



# Ark Schools Data Protection & Freedom of Information Policy

**PURPOSE**

This Ark Schools Data Protection & Freedom of Information (FOI) policy is intended to ensure that personal information is dealt with properly and securely and in accordance with the EU General Data Protection Regulation (“the GDPR”) and other related legislation. It contains the Ark Schools FOI Publication Scheme. It will apply to information regardless of the way it is used, recorded and stored and whether it is held in paper files or electronically. It applies to all data held by Ark Schools as a multi-academy trust, each individual Ark school, and Ark Schools’ wholly owned subsidiary company Ark Academies Projects Ltd.

Date of last review:	April 2018	Author:	Governance Manager
Date of next review:	April 2021	Owner:	Director of Governance
Type of policy:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Network-wide <input type="checkbox"/> Tailored by school	Approval:	Board
School:	N/A	Key Contact Name:	Governance Team
Key Contact Email:	governance.team@arkonline.org	Key Contact Phone:	0203 116 6333

**POSITIONING WITHIN ARK OPERATIONAL MODEL**

Component	Element
<input type="checkbox"/> Strategic Leadership & Planning <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Monitoring, Reporting & Data <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Governance & Accountabilities <input type="checkbox"/> Teaching & Learning <input type="checkbox"/> Curriculum & Assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Culture, Ethos & Wellbeing <input type="checkbox"/> Pathways & Enrichment <input type="checkbox"/> Parents & Community <input type="checkbox"/> Finance, IT & Estates <input type="checkbox"/> Our People	Data

**Contents**

Policy information..... 1

1. Introduction.....3

2. Roles and responsibilities .....3

3. Personal data .....3

4. Data protection principles .....4

5. Conditions for processing in the first Data Protection principle.....5

6. Use of personal data by Ark Schools.....5

7. Security of personal data .....6

8. Disclosure of personal data to third parties .....7

9. Confidentiality of pupil concerns.....8

10. Subject access requests .....8

11. Exemptions to access by data subjects.....9

12. Other rights of individuals .....9

13. Breach of any requirement of the GDPR .....11

14. Ark Schools and Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI) ..... 12

15. Freedom of Information Publication Scheme..... 12

16. Method by which information under the Publication Scheme is made available ..... 12

17. Schedule of charges under Freedom of Information Publication Scheme ..... 13

18. Freedom of Information requests ..... 13

19. Time limit for compliance with FOI requests ..... 14

20. Procedure for dealing with a request ..... 14

21. Responding to a request..... 15

22. Contact ..... 15

Appendix 1: Guide to information available under the Publication Scheme..... 16

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. All academies within the Ark Schools network collect and use certain types of personal information about staff, pupils, parents and other individuals who come into contact with the academy in order provide education and associated functions. Our academies may be required by law to collect and use certain types of information to comply with statutory obligations related to employment, education and safeguarding, and this policy is intended to ensure that personal information is dealt with properly and securely and in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and other legislation.
- 1.2. The GDPR applies to all computerised data and manual files if they come within the definition of a filing system. Broadly speaking, a filing system is one where the data is structured in some way that it is searchable on the basis of specific criteria (so you would be able to use something like the individual's name to find their information), and if this is the case, it does not matter whether the information is located in a different physical location.
- 1.3. This policy will be updated as necessary to reflect best practice, or amendments made to data protection legislation, and shall be reviewed every 3 years.

## **2. Roles and responsibilities**

- 2.1. Ark Schools is a registered data controller. The Ark Schools board is ultimately accountable for ensuring that Ark complies with all relevant legislation including for data protection. Data protection sits under the remit of the Ark Schools Director of Governance.
- 2.2. The Information Governance Manager serves as Ark Schools' Data Protection Officer, responsible for overall coordination of data protection including ICO registration and overseeing responses to subject access requests.
- 2.3. The wider staff body are made aware of this policy and their duties under GDPR as part of their induction to Ark Schools. In addition, regular training opportunities are made available to staff, in particular those for whom data protection is of particular relevance to their role.

## **3. Personal data**

- 3.1. 'Personal data' is information that identifies an individual, and includes information that would identify an individual to the person to whom it is disclosed because of any special knowledge that they have or can obtain<sup>1</sup>. A sub-set of personal data is known as 'special category personal data'. This special category data is information that reveals:
  - race or ethnic origin;
  - political opinions;
  - religious or philosophical beliefs;
  - trade union membership;
  - physical or mental health;
  - an individual's sex life or sexual orientation;
  - genetic or biometric data for the purpose of uniquely identifying a natural person.
- 3.2. Special Category Data is given special protection, and additional safeguards apply if this information is to be collected and used.
- 3.3. Information relating to criminal convictions shall only be held and processed where there is legal authority to do so.

---

<sup>1</sup> For example, if asked for the number of female employees, and you only have one female employee, this would be personal data if it was possible to obtain a list of employees from the website.

3.4. Ark Schools does not intend to seek or hold Special Category Data (previously known as sensitive personal data) about staff or students except where we have been notified of the information, or it comes to the attention of our academies via legitimate means (e.g. a grievance) or needs to be sought and held in compliance with a legal obligation or as a matter of good practice. Staff or students are under no obligation to disclose to our academies their race or ethnic origin, political or religious beliefs, whether or not they are a trade union member or details of their sexual life (save to the extent that details of marital status and / or parenthood are needed for other purposes, e.g. pension entitlements).

#### **4. Data protection principles**

- 4.1. The six data protection principles as laid down in the GDPR are followed at all times:
- 4.1.1. personal data shall be processed fairly, lawfully and in a transparent manner, and processing shall not be lawful unless one of the processing conditions can be met;
  - 4.1.2. personal data shall be collected for specific, explicit, and legitimate purposes, and shall not be further processed in a manner incompatible with those purposes;
  - 4.1.3. personal data shall be adequate, relevant, and limited to what is necessary for the purpose(s) for which it is being processed;
  - 4.1.4. personal data shall be accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date;
  - 4.1.5. personal data processed for any purpose(s) shall not be kept in a form which permits identification of individuals for longer than is necessary for that purpose / those purposes;
  - 4.1.6. personal data shall be processed in such a way that ensures appropriate security of the data, including protection against unauthorised or unlawful processing and against accidental loss, destruction, or damage, using appropriate technical or organisational measures.
- 4.2. In addition to this, Ark Schools is committed to ensuring that at all times, anyone dealing with personal data shall be mindful of the individual's rights under the law (as explained in more detail in paragraphs 7 and 8 below).
- 4.3. Ark Schools is committed to complying with the principles in 4.1 at all times. This means that Ark Schools will:
- 4.3.1. inform individuals about how and why we process their personal data through the privacy notices which we issue;
  - 4.3.2. be responsible for checking the quality and accuracy of the information;
  - 4.3.3. regularly review the records held to ensure that information is not held longer than is necessary, and that it has been held in accordance with the data retention schedule;
  - 4.3.4. ensure that when information is authorised for disposal it is done appropriately;
  - 4.3.5. ensure appropriate security measures to safeguard personal information whether it is held in paper files or on our computer system, and follow the relevant security policy requirements at all times;
  - 4.3.6. share personal information with others only when it is necessary and legally appropriate to do so;
  - 4.3.7. set out clear procedures for responding to requests for access to personal information known as subject access requests;
  - 4.3.8. report any breaches of the GDPR in accordance with the procedure in paragraph 9 below.

## **5. Conditions for processing in the first Data Protection principle**

- 5.1. The individual has given consent that is specific to the particular type of processing activity, and that consent is informed, unambiguous and freely given.
- 5.2. The processing is necessary for the performance of a contract, to which the individual is a party, or is necessary for the purpose of taking steps with regards to entering into a contract with the individual, at their request.
- 5.3. The processing is necessary for the performance of a legal obligation to which we are subject.
- 5.4. The processing is necessary to protect the vital interests of the individual or another.
- 5.5. The processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest, or in the exercise of official authority vested in us.
- 5.6. Outside of fulfilling our public task, the processing is necessary for a legitimate interest of Ark Schools or that of a third party, except where this interest is overridden by the rights and freedoms of the individual concerned.

## **6. Use of personal data by Ark Schools**

- 6.1. Ark Schools and our individual academies process personal data on pupils, staff and other individuals such as visitors. In each case, the personal data must be processed in accordance with the data protection principles as outlined in paragraph 4.1 above.

### *Pupils*

- 6.2. The personal data held regarding pupils includes contact details, assessment / examination results, attendance information, characteristics such as ethnic group, special educational needs, any relevant medical information, and photographs.
- 6.3. The data is used in order to support the education of the pupils, to monitor and report on their progress, to provide appropriate pastoral care, and to assess how well the academy as a whole is doing, together with any other uses normally associated with this provision in a school environment.
- 6.4. Ark Schools and our academies may make use of limited personal data (such as contact details) relating to pupils, and their parents or guardians for fundraising, marketing or promotional purposes and to maintain relationships with pupils of the academy, but only where consent has been provided for this.
- 6.5. In particular, Ark Schools and our academies may:
  - 6.5.1. transfer information to any association society or club set up for the purpose of maintaining contact with pupils or for fundraising, marketing or promotional purposes relating to the academy but only where consent has been obtained first;
  - 6.5.2. make personal data, including sensitive personal data, available to staff for planning curricular or extra-curricular activities;
  - 6.5.3. keep the pupil's previous school informed of his/ her academic progress and achievements e.g. sending a copy of the school reports for the pupil's first year at the Academy to their previous school;
  - 6.5.4. Use photographs of pupils in accordance with the Using Technology Safely policy and associated photography procedures.
- 6.6. Any wish to limit or object to any use of personal data should be notified to the school Data Protection lead and Ark Schools Information Governance Manager in writing, which notice will be acknowledged by the relevant school in writing. If, in the view of the school Data Protection lead and Ark Schools Information Governance Manager the objection cannot be maintained, the individual will be given written reasons why the school cannot comply with their request.

### *Staff*

- 6.7. The personal data held about staff will include contact details, employment history, information relating to career progression, information relating to DBS checks and photographs, as well as information required to administer your terms and conditions of employment including occupational pensions.
- 6.8. The data is used to comply with legal obligations placed on Ark Schools and our academies in relation to employment, and the education of children in a school environment. Ark Schools and our academies may pass information to other regulatory authorities where appropriate, and may use names and photographs of staff in publicity and promotional material. Personal data will also be used when giving references.
- 6.9. Staff should note that information about disciplinary action may be kept for longer than the duration of the sanction. Although treated as “spent” once the period of the sanction has expired, the details of the incident may need to be kept for a longer period.
- 6.10. Any wish to limit or object to the uses to which personal data is to be put should be notified to the school Data Protection lead and Ark Schools Information Governance Manager who will ensure that this is recorded, and adhered to if appropriate. If the school Data Protection lead and Ark Schools Information Governance Manager is of the view that it is not appropriate to limit the use of personal data in the way specified, the individual will be given written reasons why the Academy cannot comply with their request.

### *Information relating to DBS checks*

- 6.11. DBS checks are carried out on the basis of the academy trust’s legal obligations in relation to the safer recruitment of Staff as stipulated in the Independent School Standards Regulations and the DBS information (which will include personal data relating to criminal convictions and offences) is further processed in the substantial public interest, with the objective of safeguarding children. Retention of the information is covered by the Data Retention Schedule.

Access to the DBS information is restricted to those staff who have a genuine need to have access to it for their job roles. In addition to those provisions of the GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018, disclosure of this information is restricted by section 124 of the Police Act 1997 and disclosure to third parties will only be made if it is determined to be lawful.

### *Other Individuals*

- 6.12. The Academy may hold personal information in relation to other individuals who have contact with the school, such as volunteers and guests. Such information shall be held only in accordance with the data protection principles, and shall not be kept longer than necessary.

## **7. Security of personal data**

- 7.1. The Academy Trust (Ark Schools) will take reasonable steps to ensure that members of staff will only have access to personal data where it is necessary for them to carry out their duties. All staff will be made aware of this Policy and their duties under the GDPR. The Academy Trust will take all reasonable steps to ensure that all personal information is held securely and is not accessible to unauthorised persons.
- 7.2. For further details as regards security of IT systems, please refer to the ICT Policy. Ark Schools’ Incident Response Strategy outlines how data kept on Ark’s servers/ cloud-based storage will be kept secure, and then recovered, in the event of a major incident.

## **8. Disclosure of personal data to third parties**

- 8.1. The following list includes the most usual reasons that the Academy will authorise disclosure of personal data to a third party:
- 8.1.1. To give a confidential reference relating to a current or former employee, volunteer or pupil;
  - 8.1.2. for the prevention or detection of crime;
  - 8.1.3. for the assessment of any tax or duty;
  - 8.1.4. for administration of pensions and employee benefits;
  - 8.1.5. where it is necessary to exercise a right or obligation conferred or imposed by law upon the Academy (other than an obligation imposed by contract);
  - 8.1.6. for the purpose of, or in connection with, legal proceedings (including prospective legal proceedings);
  - 8.1.7. for the purpose of obtaining legal advice;
  - 8.1.8. for research, historical and statistical purposes (so long as this neither supports decisions in relation to individuals, nor causes substantial damage or distress);
  - 8.1.9. to publish the results of public examinations or other achievements of pupils of the Academy;
  - 8.1.10. to disclose details of a pupil's medical condition where it is in the pupil's interests to do so and there is a legal basis for doing so, for example for medical advice, insurance purposes or to organisers of school trips. The legal basis will vary in each case but will usually be based on explicit consent, the vital interests of the child or reasons of substantial public interest (usually safeguarding the child or other individuals);
  - 8.1.11. to provide information to another educational establishment to which a pupil is transferring;
  - 8.1.12. to provide information to the Examination Authority as part of the examination process; and
  - 8.1.13. to provide information to the relevant Government Department concerned with national education. At the time of the writing of this Policy, the Government Department concerned with national education is the Department for Education (DfE). The Examination Authority may also pass information to the DfE.
- 8.2. The DfE uses information about pupils for statistical purposes, to evaluate and develop education policy and to monitor the performance of the nation's education service as a whole. The statistics are used in such a way that individual pupils cannot be identified from them. On occasion the DfE may share the personal data with other Government Departments or agencies strictly for statistical or research purposes.
- 8.3. Ark Schools and our academies may receive requests from third parties (i.e. those other than the data subject, Ark Schools, and employees of Ark Schools) to disclose personal data it holds about pupils, their parents or guardians, staff or other individuals. This information will not generally be disclosed unless one of the specific exemptions under data protection legislation which allow disclosure applies; or where necessary for the legitimate interests of the individual concerned, Ark Schools or the academy.
- 8.4. All requests for the disclosure of personal data must be sent to the Ark Schools Information Governance Manager, who will review and decide whether to make the disclosure, ensuring that reasonable steps are taken to verify the identity of that third party before making any disclosure.

## **9. Confidentiality of pupil concerns**

9.1. Where a pupil seeks to raise concerns confidentially with a member of staff and expressly withholds their agreement to their personal data being disclosed to their parents or guardian, Ark Schools and/or the academy will maintain confidentiality unless it has reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil does not fully understand the consequences of withholding their consent, or where the academy believes disclosure will be in the best interests of the pupil or other pupils. Disclosure for a safeguarding purpose will be lawful because it will be in the substantial public interest.

## **10. Subject access requests**

10.1. Anybody who makes a request to see any personal information held about them by Ark Schools or an individual academy is making a subject access request. All information relating to the individual, including that held in electronic or manual files should be considered for disclosure, provided that they constitute a “filing system” (see clause 1.5).

10.2. The individual’s full subject access right is to know:

- Whether personal data about him or her are being processed
- The purposes of the processing
- The categories of personal data concerned
- The recipients or categories of recipient to whom their personal data have been or will be disclosed
- The envisaged period for which the data will be stored or where that is not possible, the criteria used to determine how long the data are stored
- The existence of a right to request rectification or erasure of personal data or restriction of processing or to object to the processing
- The right to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner’s Office
- Where the personal data are not collected from the individual, any available information as to their source
- Details of the safeguards in place for any transfers of their data to locations outside the European Economic Area

10.3. All requests should be sent to [sar@arkonline.org](mailto:sar@arkonline.org) within 3 working days of receipt, and must be dealt with in full without delay and at the latest within one month of receipt.

10.4. Where a child or young person does not have sufficient understanding to make his or her own request (usually those under the age of 12, or over 12 but with a special educational need which makes understanding their information rights more difficult), a person with parental responsibility can make a request on their behalf.

The Information Governance Manager must, however, be satisfied that:

10.4.1. the child or young person lacks sufficient understanding; and

10.4.2. the request made on behalf of the child or young person is in their interests.

10.5. Any individual, including a child or young person with ownership of their own information rights, may appoint another person to request access to their records. In such circumstances the Academy Trust must have written evidence that the individual has authorised the person to make the application and the Information Governance Manager must be confident of the identity of the individual making the request and of the authorisation of the individual to whom the request relates.



- 10.6. Access to records will be refused in instances where an exemption applies, for example, information sharing may place the individual at risk of significant harm or jeopardise police investigations into any alleged offence(s).
- 10.7. A subject access request must be made in writing. The Academy Trust may ask for any further information reasonably required to locate the information.
- 10.8. An individual only has the automatic right to access information about themselves, and care needs to be taken not to disclose the personal data of third parties where consent has not been given, or where seeking consent would not be reasonable, and it would not be appropriate to release the information. Particular care must be taken in the case of any complaint or dispute to ensure confidentiality is protected.
- 10.9. All files must be reviewed by the Information Governance Manager before any disclosure takes place. Access will not be granted before this review has taken place.
- 10.10. Where all the data in a document cannot be disclosed a permanent copy should be made and the data obscured or retyped if this is more sensible. A copy of the full document and the altered document should be retained, with the reason why the document was altered.

## **11. Exemptions to access by data subjects**

- 11.1. Where a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings, the information is likely to be exempt from disclosure unless the privilege is waived.
- 11.2. There are other exemptions from the right of subject access. If we intend to apply any of them to a request then we will usually explain which exemption is being applied and why.

## **12. Other rights of individuals**

- 12.1. The Academy Trust has an obligation to comply with the rights of individuals under the law, and takes these rights seriously. The following section sets out how the academy will comply with the rights to:
  - 12.1.1. object to Processing;
  - 12.1.2. rectification;
  - 12.1.3. erasure; and
  - 12.1.4. data Portability.

### *Right to object to processing*

- 12.2. An individual has the right to object to the processing of their personal data on the grounds of pursuit of a public interest (ground 5.5 above) where they do not believe that those grounds are adequately established.
- 12.3. Where such an objection is made, it must be sent to the school Data Protection lead and Ark Schools Information Governance Manager within 2 working days of receipt, who will assess whether there are compelling legitimate grounds to continue processing which override the interests, rights and freedoms of the individuals, or whether the information is required for the establishment, exercise or defence of legal proceedings.
- 12.4. The school Data Protection lead and Ark Schools Information Governance Manager shall be responsible for notifying the individual of the outcome of their assessment within twenty of working days of receipt of the objection.

### *Right to rectification*

- 12.5. An individual has the right to request the rectification of inaccurate data without undue delay. Where any request for rectification is received, it should be sent to the school Data Protection lead and Ark Schools Information Governance Manager within 2 working days of receipt, and where adequate proof of inaccuracy is given, the data shall be amended as soon as reasonably practicable, and the individual notified.

- 12.6. Where there is a dispute as to the accuracy of the data, the request and reasons for refusal shall be noted alongside the data, and communicated to the individual. The individual shall be given the option of a review under the data protection complaints procedure, or an appeal direct to the Information Commissioner.
- 12.7. An individual also has a right to have incomplete information completed by providing the missing data, and any information submitted in this way shall be updated without undue delay.

*Right to erasure*

- 12.8. Individuals have a right, in certain circumstances, to have data permanently erased without undue delay. This right arises in the following circumstances:
- 12.8.1. where the personal data is no longer necessary for the purpose or purposes for which it was collected and processed;
- 12.8.2. where consent is withdrawn and there is no other legal basis for the processing;
- 12.8.3. where an objection has been raised under the right to object, and found to be legitimate;
- 12.8.4. where personal data is being unlawfully processed (usually where one of the conditions for processing cannot be met);
- 12.8.5. where there is a legal obligation on the Academy Trust to delete.
- 12.9. The school Data Protection lead and Ark Schools Information Governance Manager will make a decision regarding any application for erasure of personal data, and will balance the request against the exemptions provided for in the law. Where a decision is made to erase the data, and this data has been passed to other data controllers, and / or has been made public, reasonable attempts to inform those controllers of the request shall be made.

*Right to restrict processing*

- 12.10. In the following circumstances, processing of an individual's personal data may be restricted:
- 12.11. In the following circumstances, processing of an individual's personal data may be restricted:
- 12.11.1. where the accuracy of data has been contested, during the period when the Academy is attempting to verify the accuracy of the data;
- 12.11.2. where processing has been found to be unlawful, and the individual has asked that there be a restriction on processing rather than erasure;
- 12.11.3. where data would normally be deleted, but the individual has requested that their information be kept for the purpose of the establishment, exercise or defence of a legal claim;
- 12.11.4. where there has been an objection made under para 8.2 above, pending the outcome of any decision.

*Right to portability*

- 12.12. If an individual wants to send their personal data to another organisation they have a right to request that the Academy Trust provides their information in a structured, commonly used, and machine readable format. As this right is limited to situations where the Academy Trust is processing the information on the basis of consent or performance of a contract, the situations in which this right can be exercised will be quite limited. If a request for this is made, it should be forwarded to the school Data Protection lead and Ark Schools Information Governance Manager within 2 working days of receipt, who will review and revert as necessary.

### **13. Breach of any requirement of the GDPR**

- 13.1. Any and all breaches of the GDPR, including a breach of any of the data protection principles shall be reported as soon as it is/ they are discovered, to the Ark Schools Information Governance Manager.
- 13.2. Once notified, the Ark Schools Information Governance Manager shall assess:
  - 13.2.1. the extent of the breach;
  - 13.2.2. the risks to the data subjects as a consequence of the breach;
  - 13.2.3. any security measures in place that will protect the information;
  - 13.2.4. any measures that can be taken immediately to mitigate the risk to the individuals.
- 13.3. Unless the Ark Schools Information Governance Manager concludes that there is unlikely to be any risk to individuals from the breach, it must be notified to the Information Commissioner's Office within 72 hours of the breach having come to the attention of the Academy Trust, unless a delay can be justified.
- 13.4. The Information Commissioner shall be told:
  - 13.4.1. details of the breach, including the volume of data at risk, and the number and categories of data subjects;
  - 13.4.2. the contact point for any enquiries (which shall usually be the Ark Schools Information Governance Manager);
  - 13.4.3. the likely consequences of the breach;
  - 13.4.4. measures proposed or already taken to address the breach.
- 13.5. If the breach is likely to result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of the affected individuals then the Ark Schools Information Governance Manager shall notify data subjects of the breach without undue delay unless the data would be unintelligible to those not authorised to access it, or measures have been taken to mitigate any risk to the affected individuals.
- 13.6. Data subjects shall be told:
  - 13.6.1. the nature of the breach;
  - 13.6.2. who to contact with any questions;
  - 13.6.3. measures taken to mitigate any risks.
- 13.7. The Ark Schools Information Governance Manager shall then be responsible for instigating an investigation into the breach, including how it happened, and whether it could have been prevented. Any recommendations for further training or a change in procedure shall be reviewed at board level and a decision made about implementation of those recommendations.

### **14. Data Protection Complaints Procedure**

Ark Schools aims to comply fully with its obligations under the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). If you have any questions or concerns regarding Ark Schools' management of personal data including your subject rights, please contact the Information Governance Manager ([dataprotection@arkonline.org](mailto:dataprotection@arkonline.org)) who is responsible for ensuring Ark Schools is compliant with the GDPR.

If Ark Schools holds inaccurate information about you, Information Governance Manager ([dataprotection@arkonline.org](mailto:dataprotection@arkonline.org)) explaining what the problem is and where appropriate provide with any evidence to show what the information should say. Keep copies of the correspondence. If after a reasonable amount of time (28 days is recommended) the information has not been corrected, you can make a complaint.

If you feel that your questions/concerns have not been dealt with adequately on any data protection please get in touch with us and the matter will be escalated to our Head of Governance.

If you remain unhappy with our response or if you need any advice you can contact the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). Please visit their [website](#) for information on how to make a data protection complaint.

## **15. Ark Schools and Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI)**

- 15.1. Ark Schools is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI) as a public authority, and as such, must comply with any requests for information in accordance with the principles laid out in the Act.
- 15.2. This means that Ark Schools must hold and publish a FOI Publication Scheme, to communicate what information Ark Schools makes readily available to the public, and where it can be found. It also means that Ark Schools must have procedures in place to respond to FOI requests.
- 15.3. This section of the policy provides further information on the FOI Publication Scheme and FOI requests.

## **16. Freedom of Information Publication Scheme**

- 16.1. The Freedom of Information Act requires every public authority to have a publication scheme. The Ark Schools publication scheme contained within this policy (see Appendix 1) was developed to ensure all our academies are as transparent as possible when it comes to the publication of information. Most of the information listed below is published routinely on the academies' websites and in their individual prospectuses. Stakeholders are invited to review the publication scheme before submitting an FOI request.
- 16.2. This publication scheme (see Appendix 1) has the following aims:
  - To proactively publish or otherwise make available as a matter of routine, information, including environmental information, which is held by Ark and falls within the classification below.
  - To specify the information that is held by the Ark and falls within the classifications below.
  - To proactively publish or otherwise make available as a matter of routine, information in line with the statements contained within this scheme.
  - To produce and publish the methods by which the specific information is made routinely available so that it can easily be identified and accessed by members of the public.
  - To review and update regularly the information Ark makes available under this scheme.
  - To produce a schedule of fees charged for access to information which is made proactively available.
  - To make this publication scheme available to the public.
- 16.3. The publication scheme and the material it covers will be readily available in hard copy from Ark. It is also available on the Ark and relevant Academy websites. This scheme conforms to the model scheme for Academies approved by the Information Commissioner's Office.

## **17. Method by which information under the Publication Scheme is made available**

- 17.1. Ark will indicate clearly to the public what information is covered by this scheme and how it can be obtained. Where it is within the capability of Ark, information will be provided on our website. Where it is impracticable to make information available on our website or

when an individual does not wish to access the information by this method, Ark will indicate how information can be obtained by other means and provide it by those means.

- 17.2. In exceptional circumstances, some information may be available only by viewing in person. Where this manner is specified, contact details will be provided and an appointment to view the information will be arranged within a reasonable timescale. Information will be provided in the language in which it is held or in such other language that is legally required. Where Ark is legally required to translate any information, it will do so.
- 17.3. Obligations under disability and discrimination legislation and any other legislation to provide information in other forms and formats will be adhered to when providing information in accordance with this scheme.

## 18. Schedule of charges under Freedom of Information Publication Scheme

Type of Charge	Description	Basis of charge
<b>Disbursement cost</b>	Photocopying/Printing @ 10p per sheet	Actual cost 10p
	Photocopying/Printing @ 50p per sheet	Actual cost 50p
	Postage	Actual cost of Royal Mail standard 2 <sup>nd</sup> class
<b><i>See our Charging Policy for more details</i></b>		

- Where the cost of postage, printing or photocopying is below **£10.00**, we will not make a charge.
- Where it is over £10.00, the first £10.00 will be free of charge, after that we will charge the full estimated cost of postage and copying.
- Before we produce the information, we shall inform you of the total cost. You may wish to refine the request in order to reduce the cost and we would be happy to discuss this with you.

## 19. Freedom of Information requests

- 19.1. Any request for any information from Ark Schools or our individual academies is technically a request under the FOI, whether or not the individual making the request mentions the FOI. However, the ICO has stated that routine requests for information (such as a parent requesting a copy of a policy) can be dealt with outside of the provisions of the Act.
- 19.2. In all non-routine cases, if the request is simple and the information is to be released, then the individual who received the request can release the information, but must ensure that this is done within the timescale set out below. A copy of the request and response should then be sent to the Ark Schools Information Governance Manager via [foi@arkonline.org](mailto:foi@arkonline.org).
- 19.3. All other requests should be referred in the first instance to the Ark Schools Information Governance Manager via [foi@arkonline.org](mailto:foi@arkonline.org) who may allocate another individual to deal with the request. This must be done promptly, and in any event within 3 working days of receiving the request.
- 19.4. When considering a request under FOI, you must bear in mind that release under FOI is treated as release to the general public, and so once it has been released to an individual, anyone can then access it, and you cannot restrict access when releasing by marking the information “confidential” or “restricted”.

## **20. Time limit for compliance with FOI requests**

20.1. Ark Schools must respond as soon as possible, and in any event, within 20 working days of the date of receipt of the request. For Ark Schools 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.

## **21. Procedure for dealing with a request**

21.1. When a request is received that cannot be dealt with by simply providing the information, it should be referred in the first instance to the Ark Schools Information Governance Manager who may re-allocate to an individual with responsibility for the type of information requested.

21.2. The first stage in responding is to determine whether or not Ark Schools and/or the individual academy “holds” the information requested. Ark Schools will hold the information if it exists in computer or paper format. Some requests will require Ark Schools to take information from different sources and manipulate it in some way.

Where this would take minimal effort, Ark Schools is considered to “hold” that information, but if the required manipulation would take a significant amount of time, the requestor should be contacted to explain that the information is not held in the manner requested, and offered the opportunity to refine their request. For example, if a request required the Academy to add up totals in a spread sheet and release the total figures, this would be information “held” by Ark Schools. If Ark Schools would have to go through a number of spread sheets and identify individual figures and provide a total, this is likely not to be information “held” by Ark Schools, depending on the time involved in extracting the information.

The classes of information that are available include:

- Who we are and what we do – Organisational information, prospectus, locations and contacts, constitutional and legal governance, instrument of government
- What we spend and how we spend it – Financial information about income and expenditure, financial audit, funding agreements, procurement, tendering and contracts. (current and previous two years as a minimum)
- What our priorities are & how we are doing it – Strategies and plans, performance indicators, audits, inspections and
- How we make decisions – Decision making processes and records of decisions, internal criteria and procedures
- Our policies and procedures – Current written protocols, policies and procedures for delivering our services and responsibilities.
- Lists and Registers – Information held in currently maintained lists, required by law and other lists and registers relating to the function of Ark.
- The services we offer – Advice and guidance, booklets and leaflets, transactions and media releases. A description of the services offered.

The classes of information will not generally include:

- Information the disclosure of which is prevented by law, or exempt under the Freedom of Information Act, or is otherwise properly considered to be protected from disclosure.
- Information in draft form
- Information that is no longer readily available as it is contained in files that have been placed in archive storage, or is difficult to access for similar reasons.

21.3. The second stage is to decide whether the information can be released, or whether one of the exemptions set out in the Act applies to the information. Common exemptions include:

- 21.3.1. Section 40 (1) – the request is for the applicants personal data. This must be dealt with under the subject access regime in the GDPR, detailed in paragraph 10 above;
  - 21.3.2. Section 40 (2) – compliance with the request would involve releasing third party personal data, and this would be in breach of the GDPR principles as set out in paragraph 4.1 of the policy above;
  - 21.3.3. Section 41 – information that has been sent to the Academy Trust (but not the Academy’s own information) which is confidential;
  - 21.3.4. Section 21 – information that is already publicly available, even if payment of a fee is required to access that information;
  - 21.3.5. *Section 22 – information that the Academy Trust intends to publish at a future date;*
  - 21.3.6. *Section 43 – information that would prejudice the commercial interests of the Academy and / or a third party;*
  - 21.3.7. *Section 38 – information that could prejudice the physical health, mental health or safety of an individual (this may apply particularly to safeguarding information);*
  - 21.3.8. *Section 31 – information which may prejudice the effective detection and prevention of crime – such as the location of CCTV cameras;*
  - 21.3.9. *Section 36 – information which, in the opinion of the chair of trustees of the Academy Trust, would prejudice the effective conduct of the Academy. There is a special form for this on the ICO’s website to assist with the obtaining of the chair’s opinion.*
- 21.4. The sections mentioned in italics are qualified exemptions. This means that even if the exemption applies to the information, you also have to carry out a public interest weighting exercise, balancing the public interest in the information being released, as against the public interest in withholding the information.

## **22. Responding to a request**

- 22.1. When responding to a request where Ark Schools has withheld some or all of the information, Ark Schools 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.
- 22.2. The letter should end by explaining to the requestor how they can complain – either by reference to an internal review by the Director of Governance, or by writing to the ICO.

## **23. Contact**

- 23.1. As outlined above, Subject Access Requests can be submitted to [sar@arkonline.org](mailto:sar@arkonline.org), and Freedom of Information Requests to [foi@arkonline.org](mailto:foi@arkonline.org).
- 23.2. If anyone has any concerns, questions or complaints in relation to this policy or the publication scheme contained within it they should contact the Ark Schools Information Governance Manager via [dataprotection@arkonline.org](mailto:dataprotection@arkonline.org).
- 23.3. If you require a paper version of any information set out under the FOI Publication Scheme, or want to ask whether information is available, contact Ark using the details set out below. You can also visit our website [www.arkschoolsonline.org](http://www.arkschoolsonline.org). To help us process requests quickly, any correspondence should be clearly marked ‘Publication Scheme Request’.
- 23.4. 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: Information Commissioners Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5A, telephone: 0303 123 1113, website: [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk)

## Appendix 1: Guide to information available under the Publication Scheme

Information available	How the information can be obtained	Charge
<b>Class 1: Who we are and what we do</b> <b>Organisational Information, structure, locations and contacts</b> Current information only		
Who's who in Ark	Ark website	No charge
Governing body – names and contact details of the governors and the basis of their appointment	Individual Academy websites	No charge
Instrument of Government –Funding Agreements	DfE website	No charge
Ark staffing structure – names of key personnel	Individual Academy Websites	No charge
School Session times, term dates and holidays	Individual Academy Websites	No charge
Location & Contact information – address, telephone numbers & website	Individual Academy Websites	No charge
Contact details for the Principal and the Governing Body	Individual Academy Websites	No charge
School Prospectus	Individual Academy Websites	No charge

Information available	How the information can be obtained	Charge
<b>Class 2: What we spend and how we spend it</b> <b>Financial information relating to projected and actual income and expenditure, procurement, contracts and financial audit</b> (Minimum of current and the previous two years financial year)		
Annual financial statements, capital funding and income generation for prior years	Hard copy and on website	No charge
Statutory Accounts	Ark/ Companies House website	No charge
Details of capital funding allocated to the school along with information on related building projects and other capital projects or sources of funding for current year	Electronic copy through request to <a href="mailto:foi@arkonline.org">foi@arkonline.org</a>	No charge



Procurement and contracts	Electronic copy through request to <a href="mailto:foi@arkonline.org">foi@arkonline.org</a>	No charge
Pay Policy – statement on Ark policy on procedures	Hard copy	Schedule of charges
Staff grading and structure	Hard copy	Schedule of charges
Governors’ allowances – details if allowances/expenses that can be claimed/incurred	Hard copy	Schedule of charges

Information available	How the information can be obtained	Charge
<b>Class 3: What our priorities are and how we are doing it</b>		
<b>Strategies and plans, performance indicators, audits, inspections and reviews</b>		
Current information as a minimum		
School Profile -Government supplied data	Hard copy	Schedule of charges
-Latest OFSTED report – summary and full report	<a href="#">Ofsted website</a>	No charge
-Examination results	Hard copy	No charge
Performance Management policy and procedures	Hard copy	Schedule of charges
Ark future plans	Ark Website Individual Academy websites	No charge
Safeguarding policies and procedures	Hard copy	Schedule of charges

<b>Information available</b>	<b>How the information can be obtained</b>	<b>Charge</b>
<b>Class 4: How we make decisions</b> <b>Decision making processes and records of decisions</b> Current and previous three years as a minimum		
Admissions policy and decisions (not individual decisions)	Individual Academy websites	No charge
Governing Board meeting agendas and minutes – (this will exclude information that is properly regarded as private to the meeting)	Hard copy Individual Academy websites	Schedule of charges No charge

<b>Information available</b>	<b>How the information can be obtained</b>	<b>Charge</b>
<b>Class 5: Our policies and procedures</b> <b>Current written protocols, policies and procedures for delivery our services and responsibilities</b> Current information as a minimum		
<b>Ark policies including:</b> Charging and remission policy Health & Safety and risk assessment Complaints procedure Staff, discipline, grievance, pay and conduct Policies Staffing structure implementation plan Equal Opportunities policies – including equality & diversities Staff Recruitment & Selection policies Child Protection Policy	Hard copy Individual Academy websites	No charge

<p><b>Pupil and curriculum policies including:</b>  Home School Agreement  Curriculum Policy  Sex Education Policy  Special Needs Educational Policy  Accessibility Policy</p>	<p>Hard copy  Individual Academy websites</p>	<p>No charge</p>
--	---	------------------

Information available	How the information can be obtained	Charge
<p><b>Class 5: Our policies and procedures</b>  <b>Current written protocols, policies and procedures for delivery our services and responsibilities</b>  Current information as a minimum</p>		
<p><b>Pupil and curriculum policies including:</b> (cont'd)  Race Equality Policy  Collective Worship Policy  Career Education Policy  Pupil Discipline Policy</p>	<p>Hard copy  Individual Academy websites</p>	<p>No charge</p>
<p><b>Records Management and Personal Data Policies:</b>  Information security policies  Records retention policies  Destruction and archive policies  Data protection policies</p>	<p>Hard copy</p>	<p>No charge</p>
<p><b>Charging Regimes and policies:</b> includes details of any statutory charging regimes – charges made for information routinely published. Clearly stating what costs are to be recovered, the basis on which they are made and how they are calculated.</p>	<p>Hard copy</p>	<p>No charge</p>

<b>Information available</b>	<b>How the information can be obtained</b>	<b>Charge</b>
<b>Class 6: Lists and Registers</b>		
Currently maintained lists and registers only		
Curriculum circulars and statutory instruments	Hard copy	Schedule of charges
Disclosure Logs	Individual Academy websites	Schedule of charges
Asset Register	Individual Academy websites	Schedule of charges
Any information Ark are currently legally required to hold in publicly available registers	Hard copy	Schedule of charges
<b>Class 7: The services we offer</b>		
<b>Information about the services we offer, including leaflets, guidance &amp; newsletters</b>		
Currently information only		
Extra-curricular activities Out of School Clubs	Individual Academy websites	No charge
School publications	Individual Academy websites	No charge
Services for which the Academy is entitled to recover a fee, together with those fees	Individual Academy websites	No charge
Leaflets, booklets and newsletters	Individual Academy websites	No charge