

Connect Academy Trust

Freedom of Information Act



September 2016

For Review and Approval by the Board of Connect Academy Trust,
October 2016

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Freedom of Information Act 2016-2017

This is Connect Academy Trust's Publication Scheme on information available under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

The Board of Trustees is responsible for maintenance of this scheme.

1. Introduction - What A Publication Scheme Is and Why It Has Been Developed

One of the aims of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (which is referred to as FOIA in the rest of this document) is that public authorities, including all maintained schools, should be clear and proactive about the information they will make public.

To do this we must produce a publication scheme, setting out:

- the classes of information which we publish or intend to publish;
- the manner in which the information will be published; and
- whether the information is available free of charge or on payment.

The scheme covers information already published and information which is to be published in the future. All information in our publication scheme is available in paper form.

Some information which we hold may not be made public, for example personal information.

This publication scheme conforms to the Model Scheme for Schools approved by the Information Commissioner.

2. Aims and Objectives

Vision

Our Trust's vision is for excellence in the academic, social and physical development of ALL children, in an ever changing and diverse world.

Aims

To achieve our vision we aim to involve staff, Pupils, Parents, Trustees and Governors and the wider community in enabling children to:-

- enjoy learning,
- gain appropriate knowledge and skills,
- experience personal success,
- develop a sense of responsibility and make a positive contribution,
- develop initiative and confidence,
- work together,
- develop understanding and respect for others,
- be healthy and stay safe.

This will happen in an environment where:-

- opportunities are offered to all children,
- children can achieve their highest possible standards,
- there are clear expectations for work and behaviour,
- children and adults are valued,
- there is co-operation and understanding,
- safety and healthy living are important.

3. **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 four broad topic areas:

- Prospectus* – information published in the prospectus
- Profile and other information relating to the Board of Trustees – information published in the Trust Profiles and in other Board of Trustees documents
- Pupils & Curriculum – information about policies that relate to pupils and the curriculum
- Policies and other information related to the Trust - information about policies that relate to the Trust in general.

4. **How to Request Information**

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

Email:

cbiggs@leigham-primary.plymouth.sch.uk

dbrooker@thornbury.plymouth.sch.uk

Website: tba

Tel: 01752 790990

Contact Address: Connect Academy Trust, Leigham Primary School, Cockington Close, Leigham, Plymouth, PL6 8RF

To help us process your request quickly, please clearly mark any correspondence “PUBLICATION SCHEME REQUEST” (in CAPITALS please).

If the information you are looking for is not available via the scheme and is not on our website, you can still contact the Trust to ask if we have it.

5. **Paying for Information**

Information published on our website is free, although you may incur costs from your internet service provider. If you do not have internet access, you can access our website using a local library or an internet café.

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.

6. Classes of Information Currently Published

Pupils & Curriculum Policies

Policy	Description
Home – School Agreement	Statement of the Trust’s aims and values, the Trust’s responsibilities, the parental responsibilities and the Trust’s expectations of its pupils for example homework arrangements.
Curriculum	Statement on following the policy for the secular curriculum subjects and religious education and schemes of work and syllabuses currently used by the Trust.
Relationships & Sex Education	Statement of policy with regard to relationships and sex education.
Special Education Needs	Information about the Trust’s policy on providing for pupils with Special Educational Needs.
Equality Action Plan	Statement of policy for promoting equality.
Child Protection	Statement of policy for safeguarding and promoting welfare of pupils within the Trust.
Behaviour & NO to Bullying Statement	Statements of general principles on behaviour and discipline and of measures taken by the Trust to prevent bullying.

Trust Policies and other information related to the Trust

Document	Description
Published reports of Ofsted referring expressly to the School	Published report of the last inspection of the School and the summary of the report and where appropriate inspection reports of religious education in those schools designated as having a religious character.
Charging and Remissions	A statement of the Trust’s policy with respect to charges and remissions for any optional extra or board and lodging for which charges are permitted, for example Trust publications, music tuition, trips.
School times and term dates	Details of session and dates of School terms and holidays.
Health and Safety and Risk Assessment	Statement of general policy with respect to health and safety at work of employees (and others) and the organisation and arrangements for carrying out the policy.
Complaints	Statement of procedures for dealing with complaints.
Admissions	Statement of the Trust’s policy on admissions.

7. **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 CEO, Leigham Primary School, Cockington Close, Leigham, Plymouth, PL6 8RF

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:

Information Commissioner, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF

or

Enquiry/Information Line: 01625 545 745 or 03031231113

Website : www.ico.org.uk

- * Documents can be viewed 'free of charge' but if a copy is requested a standard charge of £2.00 will be made, unless the document is indicated by an asterix (*).

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 PUBLICATION SCHEMES FOR PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Documents to Support Schools

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Introduction

Part 1 – Letter from the Information Commissioner

Part 2 – Explanatory Notes

Part 3 – Primary Model Publication Scheme

Part 4 – Secondary Model Publication Scheme

Introduction

Each school's Chair of Governors will have recently received a copy of a letter from the Information Commissioner on the above. This letter provides details of approved model publication schemes for primary and secondary schools. It also provides details of a link to the Information Commissioners website where it will be possible to download explanatory notes and the relevant model.

The LEA has also provided an electronic model which can be found on PGFL/Governors/LEA support. There are two specific aspects of the model that the Information Commissioner wishes to draw attention to. Firstly, the Commissioner has agreed that schools **do not have to complete a return** to confirm acceptance of the model. The Commissioner's office will assume that schools have accepted the model unless they receive an individual "bespoke" scheme from a school. The Information Commissioner will, however, undertake a sample check to see if schools are having difficulties in adopting the model. One of the steps included in the explanatory notes is for governing bodies to record in their minutes if they decide to adopt the model scheme. However, if other changes are made to the model then the school will need to submit the revised scheme to the Commissioner for approval.

Part 1 – Letter from the Information Commissioner

Reference: LEA/0325/2003

Date: 16/09/2003

Dear

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 – PUBLICATION SCHEMES FOR SCHOOLS

The purpose of the Freedom of Information Act is to promote greater openness and accountability across the public sector. It does this in two ways:

- From January 2005 there will be a right of access - “the right to know”- to all information held by public bodies. Although the right is subject to some exemptions, there is a recognition in the Act that there is a public interest in allowing access to information held by public authorities.
- Public authorities are also placed under a duty to publish information which they hold proactively, through the adoption of “publication schemes” and by publishing information in accordance with those schemes. Schemes must be approved by the Information Commissioner who has already approved schemes for central and local government and the police. Schools have the choice of either adopting the appropriate model scheme or preparing their own bespoke schemes (see below). Schools which prepare bespoke schemes must submit these to the Commissioner for approval and both bespoke **and** model schemes will become operational.

Please note that a different timeframe applies to maintained nursery schools. It has been agreed that maintained nursery schools will fall into the final wave of the publication schemes timetable and will be required to have an approved scheme in place.

What are publication schemes?

A publication scheme is simply a guide to the *types* of information a public authority undertakes to make available to the public as a matter of routine. As well as describing the types of information, your scheme should also indicate whether a charge is made for any types of information and also the form in which information is published (for instance on a web site or as leaflets).

You may decide to adopt the appropriate “**model scheme**” for your sector. This is a pre-approved, off-the-shelf scheme which has been devised by a working group led by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) in consultation with other parties. Separate model schemes have been developed for primary and secondary schools in England. The model schemes have been approved by the Information Commissioner and are available, together with accompanying explanatory notes, via his website or from your own Local Education Authority.

If you decide to adopt a model scheme you must ensure that you can publish the information that the model scheme commits you to make available.

Alternatively, you may devise your own “**bespoke**” publication scheme to reflect information held by your organisation which can be made available to the public. This may be the choice of a school which plans to publish a more extensive range of information than that envisaged in the model schemes. Guidance on developing bespoke schemes is contained in the booklet, “Publication

Schemes Approval Documentation” which can be found on the Commissioner’s website www.ico.org.uk) or obtained by calling **03031231113** and quoting “Bespoke”.

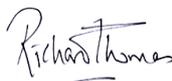
Please note: if you decide to prepare a bespoke scheme you should forward a copy of your scheme together with a completed Approval Questionnaire, to the Commissioner. Model schemes for schools have already been approved, so if you adopt the appropriate model scheme you do **not** need to return any documentation.

However, it is important that all schools do adopt a publication scheme and the Information Commissioner will be contacting a representative sample of schools to check that they have formally adopted the model and that information is available through it.

Further Guidance

The Commissioner is continually developing policy in this area and all our guidance is available on our website at: www.ico.org.uk.

Yours faithfully



Richard Thomas
Information Commissioner

Part 2 - Explanatory Notes for the Model Publication Scheme for Schools

The Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 2000

The FOI Act received Royal Assent on 30 November 2000. The primary object of the legislation is to confer a right on individuals to obtain disclosure of information held by public bodies, including schools, rather than leaving public bodies to confer access to the information they hold as a favour. This is achieved in two ways:

- by imposing on public authorities a positive duty to make information available through the publication of schemes setting out what information it has decided to make routinely available and how/where the information is available to an interested individual.
- by giving the individual who makes a request for information the right to be told whether the body holds such information, and if it does, the right to have that information communicated to them, subject to exemptions. This individual right of access to information will be brought into force for all public authorities (including schools).

Model Publication Schemes

The Information Commissioner¹ has power to approve ‘model’ schemes for particular classes of public bodies, including schools.

¹ The Information Commissioner is the independent body with responsibility for regulation of both the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998

Two model publication schemes have been approved by the Information Commissioner for the governing bodies of maintained schools. These are designed for primary and secondary schools with special schools advised to use the secondary model. A model for maintained nursery schools has been developed.

A publication scheme is essentially a guide to information that a public body commits to make available to the public and states how it can be accessed (eg paper, online) and whether it is available free or at a charge.

These notes are aimed to help you and will explain the steps you need to take in order to adopt the scheme. Having adopted the model scheme your school will then be obliged to publish the information set out in it.

The model scheme was developed by DfES in consultation with interested parties and has been approved by the Information Commissioner's Office.

Is the Model Scheme appropriate for your school?

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 defines the public authorities that are covered by the Act and so are required to adopt and maintain a publication scheme. **All** maintained schools are covered by the Act and by adopting the model scheme you will meet the requirements of the Act. However, if you wish to, you may submit a 'bespoke' scheme for approval by the Commissioner which better caters for your school's individual circumstances. If you decide you would prefer to submit a bespoke scheme please see the section: further help and assistance.

The Model Scheme

The model scheme has been developed in a way that should allow a school to simply insert its own details into the appropriate places as indicated by the bold text in capital letters contained in square brackets.

To adopt the model and comply with the FOI requirements, the steps a school needs to take are:

- Adoption of the model scheme by the governing body, recording the decision in the governing body minutes.
- Enter your school and contact details in the model, removing/including any reference to your website. Including a £ sign in the description box where there is a charge
- Publish the scheme – see '*how should the information be made available*'
- Make the information available on request – you may want to review your record management system by undertaking a simple audit of your documents to help you respond to any request.

Changes to the model

If a school adopts the model scheme they **do not** need to send it to the Commissioner for approval. However, the model scheme should not be altered **except** to include:

- contact and school details
- details of website address, where appropriate
- a £ sign in the description box, where a charge may be incurred for an item
- replacing the aims and objectives with the school's own version (optional)

If you wish to make any other changes to the scheme eg removing or adding another class you will need to submit the scheme for approval to the Commissioner together with a completed approval questionnaire.

What will adopting the model publication scheme commit a school to do?

Simply completing a copy of the model scheme does not in itself fulfil a school's obligation under the Act in relation to publication schemes. A school has to make its publication scheme available and publish information in accordance with that scheme. By adopting the model scheme, your school is committing itself to publishing the information described.

As new information is produced which falls within a class definition, it should be prepared for publication and made available.

Schools are one of the last public authorities in the rolling programme that are required to have a publication scheme in place. The DfES will issue further guidance to schools on the effect of the Freedom of Information Act from 2005 covering how to respond to requests for information not set out in your publication scheme.

How should the information be made available?

The scheme provides scope for a school to publish information in a variety of ways. It is expected that unless you state otherwise the information will be in paper form. However schools may wish to make information available on their websites. The model contains optional text in square brackets for this purpose.

Where information is available on a website the Information Commissioner will still expect hard copies to be made available on request as not everyone has access to the internet.

The Freedom of Information Act aims to develop a culture of openness amongst public authorities. Schools **should** raise awareness of the existence and contents of the scheme among the general public and parents in particular. You could do this through the Governors' Annual Report, through a paragraph in your newsletter and on your website if you have one. You may find the following paragraph helpful in meeting the requirements of the FOIA.

The Freedom of Information Act requires publicly funded bodies, including schools, to be clear about the information they publish. We have produced a publication scheme setting out all the information we publish on a regular basis and where to find it. Ask the school office to let you see the scheme or provide you with a copy free of charge.

Fees

It is expected that schools will make all items available to the public free of charge or in line with their existing charging policy. The FOI Act does not introduce any new requirements for making documents available in another language. However, you will want to ensure accessibility to the information and conform with existing legal requirements eg Disability Discrimination Act. If a school is making available a priced item such as printed publications, videos and bound information then a charge may be levied for that item. Where you have decided that there is a charge for an item this **should be annotated with a £ sign in your publication scheme** next to the description. If the request requires a lot of photocopying or large postage costs a school will need to make clear to enquirers that there could be a handling charge in line with any existing policy on charging.

The Duration of the Model Scheme

The model scheme prepared for maintained schools has been approved for a period of four years. The Information Commissioner will review the scheme before its anniversary date. If you decide to submit your own scheme the Commissioner will advise you whether it has been accepted. At that time you will also be informed of the date the approval of your model scheme will expire. Generally this will be four years.

Freedom of Information and the Data Protection Act

Personal information is exempt under the FOI Act. However individuals may continue to make a 'subject access request' under the Data Protection Act. If a request is made for a document eg Governing Body minutes which contains personal information, the minutes may be issued by blanking out the relevant personal information.

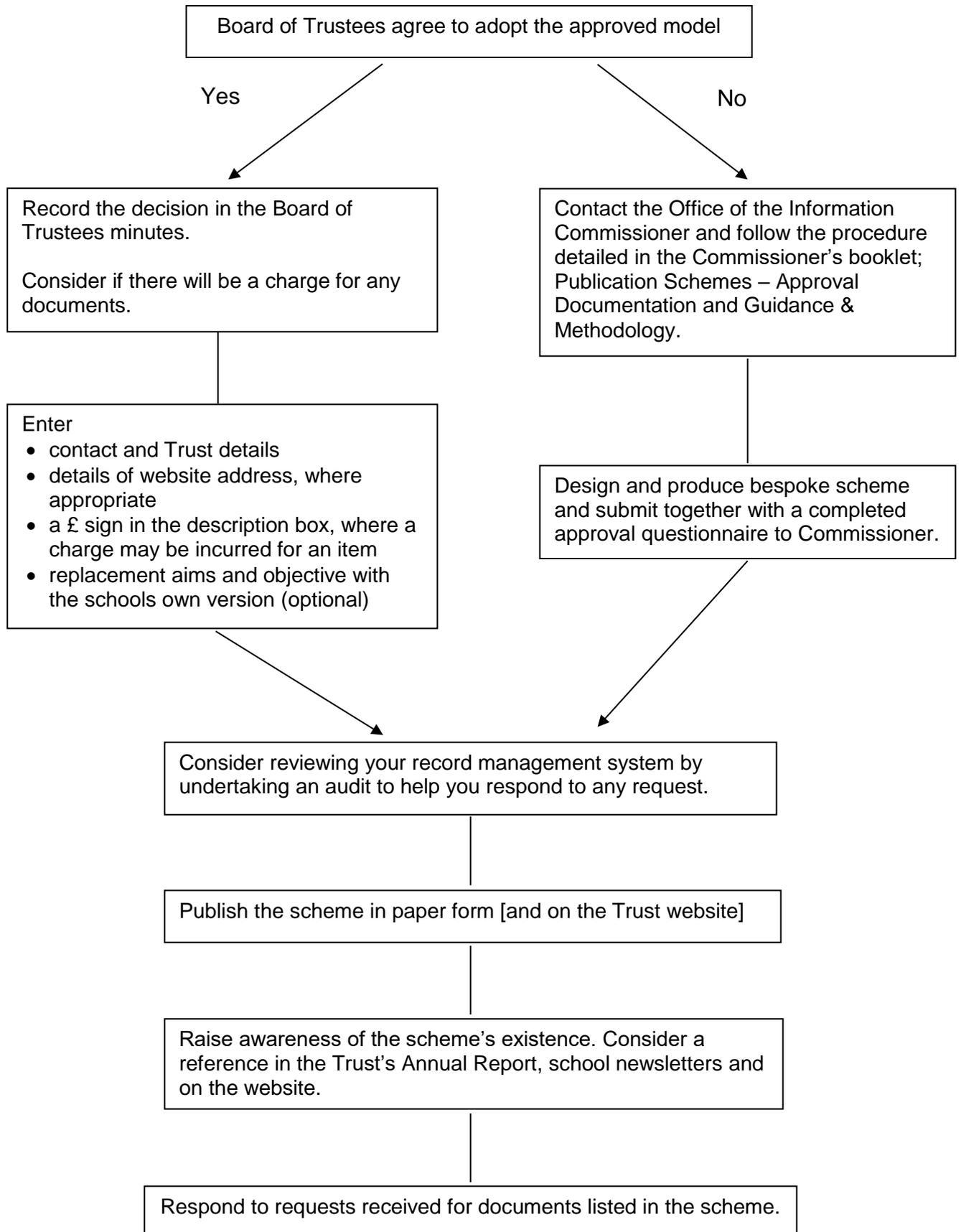
Further Help and Assistance

For further information contact the Public Enquiry Unit at the DfES on 0870 000 2288 or your own LEA which will be able to provide advice and support. General enquiries about FOI, publication schemes, the FOI Act or the submission process and subsequent operation of the scheme once adopted should be addressed to the FOI compliance team at the Information Commissioner's Office (see below).

To submit a bespoke scheme you should follow the procedure detailed in the Commissioner's booklets; Publication Schemes – Approval Documentation and Guidance & Methodology. These are available on the Commissioner's website at www.ico.org.uk or by telephoning 03031231113

Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF
or Enquiry/Information Line: 01625 545 745, www.ico.org.uk

**Freedom of Information Act
Publication Scheme Flowchart
(steps required to adopt the model FOIA)**



Signed
Chief Executive Officer

Date

Signed
Chair of Connect Academy Trust

Date