



Transforming Lives

EDUCATIONAL TRUST

Freedom of Information Policy

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1 – The TLET Way

Transforming Lives Educational Trust (TLET/The Trust) is a family of academies. Every TLET policy is rooted in and reflects our ambitions for pupils, students and wider stakeholders alike.

OUR AMBITIONS -

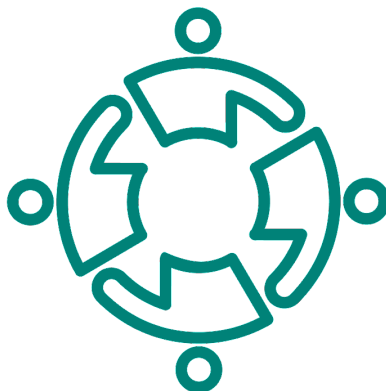
As a Trust family, our shared ambitions drive everything we do, we call this ‘The TLET Way’.

Through the transformative values of courage, kindness and loyalty, together we:



NURTURE POTENTIAL

We flourish in the places we create together.



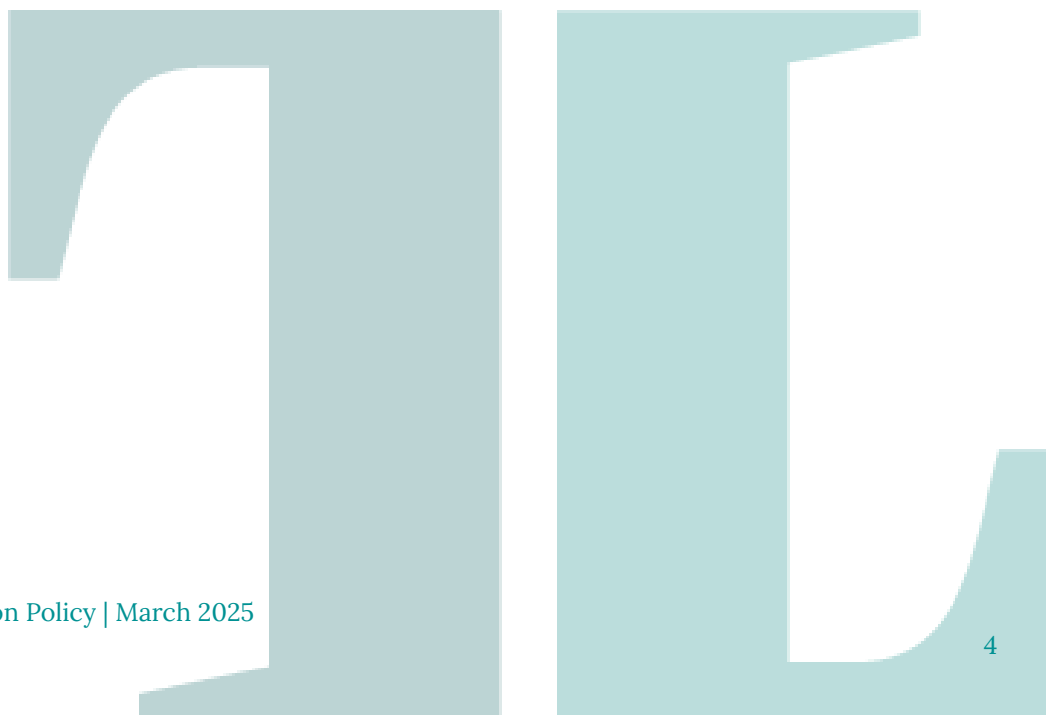
INSPIRE COMMUNITY

We champion each other to make a difference.



DELIVER EXCELLENCE

We strive to achieve our best.



2 – Definition of Terms

- 2.1 ‘The Trust’ means Transforming Lives Educational Trust and all its Academies.
- 2.2 Trust ‘Appropriate Limit’ means the limit set by the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004 as amended from time to time
- 2.3 ‘Fee Notice’ means the amount the Requester will need to pay in order for the Trust to comply with the request for information.
- 2.4 ‘FOIA’ means the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and amendments.
- 2.5 ‘GDPR’ means the General Data Protection Regulation, (and the Data Protection Act 2018)
- 2.6 ‘Publication Scheme’ means a list of information that will be routinely published via the Trust’s website.
- 2.7 ‘Requester’ means the person making a request for the information from the Trust.
- 2.8 ‘Social Media’ means websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking including Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Google+, and all other social networking sites, internet postings and blogs. It applies to the use of Social Media for Trust purposes as well as personal use that may affect the Trust in any way.
- 2.9 ‘Academy day’ means any day on which there is an academy session.
- 2.10 ‘Working Day’ means any other day other than a Saturday, a Sunday, Christmas Day, Good Friday or a day which is a bank holiday.

3 – Scope

This policy refers to:

Parents/Carers	✓	Trustees	✓
Employees	✓	Volunteers	✓
Pupils/Students	✓	Visitors	✓
Governors	✓	Community	✓

4 – Principles

- 4.1 The policy has been created to adhere to and demonstrate Transforming Lives Educational Trusts commitment to adhering to the Freedom of Information Act.

5 – Policy Statement

- 5.1 The Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) came into effect on 30th November 2000 and gives general right of access to recorded information held by a public authority, including Academies and Trusts, subject to certain exemptions. Transforming Lives Educational Trust (TLET) is committed to complying with the provisions of FOIA.

6 – Procedure

6.1 Procedure for making a request for information

- 6.1.1 The Trust requires requests for information, pursuant to the provisions of FOIA, to be made in writing. The Trust considers ‘in writing’ to mean communications by post, fax and email. If a request is received by one of the Trust’s academies, the academy should forward the request to the Trust at dpo@tlet.org.uk
- 6.1.2 Requests for information held by the Trust should be sent to the addresses found on its website: www.tlet.org.uk
- 6.1.3 A request for information made to the Trust should provide the name of the Requester and an address for correspondence, and should clearly set out the information being requested from the Trust.

6.2 Duty to Assist

- 6.2.1 There may be circumstances where it is unclear to the Trust what information is being requested or where it appears that the request for information is such that responding will cause the Trust to exceed the Appropriate Limit. In these circumstances, the Trust will seek to provide advice and assistance to the requester in order to enable the Trust to provide the requester with the information they are seeking to obtain or inform the requester as to why this is not possible.

6.3 Time Limit for responding to request for information

- 6.3.1 The Trust will seek to respond to a request for information promptly and in any event no later than 20 Academy days or 60 working days from the date of the request, whichever occurs first.
- 6.3.2 Where a fee is payable for responding to the request, the Trust will disregard any day between a Fee Notice being sent to the Requester and the correct fee being received by the Trust when calculating the time limit for responding.
- 6.3.3 In the event the Trust is unable to respond within the periods set out above, the Trust will write to the Requester advising it will be unable to comply and provide a new time scale for responding to the request.

6.4 Fees

- 6.4.1 The Trust will not charge for the provision of information which is requested subject to the provisions of FOIA. However the Trust may charge for requests where it incurs a cost in photocopying, printing or otherwise reproducing the requested information and/or where the Trust will incur a significant fee for providing the requested information in the format requested by the Requester. There may also be a charge where the Trust has issued a Fee Notice and Requester has agreed to pay the fee as set out in the Fee Notice.
- 6.4.2 The Trust is not obliged to comply with a request for information if the cumulative time spent on locating, retrieving or, if necessary, extracting the information requested is estimated to exceed the Appropriate Limit.
- 6.4.3 The Trust may decide to provide information requested in excess of the Appropriate Limit without charging a fee where it considers it reasonable and within the public interest to do so.
- 6.4.4 Where it appears that responding to a request for information will result in the Trust exceeding the Appropriate Limit and the Trust does not waive the fee for complying with the request, the Trust may provide the Requester

with a Fee Notice. The Trust will also inform the Requester as to how it has estimated that the Appropriate Limit will be exceeded, what information it could provide within the Appropriate Limit, and provide the Requester with the opportunity to narrow their request.

- 6.4.5 Where the Trust has issued a Fee Notice and Requester indicates they are not prepared to pay the fee as set out in the Fee Notice or does not pay the fee as set out in the Fee Notice within three months, the Trust is not obliged to comply with the original request. The Trust will, however, consider any narrowed or amended request.

6.5 Exemptions

- 6.5.1 The right to be provided with information requested may be limited by the application of an exemption. Some exemptions are absolute, and others are qualified. Where an exemption applies to information requested, the Trust may also be exempt from having to confirm or deny that the information exists as well as from disclosing the requested information.

- 6.5.2 Where a qualified exemption applies to information requested from the Trust, the Trust will consider whether the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

- 6.5.3 The absolute exemptions most relevant to the Trust are those that relate to:

- A. Information accessible by other means ([FOIA Section 21](#))
- B. Personal Information ([FOIA Section 40](#))
- C. Confidential Information ([FOIA Section 41](#))
- D. Prohibitions on Disclosure ([FOIA Section 44](#))

- 6.5.4 The qualified exemptions most relevant to the Trust are those that relate to:

- A. Information intended for future publication ([FOIA Section 22](#))
- B. Prejudice to the Effective Conduct of Public Affairs ([FOIA Section 36](#))
- C. Health and Safety ([FOIA Section 38](#))
- D. Legal Professional Privilege ([FOIA Section 42](#))
- E. Commercial Interests ([FOIA Section 43](#))

- 6.5.5 Where the Trust relies on an exemption in not complying with a request for information, the Trust will write to the Requester setting out the exemption relied on explaining the reason(s) the Trust considers that the exemption applies to the information requested and, where appropriate, why it has decided that the public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in disclosing it.

6.6 Requests for Personal Data

- 6.6.1 A request by an individual for their own data made subject to the provisions of FOIA will be treated as a subject access request.

- 6.6.2 A request for the personal data of a third party will be refused where the provision of that information will

contravene any of the principles of the GDPR, pursuant to section 40(2) of FOIA.

6.6.3 For further detail please refer to the Trust's Subject Access Request Policy.

6.7 Repeat and Vexatious Requests

6.7.1 The Trust will not comply with a request for information which is considered to be vexatious.

6.7.2 In determining whether a request is vexatious, the Trust will consider whether the request is likely to cause a disproportionate or unjustified level of disruption, irritation or distress to the Trust, staff, Trustees or Governors. The Trust will also consider the burden on the Trust and any possible distress to its staff, Board of Trustees and/or Local Governing Boards (LGB) in responding to the request, the motive of the Requester and the seriousness of the request.

6.7.3 The Trust will also not comply with a request for information which is identical or substantially similar to a previous request made by the Requester unless a reasonable time has elapsed between the current request and the previous request.

6.7.4 In considering whether a reasonable time has elapsed the Trust will take into account the time that has passed between the current request and the previous request and likelihood that the information requested will differ significantly from the information provided in the response to the previous request.

6.8 Complaints

6.8.1 Appeals against any decision not to supply information which the Trust considers exempt should be made to the Data Protection Officer at dpo@tlet.org.uk who will review the original decision.

6.8.2 A complaint about the Trust's Freedom of Information processes, procedures or how a request for information has been dealt with should be made via the Trust's Complaints Policy available at [TLET Website](#).

6.8.3 If a requester is unhappy with the outcome of their complaint, or the way a request for information has been handled, they can complain to the Information Commissioner at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF
Tel: 0162 545700

7 – Monitoring

7.1 This policy will be reviewed annually or earlier if required and may be subject to change.

Contacting the Data Protection Officer

The Trust's Data Protection Officer can be contacted by email dpo@tlet.org.uk or telephone on 01788 593900.

Appendix 1

Freedom of Information Publication Scheme

Introduction

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) requires all public authorities (including schools/academies) to adopt and maintain a publication scheme. In 2008 the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) changed the emphasis in the approval and operation of publication schemes to a generic model, with effect from 1 January 2009.

The model commits a public authority to 'produce and publish the method by which the specific information will be available so that it can be easily identified and accessed by members of the public'.

A school will breach the FOIA if it has not adopted the model scheme or is not publishing in accordance with it by this date.

The Transforming Lives Academy Trust has adopted the ICO Model Publication Scheme in full, unedited. The Guide to information below should be read together with the ICO Model Publication Scheme which can be found [here](#).

The Local Governing Board (LGB) are responsible for maintenance of this scheme and have delegated to their Principal the day-to-day responsibility for FOI policy and the provision of advice, guidance, publicity and interpretation of the policy.

Information to be published. This includes datasets where applicable	How the information can be obtained	Cost
Class 1 - Who we are and what we do (Organisational information, structures, locations and contacts) Only current information will be made available	Trust/Academy Website	Free
Who's who in the Academy/Trust	Staff list / website	Free
Who's who on the LG Board / Board of Trustees and the basis of their appointment	Staff Handbook / Website Student / Parent / Staff Portals	Free
Instrument of Governance / Articles of Association	Website	Free
Contact details for the Principal and for the LG Board, via the Academy (named contacts where possible).	Website / Headed Paper / Compliment Slips	Free
Academy prospectus (if any)	Hard copy from academy office	Free

	Online version on the website	
Annual Report (if any)	Website - Local Governing Board section	5p per sheet
Staffing structure	Hard Copy	5p per sheet
Academy session times and term dates	Website / Hard copy / Student Planner Student / Parent / Staff Portals	5p per sheet
Address of Academy / Trust and contact details, including email address.	Website / letter headed paper Student / Parent / Staff Portals	Free
Class 2 - What we spend and how we spend it (Financial information relating to projected and actual income and expenditure, procurement, contracts and financial audit) Information from the current and previous financial year will be made available.	Trust	
Trust Annual Accounts	Website / Hard Copy	5p per sheet
Annual budget plan and financial statements	Hard Copy	5p per sheet
Capital funding	Hard Copy	5p per sheet
Financial audit reports	Hard Copy	5p per sheet
Details of expenditure items over £2000 - published at least annually but at a more frequent quarterly or six-monthly interval where practical.	Hard Copy	5p per sheet
Procurement and contracts the Trust / Academy has entered into, or information relating to / a link to information held by an organisation which has done so on its behalf (for example, a local authority or diocese).	Hard Copy	5p per sheet
Pay Policy	Website/Hard Copy	5p per sheet
Staff allowances and expenses that can be incurred or claimed, with totals paid to individual senior staff members (Senior Leadership Team or equivalent, whose basic actual salary is at least £60,000 per annum) by reference to categories.	Hard Copy	5p per sheet
Staffing, pay and grading structure. As a minimum the pay information should include salaries for senior staff (Senior Leadership Team or equivalent as above) in bands of £10,000; for more junior posts, by salary	Trust Annual Accounts - Website/Hard Copy	5p per sheet

range.		
Partners' / Trustees' / Members' allowances that can be incurred or claimed, and a record of total payments made to individuals.	Hard Copy	5p per sheet
Class 3 - What our priorities are and how we are doing (Strategies and plans, performance indicators, audits, inspections and reviews) Current information will be made available	(Hard Copy or website)	5p per sheet
Academy profile (if any) And in all cases: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance data supplied to the English Government, or a direct link to the data • The latest Ofsted Inspectorate report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Summary - Full Report 	Website	Free If copies are required. 5p per sheet
Performance management policy and procedures adopted by the Trust / Academy	Website / Hard Copy	5p per sheet
Performance data or a direct link to it	Website / Prospectus	Free
The Trust's / Academy's future plans; for example, for proposals for, and any consultation on, the future, such as a change in status.	3 year plan - Website / Hard Copy Student / Parent / Staff Portals	Free / 5p per sheet
Safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures.	Website Student / Parent / Staff Portals	Free
Class 4 - How do we make decisions (Decision making processes and records of decisions) Current and previous three years as a minimum.	Website / Hard Copy	5p per sheet
Admissions policy / decisions (not individual admission decisions) - where applicable	Website / Hard Copy	5p per sheet
Agendas and minutes of meetings of the Board of Trustees and its committees, inc. LG Boards. (NB - this will exclude information that is properly regarded as private to the meetings).	Website / Hard Copy	5p per sheet
Class 5 - Our policies and procedures (Current written protocols, policies and	Website / Hard Copy	Free

procedures for delivering our services and responsibilities) Current information will be made available only.		
Policies	Website / Hard Copy	Free
Records management and personal data policies	Hard Copy	5p per sheet
Charging regimes and policies	Website / Hard Copy (See Charging and Remissions Policy)	5p per sheet
Class 6 - Lists and Registers Currently maintained lists and registers will be made available only (this does not include the attendance register)	(Website / Hard Copy; some information may only be available by inspection)	5p per sheet
Curriculum circulars and statutory instruments	Website	Free
Disclosure logs	Unnamed statement	5p per sheet
Asset register	Viewing only	Free
Any information the Trust / Academy is currently legally required to hold in publicly available registers. (NB - this does not include the attendance registers)	Website	Free
Class 7 - The services we offer (Information about the services we offer, including leaflets, guidance and newsletters produced for the public and businesses) Current information will be made available only	(Website/Hard Copy; some information may only be available by inspection)	Free
Extra - curricular activities	Website Student/Parent/Staff Portals	Free
Out of school clubs	Website Student/Parent/Staff Portals	Free
Services for which the Trust / Academy is entitled to recover a fee, together with those fees	Website	Free
School publications, leaflets, books and newsletters	Website Student/Parent/Staff Portals	Free

Additional Information		
This will provide Trusts/Academies with the opportunity to publish information that is not itemised in the lists above.		

How to Request Information

You can request a copy of the information you want from the contact details listed on www.tlet.org.uk

If the information you are looking for is not available via our publication scheme and is not on our website, you may still ask if we have it. Please contact us in writing, by email, fax or letter.

Please state this is a Freedom of Information Request.

Paying for Information

Information published on our website is free, (apart from any connection costs payable to your internet service provider). If you do not have Internet access, you can access our website using a local library or an Internet cafe.

Single printed copies of information covered by this publication are provided free unless stated otherwise. 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 DVDs we will let you know the cost before fulfilling your request.

Schedule of Charges

This describes how the charges set out in the Guide to Information above have been arrived at.

TYPE OF CHARGE	DESCRIPTION	BASIS OF CHARGE
Disbursement cost	Photocopying/printing @ 5p per sheet (black & white)	Actual cost 5p
	Photocopying/printing @ 10p per sheet (colour)	Actual cost 10p
	Postage	Actual cost of Royal Mail standard 2nd class
Statutory Fee		In accordance with the relevant legislation (quote the actual statute)
Re-licensing the use of datasets (No personal data will be disclosed)	<p>If the dataset is a relevant copyright work, the school will provide it under the terms of a specified licence.</p> <p>A relevant copyright work is one for which the school owns the copyright and database rights, and which is not a Crown copyright or Parliamentary copyright work.</p> <p>The Open Government Licence (OGL) is the default licence for datasets that can be reused without charge;</p>	There is no reuse fee if the dataset is provided under the OGL or the Non-Commercial Government Licence.

	<p>other licences (the Non-Commercial Government Licence and the Charged Licence) are available where that is not appropriate.</p> <p>We may charge a fee for communicating the information and a fee for making the dataset available for reuse if this requires cost and effort in publishing this in a reusable form.</p> <p>Under our publication scheme we will publish datasets that have been requested, and any updated versions it holds, unless it is satisfied that it is not appropriate to do so. Pronoun change? Should this be 'updated versions we hold, unless we are satisfied.....'?</p> <p>Factors that can be taken into account when deciding whether it is not appropriate include whether the information is exempt and the cost and effort of publishing in a reusable form.</p> <p>Complaints that the academy/Trust has not met its duties under the dataset provisions will be dealt with by the Information Commissioner, in consultation with the National Archives as appropriate.</p>	
Other	£2 which includes research for each item.	

Freedom of information initial response letter

Use this template to acknowledge receipt of a Freedom of information request

How to use this template

This will:

- Help you let the requester know you've received the request
- Give you an opportunity to:
 - o Clarify their request (if needed, see below)
 - o Tell them if you're using different legislation (if applicable, see below)
 - o Charge them a fee (see the section 'Charging for information', below)

Clarify if you're not sure what the request is for

Contact the requester as soon as possible for clarification. You don't have to deal with the request until you've received the clarification you reasonably need.

Consider whether you can help the requester to rephrase their request (e.g. 'Did you want X or Y?').

Make sure you're using the right legislation

- If the person is asking for their own personal data, or if they're a parent/carer wanting to see their child's personal data, deal with it as a subject access request
- If the person is a parent/carer asking to see their child's educational record and you're a maintained school, treat it as a parental access request
- If the person is asking for 'environmental information', see this ICO guidance

Any other non-routine request for information should be dealt with under the FOIA. Keep reading this article to find out how to respond.



Transforming Lives

EDUCATIONAL TRUST

Dear [requester's name],

Thank you for the request you made on [date of request], seeking the following information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000:

[Copy and paste the information requested in the initial request.]

If you don't need to clarify anything with the requester, deal with the request under different legislation or charge them a fee, insert this:

This is to confirm that we have received your request. You should receive a response from us by [insert date that's 20 school days away from when they submitted the request, or 60 working days if that's sooner].

If you need to clarify anything with the requester, insert this:

We would like to clarify the following point(s) to make sure we give you the information you are looking for:

[Insert clarification questions here].

Once we are clear on what information you are requesting, you should receive a response from us within 20 school days, or 60 working days if that is shorter.

If you need to deal with the request under different legislation, insert this:

The information you have requested does not fall under the terms of the Act. Instead, we will treat your request under [insert relevant legislation, e.g. the UK GDPR].

This means you should receive a response from us by [insert deadline as set out in relevant legislation].

If you need to charge a fee for responding to the request, insert this:

In order for us to fulfil this request, you will need to pay us [insert amount] within 3 months of the date this notice was issued. [If you want, add details about what costs this payment would cover].

If you are not willing or able to pay this fee, please do get in touch and we can discuss ways of refining your request that could bring this cost down.

If you do pay the fee, you should receive a response from us within [insert amount of compliance time left since receiving the request] once we have received the payment.

[Insert details of how this fee should be paid, such as bank account details.]

Yours Sincerely,

[Your name & position]

Freedom of information request template

Please fill in the form below to make your request. Feel free to delete the parts highlighted in yellow, which provide more instructions to help you.

Send the completed form to [insert contact details here].

Name of requester	Please specify your real name or the name of the person or organisation you're requesting the information on behalf of.
Contact details	This can be any postal or email address you can receive correspondence to, including personal and work addresses.
Information you want to access	Please be as specific as possible. We may return to you for further clarification if we're not clear what you're looking for.
How you want to receive the information	The means of communication here can be 1 or more of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A copy of the information (e.g. hard copy, electronic document)• An opportunity to come in and inspect the information• A digest or summary of the information

Freedom of information refusal letter

Use this template if refusing a FOI request for one of the following reasons:

Requests exceeding cost limit

You can refuse a request if:

- You estimate the cost of complying with the request will exceed the £450 limit
- The cost of finding out whether you hold the information would exceed the £450 limit (e.g. if you would have to do an extensive search in a number of locations)

However, you should still say whether you hold the information, even if you can't provide the information itself. As mentioned above, you should also give the requester the option of refining their request rather than paying extra.

Vexatious requests

You can refuse to comply with any part of a vexatious request, including confirming or denying whether you hold the information.

When deciding whether a request is vexatious, ask yourself: is the request likely to cause a disproportionate or unjustifiable amount of distress, disruption or irritation?

You can take into account the context and history of a request, including the identity of the requester and your previous contact with them. However, it's the request that is vexatious and not the requester. If you receive a legitimate request from the same person later, you should answer it.

If you do refuse for this reason, you need to notify the requester of your decision (use our template letter above) and keep a record of the reasons for your decision so that you can justify it later should a complaint be made to the ICO.

Repeated requests

You can refuse repeated requests, whether or not they're also vexatious, if there's a complete or substantial overlap between information sets requested by the same person. You can't refuse a request just because it's for information on a related topic.

You also can't use this justification once a 'reasonable period' has passed, although how long this period is depends on the circumstances, such as how often the information you hold changes.

As above, if you refuse for this reason, send a notification of your decision and keep a record of the reasons for your decision.

Exemptions

The FOIA defines a range of exemptions you can use to refuse part or all of a request, including confirming whether or not you hold the information.

There are 2 types of exemption:

- Absolute
- Qualified

If the exemption is qualified, you'll have to carry out a 'public interest test', which is to determine whether the public interest in applying the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

Absolute exemptions include requests for information:

- That is already reasonably accessible
- In court records
- That includes personal data of living third parties where there's no lawful basis identifiable for you to share it
- Given to you by someone else where disclosure could lead to a breach of confidence

Qualified exemptions include requests for information:

- Intended for future publication
- Related to criminal investigations
- That could prejudice law enforcement activities
- That could endanger anyone's physical or mental health or safety
- Covered by legal professional privilege
- That could prejudice commercial interests

Read [ICO guidance](#) if you want help in deciding whether any of these exemptions apply.



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Dear [requester's name],

Thank you for the request you made on [date of request], seeking the following information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000:

[Copy and paste the information requested in the initial request.]

If you're refusing on the grounds of a vexatious or repeated request, insert this:

We will not be supplying the information as we believe your request to be [vexatious/repeated]. This is allowable under section 14 of the Act.

We will not send a written refusal in response to any further [vexatious/repeated] requests.

If you're refusing on the grounds that it exceeds your cost limit, insert this:

We will not be supplying the information as the 'cost of compliance' for completing this request on our end would exceed £450, the appropriate cost limit set in legislation. This is allowable under section 12 of the Act.

[Add details about how you calculated this cost and which parts of the request took the cost over the line – for example because it would require an extensive search in a number of locations.]

Please do get in touch and we can discuss ways of refining your request that could bring this cost down.

If you're refusing on the grounds of exemptions set out in the Act, insert this:

We will not be supplying the information under the exemption set out in [insert section] of the Act, which applies to information concerning [insert details].

If you're refusing to confirm or deny whether you have the information for whatever reason, add this below whichever of the above sections used:

Due to this exemption, we're also not able to confirm or deny that we hold this information.

If you have an internal appeals process in place, insert this:

If you are not satisfied that we have complied with the Act in responding to your request, you can request an internal review. Please get in touch, explaining what you would like us to review.

If you are not satisfied with the outcomes of the internal review, you can appeal to the Information Commissioner:

- Report a concern online at <https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/>

- Call 0303 123 1113
- Or write to: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF

If you don't have an internal appeals process in place, insert this:

If you are not satisfied that we have complied with the Act in responding to your request, you can appeal to the Information Commissioner:

- Report a concern online at <https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/>
- Call 0303 123 1113
- Or write to: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF

Yours Sincerely,

[Your name & position]