



**EDUCATION
CENTRAL**
MULTI ACADEMY TRUST

Education Central Multi Academy Trust

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT

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Freedom of Information



Education Central Multi Academy Trust ('ECMAT') is committed to the principles of openness and transparency. We are committed to compliance with the Freedom of Information Act by providing a guide to the information we make available, and by responding to requests for information.

What is Freedom of Information?

Freedom of Information gives individuals and organisations the right to access information held by Public Bodies. ECMAT is a Public Body for these purposes. Any person requesting information has the following rights:

- To be informed, in writing, whether ECMAT holds the information
- To have the information communicated to him/her

Who can request information from ECMAT?

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, any individual, anywhere in the world, is able to make a request to ECMAT for information. An applicant is entitled to be informed in writing as to whether the information is held and have the information communicated to them – normally within 20 days of a valid request..

If any of the requested information is to be refused, ECMAT must provide a refusal notice which clearly states the reasons why we are withholding the information you have requested and making clear the appeals process.

What type of information can I request?

You have the right to request any information held by ECMAT. The Act allows applicants access to recorded information, such as emails, meeting minutes, research or reports, held by ECMAT. Before you make a Freedom of Information request, please check our website view our [policies and regulations](#) page to see if the information is already available. If you are unable to locate the information, please make a Freedom of Information request, as detailed below.

How do I make a Freedom of Information request?

A valid Freedom of Information request should:

- Be in writing ([emails](#) are acceptable). Requests for environmental information can be verbal e.g. a telephone request, and should be dealt with in accordance with Environmental Information Regulations
- Include the name and address of the applicant (an email address is valid)
- Describe the information required

If your request does not contain sufficient information to proceed, you will be contacted and asked to provide further information. The 20 working day deadline will not commence until the necessary information has been received. The individual must be provided with advice and assistance in making their request and describing the information requested, where necessary.

To make a Freedom of Information request you can use the [FOI request form](#) or send an email to education-central@wlv.ac.uk or please write to:

Accounting Officer
Education Central Multi Academy Trust
Room PA108 ,University of Wolverhampton Science Park
Glaisher Drive, Wolverhampton WV10 9RU

In order that we can respond to your request as quickly and concisely as possible please try to give as much information as you can about your request. Don't forget to include your name and a contact address (an email address is acceptable).

How long will it take?

Under the Freedom of Information Act ECMAT is required to respond to Freedom of Information requests within 20 working days from the day after receipt of the request.

If we have to contact you to clarify what information is being requested or to request payment of a fee, the 20 day period may be extended.

How does ECMAT respond?

When making a request you can state a preference of how you want the information communicated to you. This could be by way of:

- a hard copy (i.e. a letter), or
- an electronic copy of the information (such as an email), or
- providing you with an opportunity to inspect a record containing the information or
- providing a digest or summary of the information

ECMAT will give effect to this as far as is reasonably practical, or notify you why it is not so.

If the information is already available in the public domain, for example on ECMAT website, ECMAT will respond and inform you of where you can locate this information, providing you with a web link where ever possible.

How much will it cost?

There is no 'flat rate' fee to receive information and in many cases the information will be provided to you free of charge.

ECMAT can refuse a request if we estimate that it will cost in excess of £450 to fulfill your request. We may be willing to provide the information if you are willing to pay the full costs in dealing with the request.

Where the limit is not exceeded, the only charges that can be passed to you are those associated with providing the information, for example photocopying and postage. These are collectively known as disbursements.

In what circumstances would this information request be refused?

Requested information may not always be provided. The Freedom of Information Act recognises there will be valid reasons why some kinds of information may be withheld.

ECMAT are not obliged to deal with vexatious or repeated requests.

ECMAT will refuse to disclose information in the following circumstances: -

- a) The information requested is third party data and would be classed as personal data; the request will then be dealt with in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. If you wish to make a request for this information, please see our [Data Protection Policy](#);
- b) Where consideration needs to be given to whether the information is in the public interest. In some circumstances matter may need to be referred to ECMAT's legal representatives or the Information Commissioner. If this applies, the applicant will be contacted and informed of any likely delays due to the consideration of exemptions and public interest;
- c) The request is vexatious, or the same information has previously been provided to the applicant;
- d) The cost of complying would exceed the appropriate limit (currently £450). If this applies, the individual will be informed of any similar information which may satisfy their requirements and provided with information up-to the appropriate limit;

e) Where the individual has not responded to reasonable requests for further information regarding the nature of their request.

Where a refusal to disclose information is made, the individual will be informed of the complaints procedure and the right to refer to ECMAT to the Information Commissioner.

What do I do if I am not satisfied with the response?

Complaints are defined as “any expression of dissatisfaction from a member of the public which requires a response” and will be dealt with in accordance with existing complaints procedures to ensure that they are processed confidentially, fairly and without delay.

If you are not satisfied with ECMAT’s response to your Freedom of Information request, you should use our [Complaints Form](#) (opens as a word document) which is also available on request from the above address. If, for whatever reason, you are unable to complete a complaint form, you are encouraged to contact ECMAT and the member of staff receiving your communication will, on your request, complete a complaint form on your behalf and submit it for action.

If the decision is to uphold the exemption, a letter will be sent to you explaining that the exemption has been upheld and outlining our reasons for the decision.

You have the right to appeal to the [Information Commissioner](#) if you are not satisfied with the outcome of consideration of your complaint. They can be contacted at the following address:

The Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF.

Useful links:

[Information commissioner’s Office](#)

[Freedom of Information Act 2000](#)