

Greenshaw Learning Trust Freedom of Information Requests Procedure

May 2018

This Greenshaw Learning Trust Procedure applies to the Greenshaw Learning Trust as a whole and to all the schools and service units in the Trust, in accordance with and pursuant to the GLT Freedom of Information Policy of the Greenshaw Learning Trust. The Greenshaw Learning Trust, including all the schools and services within the Trust, their Trustees, governors and staff, must abide by this GLT Freedom of Information Procedure.

This Procedure must be read in conjunction with the GLT Freedom of Information Policy; all the terms of the GLT Freedom of Information Policy apply to the interpretation and implementation of this Procedure; if there is any ambiguity or conflict the GLT Freedom of Information Policy must be followed.

It is the responsibility of the local governing body and Headteacher of each school, and the Board of Trustees and Executive Headteacher for Trust central services, to ensure that their school/service and its staff adhere to this GLT Freedom of Information Procedure; in implementing this Procedure the local governing body, Headteacher and Trust staff must take account of any advice given to them by the GLT Executive Headteacher and/or Board of Trustees.

This Procedure is subject to the Scheme of Delegation approved for the school or service. If there is any ambiguity or conflict then the Scheme of Delegation and any specific Scheme or alteration or restriction to the Scheme approved by the Board of Trustees takes precedence.

If there is any question or doubt about the interpretation or implementation of this Procedure, the GLT Executive Headteacher should be consulted.

Approval and review:

This Procedure is the responsibility of the GLT Executive Headteacher. This Procedure was approved by the Board of Trustees on: 23 May 2018. This Procedure is due for review by: May 2021.

Greenshaw Learning Trust

Freedom of Information Requests Procedure

1.1 Responsibilities, approval and review

It is the responsibility of the local governing body and Headteacher of each school, and the Board of Trustees and Executive Headteacher for Trust central services, to ensure that their school/service and its staff adhere to this Procedure; in implementing this Procedure the local governing body, Headteacher and Trust staff must take account of any advice given to them by the GLT Executive Headteacher and/or Board of Trustees.

This Procedure was approved by the Board of Trustees on: 23 May 2018.

This Procedure is due for review by: May 2021.

1.2 Terminology

The Trust means the Greenshaw Learning Trust (GLT).

- School means a school within the Greenshaw Learning Trust.
- Headteacher means the headteacher or principal of the school.
- Executive Headteacher means the chief executive officer of the Greenshaw Learning Trust.
- Local governing body (LGB) means the committee of the Board of Trustees to which Trustees have delegated appropriate powers and functions relating to the governance of the school.

In this Procedure references to the Greenshaw Learning Trust will be read as including the Greenshaw Learning Trust central service and all schools in the Greenshaw Learning Trust.

1.3 Application

This Procedure applies to the Greenshaw Learning Trust as a whole and to all the schools and service units in the Trust, in accordance with and pursuant to the GLT Freedom of Information Policy of the Greenshaw Learning Trust. The Greenshaw Learning Trust, including all the schools and services within the Trust, their Trustees, governors and staff, must abide by this GLT Freedom of Information Procedure.

In implementing this Procedure and associated school policies and procedures the local governing body, Headteacher and school staff must take account of any advice or instruction given to them by the GLT Executive Headteacher or Board of Trustees.

If there is any question about the interpretation or implementation of this Procedure the GLT Executive Headteacher should be consulted.

2. HOW TO DEAL WITH REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

Information provided under this Procedure will be provided in accordance with the relevant Publication Scheme of the Trust or individual school.

Not every request for information has to be handled formally as a request under the Act. If it can be dealt with quickly and easily, the information should be provided.

If it is not clear what information is sought, the applicant should be asked to clarify their request.

In the first instance, persons seeking information about the Trust or its schools should be referred to the relevant Publication Scheme of the Trust or school, and to check if it is available on the school or Trust website.

For a request to be valid under the Act it must be in writing (which includes email), but requesters do not have to mention the Act or direct their request to a designated member of staff. Any letter or email to a public authority asking for information is a request for recorded information under the Act.

Requests for information held by the Trust that is not published under the appropriate publication scheme or that has not been made available following a simple enquiry to the school or service concerned may be submitted as a formal request under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act.

A request from an individual to see any personal information held about them by the Greenshaw Learning Trust will be dealt with in accordance with the GLT Subject Access Request Procedure, not through this Procedure.

As soon as a request for information invokes the FoI Act notification should be sent to the trust central team by email to foi@greenshawlearningtrust.co.uk

The request must be acknowledged immediately. The acknowledgement must confirm if the information requested is held, except in exceptional circumstances where it is not required to confirm or deny if the information is held (for example if information is sought about criminal activity which could prejudice a Police investigation).

The information requested must be provided within 20 school days, but this does not start until any necessary clarification has been provided. When calculating the 20 working day deadline, a “working day” is a school day (one in which pupils are in attendance), subject to an absolute maximum of 60 normal working days (not school days) to respond.

Information should be provided by whatever means is most reasonable. For example, if a request is made by email, it should be answered by email. However, requesters have the right to specify the means by which information is provided.

The Act only covers recorded information held by an organisation. When compiling a response to a request for information, it may be necessary to draw from multiple sources of information held but there is no requirement to make up an answer or find out information from elsewhere if the information is not held. The requester should be advised of this in writing.

Before disclosure, information must be very carefully checked to ensure it does not contain personal data or information that should be withheld.

The Data Protection Officer must be consulted about any refusal to provide information on the basis of data protection prior to notifying the applicant.

Information must be released unless there is a good reason not to. Reasons for not disclosing are:

- It would cost too much or take too much staff time to deal with the request.
- The request is vexatious.
- The request repeats a previous request from the same person.
- An exemption in the Act applies.

When responding to a request where the Trust or school has withheld some or all of the

the school or service must explain why the information has been withheld, quoting the appropriate section number and explaining how the information requested fits within that exemption. If the public interest test has been applied, this also needs to be explained.

Further information is available on the Information Commissioner's website at:

<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-freedom-of-information/refusing-a-request/>

If refusing a request, the individual should be told that they may complain to the Information Commissioner at <https://ico.org.uk/concerns/getting/>

The responses to the requester, including a copy of the information provided must be sent to the trust central team by email to FOI@greenshawlearningtrust.co.uk