- 7.9. Where there is an intention to publish the information in the future, the ALP will advise the applicant of when this publication is expected.
 - 7.10. If the request is not clear, the ALP will ask for more detail from the applicant in order to identify and locate the relevant information, before providing further advice and assistance.
 - 7.11. If the ALP is able to clearly identify the elements of a request, it will respond following usual procedures and will provide advice and assistance for the remainder of the request.
 - 7.12. If any additional clarification is needed for the remainder of a request, the ALP will ensure there is no delay in asking for further information.
 - 7.13. If an applicant decides not to follow the ALP's advice and assistance and fails to provide clarification, the ALP is under no obligation to contact the applicant again.
 - 7.14. If the school is under any doubt that the applicant did not receive the advice and assistance, the school will re-issue it.
 - 7.15. The ALP is not required to provide assistance where an applicant's request is vexatious or repeated, as defined under Section 14 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.
 - 7.16. The ALP is also not required to provide information where the cost of complying with a request exceeds the limit outlined in the Freedom of Information Act 2000. In such cases, the school will consider whether any information can be provided free of charge if the applicant refuses to pay the fee.
 - 7.17. A record will be kept by the Business Manager of all the advice and assistance provided.

8. Publication scheme

- 8.1. The ALP will meet its duty to adopt and maintain a publication scheme which specifies the information which it will publish on the school website, and whether the information will be available free of charge or on payment. See Appendix 1.
- 8.2. The publication scheme will be reviewed and, where necessary, updated on an bi annual basis.

Chair of ALP:

Date:

Date:	07/12/16
Version	2
Author:	Business Team

1. Aims and Objectives

The ALP aims to:

- Enable every child to fulfil their learning potential, with education that meets the needs of every child;
- Help every child develop the skills, knowledge and personal qualities needed for life and work;

and this publication scheme is a means of showing how we are pursuing these aims.

2. Categories 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’. These are contained in section 6 of this scheme.

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 indicators, audits, inspections and reviews.
How we make decisions:	Decision-making processes and records of decisions.
Our policies & procedures	Current written protocols, policies and procedures for delivering our services and responsibilities.
Lists & Registers:	Information in currently maintained lists and registers only.
The services we offer:	Information about the services the school provides.

Information which will not be made available under this scheme includes:

- Information the disclosure of which is prevented by law, or exempt under the Freedom of Information Act, or is otherwise properly considered to be protected from disclosure.
- Information in draft form, or notes, documents in older versions, emails or other correspondence.
- Information that is no longer readily available as it is contained in files that have been placed in archive storage, or is difficult to access for similar reasons.

3. How to request information

If you require a paper version of any of the documents within the scheme, please contact the Trust office by telephone, email, fax or letter. Contact details are set out below.

Telephone:	01670 812360
Email:	bps@alptrust.org.uk
Contact address:	ALP Office, Bothal Primary School, High Market, Ashington NE63 8NT

To help us to process your request quickly, please clearly mark any correspondence “FREEDOM OF INFORMATION SCHEME REQUEST” (in capitals please).

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

Documents can be translated under disability legislation into accessible formats where possible.

4. **Paying for Information**

Information published on our website is free, although you may incur costs from your Internet service provider. If you don't have Internet access, you can access our website using a local library or an Internet café. Also, by prior arrangement, we can make computers available to members of the local community outside of school hours.

Single copies of information covered by this publication are provided free unless stated otherwise in Section 6. If your request means that we have to do a lot of photocopying or printing, or pay a large postage charge, or is for a priced item such as some printed publications or videos we will let you know the cost before fulfilling your request. Where there is a charge this will be indicated by a £ sign in the description box.

5. **Classes of Information Currently Published**

Who we are and what we do:

Instrument of Government

- The Instrument of Government is the document which records the name and category of the school and the name and constitution of its governing body.

School curriculum

- An outline of the school curriculum.

Governing Body

- The names of our governors and the basis on which they have been appointed, along with details of how to contact them via the school.

School session times and term dates

- Details of school session times and dates of school terms and holidays.

Location and contact information

- The address, telephone number, email address and website for the school together with the names of key personnel

What we spend and how we spend it:

Annual budget plan and financial statements

- For the current and previous 2 financial years:
- Details of the sources of funding and income provided to the school by a local authority or directly by central government or from elsewhere, including the private sector, together with the annual budget plan and the school's annual income and expenditure returns.
- Details of items of expenditure over £5000, including costs, supplier and transaction information. (£)

Capital funding

- Information on major plans for capital expenditure. Details of the capital funding allocated to or by the school together with information on related building projects and other capital projects. This will include any private finance initiative and public-private partnership contracts.

Procurement and contracts

- Details of procedures used for the acquisition of goods and services. Details of contracts that have gone through a formal tendering process.

Pay policy

- The ALP's policy and procedures regarding teachers' pay.

Staff allowances and expenses

- Details of the allowances and expenses that can be incurred or claimed. It will include the total of the allowances and expenses paid to individual senior staff members by reference to categories. This information will be produced in line with the school's policies, practices and procedures and will include travel, subsistence and accommodation. For the purpose of this document, "senior staff" means staff on the Senior Leadership Team or equivalent level, or above, whose basic actual salary is at least £60,000 per

annum.

Staff pay and grading structures

- The names and positions of all staff of the school, and how they may be contacted via the school. This will be provided as part of the organisational structure and will include the salaries for senior staff as defined above. Those salaries should be stated in bands of £10,000. For more junior posts, levels of pay should be identified by salary range.

Governors' allowances

- Details of allowances and expenses that can be incurred or claimed, and a record of total payments made to individual governors.

What our priorities are and how we are doing:

Performance data supplied to the government

Latest OfSTED report

Appraisal information

- Appraisal policy and procedures adopted by the governing body.

The school's future plans

- Any major proposals for the future of the school.

Safeguarding and child protection

- The policies and procedures that are in place to ensure that the school exercises its functions with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, including child protection, in compliance with legislation and any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

How we make decisions:

Admissions policy / decisions

- The school's admission arrangements and procedures, together with information about the right of appeal. This will include information on application numbers/patterns of successful applicants (including criteria on which applications were successful).

Minutes of meetings of the governing body and its committees

- Minutes, agendas and papers considered at such meetings will be published as soon as practicable, with the exception of information that is properly considered to be private to the meeting.

Our policies & procedures

School policies and other documents

- This will include policies, procedures and documents that the school is required to have by statute or by its funding agreement or equivalent and will include the required policies listed on the Department for Education's website. It will also include policies and procedures for handling information requests.

Records management and personal data policies

- This will include information security policies, records retention, destruction and archive policies, and data protection (including data sharing) policies.

Equality and diversity

- This will also include policies, schemes, statements, procedures and guidelines relating to equal opportunities.

Policies and procedures for the recruitment of staff

- Details of current vacancies will be readily available.

Charging regimes and policies

- Details of any statutory charging regimes will be provided. This will include charges made for information routinely published. They will clearly state what costs are to be recovered, the basis on which they are made, and how they are calculated.

Lists & Registers:

Curriculum circulars and statutory instruments

- Statutory Instruments (for example Regulations), departmental circulars and administrative memoranda sent to the Head Teacher/Governing Body concerning the curriculum.

Disclosure logs

- A disclosure log will be available indicating the information provided in response to requests from September 2014.

Asset register

Any information the school is currently legally required to hold in publicly available registers

The services we offer:

Examples of services about which we will provide information

- Extra-curricular activities
- Out of school clubs
- School publications
- Services for which the school is entitled to recover a fee, together with those fees
- Leaflets, booklets and newsletters

Feedback and Complaints

We welcome any comments or suggestions you may have about the scheme. If you want to make any comments about this publication scheme or if you require further assistance or wish to make a complaint then initially this should be addressed to the Business Manager at the Trust Office address in Section 4.

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. They can be contacted at:

Telephone:

0303 123 1113

Email:

casework@ico.org.uk

Website:www.ico.org.uk/**Contact address:**

Customer Contact. Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, SK9 5AF