

Amplify Education

Freedom of Information Policy

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Author (Role Title): Head of Operations

Approved By (Board/committee/ Exec/HT): Risk and Audit Committee

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Dated Adopted: 30th June 2026

Review Date:

As part of the review process, this policy/procedure has been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment

Date	Page	Change	Purpose of Change

Aims

Values, Principles and Standards

Amplify is **a bold voice for Bristol** - speaking with ambition and channelling the city's spirit into a shared journey of belief, opportunity and citizenship.

We **build belief** in every young person, shaping a future where every voice matters, every story is heard, and every learner moves forward with confidence.

We **expand opportunities** and nurture potential to enrich each learner's journey with a passport of inclusive, academic, creative and musical experiences.

We **strengthen citizenship** through connecting communities, educating to build unity and pride. This is Bristol, represented.

Introduction

It is the responsibility of the Trustees of Amplify Education (Amplify) to ensure procedures are in place to ensure it handles information requests covered by the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FoIA), the UK GDPR and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR) in accordance with the provisions laid out therein and that they comply with the standards set out in the Lord Chancellor's

Code of Practice on satisfying public authorities obligations under the FoIA, produced under section 45 of that Act.

Amplify is committed to transparency in its dealings with the public and fully embraces the aims of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the access provisions of the UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018. They will make every effort to meet its obligations under the respective legislation and will regularly review procedures to ensure that it is doing so.

The underlying principle of this policy is that the public have a right to access to recorded information held by Amplify and that the trust should seek to promote an open regime regarding access to information, subject to the exemptions contained within the relevant legislation.

Separate guidance, in the form of operating procedures, will be shared with staff on how to handle information requests received under the FoIA regime.

Background

The FoIA applies to all public authorities and came fully into force on 1st January 2005. It provides the public with a statutory right of access to recorded information held by authorities, subject to certain exemptions, within 20 working days. The Act is fully retrospective and applies to all information that falls within the scope of the Act, not just information created from 1st January 2005. Section 19 of the Act also obliges the Trust to make information pro-actively available in the form of an approved “publication scheme”.

In addition, individuals currently have a statutory right of access to their own “personal data” under the UK GDPR.

The EIR provides a statutory right of access to “environmental information”, as defined in these regulations. The EIR came into force on 1st January 2005 and replaces the existing 1992 Regulations. The EIR are also fully retrospective.

The Government's Information Commissioner enforces these three information regimes. Each regime contains certain categories of exempt information, where information can be withheld. Any decision to withhold information under an exemption can be referred by the applicant to the Information Commissioner, who can overturn any decision to withhold information. For the purposes of this policy,

the “public” is defined as any individual or organisation anywhere in the world and an “information request” refers to any request for recorded information made under the FoIA, EIR or UK GDPR.

Timescales

Freedom of Information requests will be responded to promptly and in any event within 20 school days (i.e. days when pupils are in attendance), or 60 working days, whichever is the shorter period, in accordance with statutory requirements.

Where requests relate to a specific school within the Trust, the relevant school’s term dates will be used to calculate ‘school days’.

Delegated responsibilities

Overall responsibility for ensuring that Amplify meets the statutory requirements of the FoIA, EIR and UK GDPR lies with the Trustees and the Chair of Trustees has overall responsibility for information management issues. They have delegated the day-to-day responsibility of implementation to the Chief Executive and head teachers.

The Headteacher/Chief Executive Officer or their delegated person currently fulfils the role of ‘Fol officer’. All Trust and school staff are responsible for ensuring that they handle requests for information in compliance with the provisions of the various Acts, taking advice from the Fol officer where necessary.

Scope

This policy applies to all recorded information held by Amplify that relates to the business of its Trust and schools. This includes:

- Information created and held by the Trust or schools
- Information created by the Trust or schools and held by another organisation on their behalf

- Information held by the Trust or schools provided by third parties, where this relates to a function or business of the Trust or schools (such as contractual information) and
- Information held by the Trust or schools relating to Governors/Trustees/Members where the information relates to the functions or business of the Trust or schools.

This policy applies to all recorded information relating to Trust business, regardless of the device or account used. Purely private communications that are unrelated to Trust business are not in scope. The Amplify's Data Protection Policy establishes the standards regarding the use of "personal data" (as defined in the UK GDPR).

Requesting information

Procedures

Practical procedures for handling information enquiries in line with the relevant legislation will be produced and copies can be obtained from the School's FoI Officer.

Amplify has a duty under both the FoIA and EIR to provide advice and assistance to applicants making information requests. This includes assisting the applicant in making the application for information or providing the information in more accessible formats and additional languages. In addition, where a requestor may need to request or receive information in a non-electronic format, the Trust and/or school will discuss this with the individual and suggest alternative measures to aid access. Although no such duty exists under the UK GDPR, the same level of care will be provided where possible.

Charges

The three information regimes contain different provisions that permit charges to be made for responding to information requests. Amplify may charge a fee for complying with requests, as calculated in accordance with FoIA regulations. If a charge is to be made, the Trust or schools will give written notice to the applicant before supplying the information requested.

Amplify will only charge for the cost of copying and transmitting information, not for time taken in reaching decisions regarding whether information is covered by an exemption.

Where Amplify estimates that the cost of locating the information will exceed the statutory threshold of £450, it will consider whether or not to comply with the request. Amplify is not obliged to comply with such a request but may choose to do so.

Publication

The Trust has adopted the model publication scheme set out by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) for all public authorities and is committed to publishing the information it describes. Included in the scheme are the following classes of information:

- Who we are and what we do
- What we spend and how we spend it
- What our priorities are and how we are doing
- How we make decisions
- Our policies and procedures
- Lists and registers
- The services we offer

See Appendix 1 for the Amplify Education Publication Scheme.

Withholding Information

The Freedom of Information Act contains 23 exemptions whereby information can be withheld. There are two categories; absolute and non-absolute. Amplify will only withhold information if it falls within the scope of one or more of these exemptions.

Where an absolute exemption applies, Amplify can automatically withhold the information. However, where the exemption is non-absolute the information can only be withheld where Amplify decides that the public interest is best served by withholding the information. Certain exemptions also contain a "prejudice test", which means that the exemption can only be claimed if disclosing the information would prejudice the interest protected by the exemption.

Amplify will only withhold information covered by the exemption. Complete files or documents will not be withheld just because part of the information is covered by an exemption.

Amplify will only apply an exemption where it has reason to believe that prejudice might occur to the interest protected by the exemption. In addition, wherever a “public interest” exemption is being considered, Amplify will only withhold that information which it can demonstrate that the public interest will be best served by withholding. When considering withholding information under a non-absolute exemption Amplify will take into account whether the release of the information would:

- promote further understanding of current issues of public debate;
- promote the accountability of decisions taken by Amplify and the spending and allocation of public money;
- bring to light matters of public safety;
- allows the public to understand and challenge decisions made by Amplify;
- be otherwise in the public interest.

Where information is withheld under an exemption in most cases the reason behind the decision will be made clear to the applicant, citing the exemption under which the information is being withheld. The applicant will also be given details of the right to challenge the decision through the FOI Complaint procedure (see below page 11) and the right of appeal to the Information Commissioner's Office.

Where a staff member plans to apply an exemption, he/she will consider whether other schools hold similar information. If this is considered likely, he/she may contact the relevant school(s) to ensure that a consistent response is provided to the applicant.

Amplify will also refuse to supply information under the FoIA, where the request is considered “vexatious” or “repeated” and under the EIR, where the request is considered ‘manifestly unreasonable’.

Releasing a third party's information

Where, in response to a request, information belonging to a third party (either an individual or other organisation) has to be considered for release, the staff member that received the request will seek input from the FoI officer prior to the release of the information.

The release of third party information will be considered carefully to prevent actions for breach of confidence or, in the case of living individuals, breaches of the UK GDPR. Both the EIR and FoIA permit information to be withheld when its release would breach the provisions of the UK GDPR.

When the requested information relates to a living individual and amounts to “personal data” as defined in the UK GDPR, its disclosure could breach the UK GDPR. Therefore, the release of third party personal information relating to living individuals will be considered in accordance with the data protection principles and, in particular, the “third party” provisions of the UK GDPR.

Where appropriate, Amplify will contact the individual to ask for permission to disclose the information. If consent is not obtained, either because it was not considered appropriate to approach the third party or the third party could not be contacted or consent is refused. Amplify will then consider if it is reasonable to disclose the information, taking into account:

- the circumstances surrounding the information;
- any duty of confidentiality owed to the third party
- the steps taken to seek consent
- whether the third party is able to give consent and
- any express refusal of consent

The decision to disclose third party information will also take into account the impact of disclosure on the third party, relative to the impact on the applicant of withholding the information. Where the third party has been acting in an official, rather than private capacity, Amplify will be minded to disclose the information, although decisions will be made on a case by case basis.

Where the information relates to a staff member, the provisions of the UK GDPR will still apply in many circumstances but the nature of the information will influence Amplify’s decision whether to release the information. Where the information relates to a matter clearly private to the individual, e.g. a disciplinary hearing, the information will almost certainly be withheld. However, where the information relates to the member of staff acting in their official capacity, e.g. an expenses

claim, the information will normally be released. The exemption relating to the release of a third party's personal data will not be used to withhold information about administrative decisions taken by Amplify.

As the UK GDPR only relates to living individuals, the exemption relating to Data Protection under both the EIR and FoIA will not apply to information held about the deceased. Where the request might be controversial, the staff member will seek input from the FoI officer who will take advice from the Trust's board where necessary.

Where the third party is an organisation, rather than an individual, the provisions of UK GDPR will not apply. Amplify will consider consulting the third party concerning the release of their information where:

- the views of the third party may assist Amplify to decide whether an exemption under the Act applies to the information and
- in the event of the public interest test being applied, where the views of the third party may assist Amplify to make a decision relating to where the public interest lies

Consultation will not be undertaken where:

- Amplify will not be disclosing the information due to some valid reason under the Act
- Amplify is satisfied that no exemption applies to the information and therefore cannot be withheld and
- the views of the third party will have no effect on the decision e.g. where there is other legislation preventing disclosure

Where input from a third party is required, the response time for the request remains the same. Therefore it will be made clear to the third party at the outset that they have a limited time for their views to be provided and that where responses are not immediate, the decision to disclose may have to be made without their input in order for Amplify to comply with the statutory time limits dictated by the legislation.

Amplify will endeavour to inform individuals and organisations submitting information that the information might be released following an information request and, where appropriate, will provide the supplier of the information opportunity to request confidentiality or supply reasons as to why the information should be treated confidentially.

Information held within contracts with Amplify

Any contractual information, or information obtained from organisations during the tendering process, held by Amplify are subject to the provisions of the FoIA and EIR. Whenever Amplify enters into contracts, it will seek to exclude contractual terms forbidding the disclosure of information beyond the restrictions contained in the legislation. A standard form of wording will be included in contracts to cover the impact of FoIA and EIR in relation to the provision of information held in contracts.

Amplify can withhold contractual information where its disclosure under either the FoIA or EIR could be treated as actionable breach of confidence. Where Amplify intends to include non-disclosure provisions in a contract, it will agree with the contractor a schedule of the contract that clearly states which information should not be disclosed.

Amplify will only agree to enter into confidentiality clauses where the information is confidential in nature and that it is confident that the decision to restrict access to the information could be justified to the Information Commissioner.

Where information is not covered by the exemption relating to information accepted in confidence, a further exemption specifically under FoIA may be relevant, relating to commercial interests. This exemption is subject to a “public interest” test. Whenever Amplify has to consider the release of such information, it will contact the relevant organisation to obtain its opinions on the release of the information and any exemptions they may think relevant. However, Amplify will make the final decision relating to the disclosure of the information.

Amplify can also withhold information contained in contracts where any of the other exemptions listed in the FoIA or EIR are appropriate, although information will only be withheld in line with Amplify's policy on the use of exemptions. All future contracts should contain a clause obliging contractors to cooperate fully and in a timely manner where assistance is requested in responding to a FoIA or EIR request.

Complaints procedure

Whenever Amplify withholds information under an exemption, or for any other reason, it will inform the applicant of their right to complain about the decision through the statutory FOI review procedure and of the right of appeal to the Information Commissioner. Any complaint received will be dealt with in accordance with the legal requirements in relation to this procedure.

This review procedure is a one stage process where an internal review of the handling of the request will be carried out. Internal reviews will be carried out by a suitably qualified member of staff who was not involved in the original request. If the result of the complaints is that any decision to withhold information be overturned, this information will be supplied as soon as possible.

Illegal actions

It is a criminal offence under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Environmental Information Regulations 2004 for members of staff to alter, deface or remove any record (including e-mails) following receipt of an information request. Both the FoIA and EIR contain specific provisions to make such action a criminal offence.

Review of the Policy

This policy is scheduled to be reviewed every 2 years unless there is a change in statutory legislation.

Appendix 1

Amplify Education Freedom of information Publication Scheme (ICO Model)

Information to be published	How the information can be obtained	Cost

Class 1 - Who we are and what we do (organisational information, structures, locations and contacts – current information only)		
Who's who in the Trust / schools	Individual School and Trust Websites	No charge
Who's who on the governing body / board of Trustees including the basis of their appointment, contact details and information about the duties of governors	Individual School and Trust Websites	No charge
Articles of Association	Trust Website	No charge
Gender Pay Gap reporting	Trust Website	No charge
School prospectus and curriculum	Individual School's Website	No charge
School session times and term dates	Individual School's Website	No charge
Address and contact details for Trust and schools	Individual School and Trust Websites	No charge
Class 2 – What we spend and how we spend it (financial information relating to actual income and expenditure, procurement, contracts and financial audit – current and previous financial year as a minimum)		
Annual budget plan and financial statements	Trust Website (fin statements) or hard copy	No charge
Financial audit reports	Hard copy	Chargeable
Capital funding – details of capital funding allocated to schools along with information on related building and other capital projects	Hard copy	Chargeable
Expenditure – details for items over £5000 including	Hard copy	Chargeable

costs, supplier and transaction information.		
Procurement and contracts – details of procedures used for the acquisition of goods and services and details of contracts that gone through a formal tendering process.	Hard copy	Chargeable
Staff allowances and expenses that can be incurred or claimed, with totals paid to key management personnel by reference to categories.	Hard copy	Chargeable
Staffing, pay and grading structures. As a minimum the pay information should include salaries for key management personnel in bands of £5,000; for all other posts, by salary range.	Hard copy (See also Financial Statements on Trust website)	Chargeable
Governors' allowances that can be incurred or claimed, and a record of total payments made to individual governors.	Hard copy	Chargeable
Pupil Premium Funding	Individual School's Website	No charge
TU facility time reporting	Trust website	No charge
Class 3 – What our priorities are and how we are doing (strategies and plans, performance indicators, audits, inspections and reviews - current information as a minimum)		

Performance data supplied to the government and performance tables	Individual School's Website	No charge
Latest Ofsted report	Individual School's Website or via Department for Education School Performance webpage	No charge
Performance management information - policy and procedures adopted by the governing body.	Hard copy	Chargeable
Future plans including any major proposals for or any consultation on the future of the school, such as a change in school status	Hard copy	Chargeable
Exam and assessment results	Individual School and Trust Websites or hard copy	Chargeable for hard copy
Data protection impact assessments (in full or summary format) or any other impact assessments (eg health and safety impact assessments, equality impact assessments), as appropriate and relevant.	Hard copy	Chargeable
Class 4 – How we make decisions (decision making processes and records of decisions -current and previous three years as a minimum)		
Admissions policy/decisions (not individual admission decisions)	Individual School and Trust Websites or hard copy	Chargeable for hard copy
Agenda and minutes of meetings of the Trust Board, its committees and school governing bodies. (NB this will exclude information that	Hard copy	Chargeable

is properly regarded as private to the meetings).		
Class 5 – Our policies and procedures (current written protocols, policies and procedures for delivering our services and responsibilities - current information only).		
School policies and other documents (as a minimum include all statutory policies)	Individual School and Trust Websites	No charge
Records management, personal data and access to information policies including: ● Information security policies ● Records retention, destruction and archive policies ● Data protection (including information sharing policies)	Individual School and Trust Websites	No charge
Equality and Diversity including policies, schemes, statements, procedures and guidelines relating to our commitment to the promotion and advancement of equal opportunities, including details of our compliance with the public sector equality duty.	Individual School and Trust Websites or hard copy	Chargeable for hard copy
Pay policy including the statement of the pay policy and procedures regarding teachers' pay	Hard copy	Chargeable
Safeguarding and Child Protection including the policies and procedures in place with a view to	Individual School and Trust Websites	No charge

safeguarding and improving child protection and promoting the welfare of children in compliance with legislation and any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.		
Health and Safety	Individual School and Trust Websites	No charge
Policies and procedures for human resources and the recruitment of staff including making details of current vacancies readily available, if they are advertised as part of recruitment policies.	Individual School and Trust Websites or hard copy	Chargeable for hard copy
Careers programme information	Individual School and Trust Websites	No charge
Complaints procedures, including for dealing with parental complaints	Individual School and Trust Websites	No charge
Charging regimes and policies. This should include details of any statutory charging regimes. Charging policies should include charges made for information routinely published. They should clearly state what costs are to be recovered, the basis on which they are made and how they are calculated.	Individual School and Trust Websites or hard copy	Chargeable for hard copy
Class 6 – Lists and Registers (currently maintained lists and registers only).		
Curriculum circulars and statutory instruments	Individual School Websites and hard copy	Chargeable
CCTV - details of the locations of any overt CCTV surveillance cameras	Hard copy	Chargeable

operated by Trust or schools or on our behalf.		
Disclosure logs	Hard copy	Chargeable
Asset register	Hard copy	Chargeable
Any information the school is currently legally required to hold in publicly available registers	Hard copy	Chargeable
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 only)		
Extra-curricular activities	Individual School's Website	No charge
Out of school clubs	Individual School's Website	No charge
Services for which the Trust is entitled to recover a fee, together with those fees	Hard copy	Chargeable
School publications, leaflets, books and newsletters	Individual School's Website	No charge

SCHEDULE OF CHARGES

This describes how the charges have been arrived at and should be published as part of the guide.

Type of Charge	Description	Basis of Charge
Disbursement cost	Photocopying/printing @ 10p per sheet (black & white)	Actual cost plus admin
	Photocopying/printing @ 20p per sheet (colour)	Actual cost plus admin

	Postage	Actual cost of Royal Mail standard 2 nd class
Statutory Fee		In accordance with the relevant legislation
Other	Cost of time involved to prepare response - £25 per hour	Flat charge