FREEDOM OF INFORMATION POLICY

Version:	2.0
Reviewer:	Rachael Tucker
Approval body:	Finance & Resources Committee
Date this version approved:	4th July 2025
Due for review:	Summer 2028

Freedom of Information Policy

INTRODUCTION

One of the aims of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) is that educational establishments should be clear and proactive about the information they make public. To do this we must produce a publication scheme, setting out:

- The categories of information that we intend to publish
- How this information can be obtained
- Whether this information is available free of charge or chargeable

OHC&AT has adopted the model publication scheme that has been prepared and approved by the Information Commissioner. This publication scheme commits the organisation to make information available to the public as part of its normal business activities. The information covered is included in the classes of information mentioned below, where this information is held by us.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- To proactively publish or otherwise make available as a matter of routine, information, including environmental information, which is held by us and falls within the classifications below.
- To specify the information which is held by us 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 be easily identified and accessed by members of the public.
- To review and update on a regular basis the information we make available under this scheme.
- To produce a schedule of any fees charged for access to information which is made proactively available.
- To make this publication scheme available to the public.
- To publish any dataset held by us that has been requested, and any updated versions we hold, unless it is not appropriate to do so; to publish the dataset, where reasonably practicable, in an electronic form that is capable of re-use; and, if any information in the dataset is a relevant copyright work and we are the only owner, to make the information available for re-use under the terms of the Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2015, if they apply, and otherwise under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act section 19.

The term ‘dataset’ is defined in section 11(5) of the Freedom of Information Act. The term ‘relevant copyright work’ is defined in section 19(8) of that Act.

CATEGORIES OF INFORMATION AVAILABLE

OHC&AT has published schemes that set out the information currently published and information that may be published in the future. There are seven main headings under which the information is available:

- Who we are and what we do.
  Organisational information, locations and contacts, constitutional and legal governance.
- What we spend and how we spend it.
  Financial information relating to projected and actual income and expenditure, tendering, procurement and contracts.
- What our priorities are and how we are doing.
  Strategy and performance information, plans, assessments, inspections and reviews.
- How we make decisions.
  Policy proposals and decisions. Decision making processes, internal criteria and procedures, consultations.
- Our policies and procedures.
- Current written protocols for delivering our functions and responsibilities.
- Lists and registers.
  Information held in registers required by law and other lists and registers relating to the functions of the authority.
- The services we offer.
  Advice and guidance, booklets and leaflets, transactions and media releases. A description of the services offered.

HOW TO REQUEST DOCUMENTATION

Members of the public may find the information they require on one of our websites: http://www.orchardhill.ac.uk/ or https://www.ohcat.org/academies/ohcat/

All requests under the Freedom of Information Act must be made in writing. If you cannot find the information you are looking for, please complete the online contact form available at https://www.ohcat.org/contact/ or https://orchardhill.ac.uk/contact/ or by email to data.protection@ohcat.org marking the subject line 'Freedom of Information Request'.

All requests will be processed and recorded centrally, although information may be obtained from any school or college location with the organisation.

No charge will be made for digital copies of information that can be sent and received by email. If you require a paper copy of any information, it will be made available. We may apply a charge of 5p per sheet along with the appropriate postal charges at cost. By law we are required to provide a full response within 20 school days (or 60 working days – whichever is shorter), if we hold the information requested. Only information that is available and falls within the FOIA will be provided as set out in this policy.

We may refuse a request if:

- 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

In addition, the Freedom of Information Act contains a number of exemptions that allow us to withhold information from a requester. In some cases it allows us to refuse to confirm or deny whether we hold information. Exemptions exist to protect information that should not be disclosed, for example because disclosing it would be harmful to another person, or it would be against the public interest, or it would be in breach of anther law, such as disclosing personal information in contravention of the UK GDPR or the DPA 2018. More information about FOIA and exemptions that may apply can be found on the Information Commissioners Office website https://ico.org.uk/.

You have the right to appeal a non-disclosure of information by writing to us within 20 working days from receipt of the Refusal Notice.

RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Data Protection Policy
Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy
Information & Records Retention Policy
Information Security Policy
IT Acceptable Use Policy
Child Protection, Adult Protection & Safeguarding Policy and Procedure
Positive behaviour policies (Academies/College)