FREEDOM OF INFORMATION POLICY

The Courtyard offers a tailored educational and social provision with a holistic approach. We aim to equip our students with the skills and experiences needed to discover and thrive with increased independence in their next stage of life.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION POLICY

Approval Committee:	**Full Governing Body**
Author/responsible person:	**Head Teacher**
Last reviewed:	**Spring 2024**
Next review date:	**Spring 2027**
Required to publish on website?	**Yes**
Statutory?	**Yes**

Freedom of Information Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 The Courtyard Islington is committed to complying with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and related legislation. This legislation enables anyone, anywhere in the world, to request any recorded information held by, or on behalf of, The Courtyard Islington.

1.2 Information will be provided if it is held, unless one or more of the exemptions listed in the legislation applies. Information which is exempt does not have to be provided.

2. Scope

2.1 This policy applies to all recorded information held by The Courtyard Islington or by someone else on behalf of The Courtyard Islington. It does not apply to information which The Courtyard Islington only holds on behalf of another person or organisation.

3. Responsibilities

3.1 All employees are responsible for ensuring that any request for information they receive is dealt with in line with the requirements of the FOIA and in compliance with this policy. The Courtyard Islington's Head Teacher coordinates all requests for information received by The Courtyard Islington. Any requests for information should be sent directly to the Head Teacher.

3.2 Where an applicant indicates that they would like the requested information in a particular form i.e. paper, electronic or inspection at The Courtyard Islington, we will comply with their preference where reasonably practicable, taking into account all the particular circumstances, including cost.

4. Dealing with requests

4.1 The Courtyard Islington will provide advice and assistance to help people make requests under the FOIA. The Courtyard Islington aims to respond to all requests promptly and at any rate, within the statutory response period of 20 working days following receipt of a valid request. This timescale can be extended under specific circumstances, for example if an exemption applies and we are considering whether or not it is in the public interest to disclose the information regardless of the exemption.

4.2 The Courtyard Islington aims to publish as much information as it can, both proactively and in response to requests under the FOIA; however exemptions will be applied where appropriate to ensure that information which is not suitable for publication is protected.

4.3 Written requests for information received by The Courtyard Islington via post, email or other means will be treated as requests under the FOIA in cases where the information is not already publicly available or routinely disclosed on request. There is no need for requests to indicate they are made under the FOIA; however applicants making requests must provide their real name and an address for correspondence (email or postal). If a request is unclear, we will ask for clarification as soon as we can to enable us to proceed with considering the request.

4.4 The Courtyard Islington reserves the right to refuse requests where the cost of providing the information would exceed the statutory cost limit. This limit is currently £450, which equates to 18 hours' work at a statutory rate of £25 per hour. Where we estimate that complying with a request will take more than 18 hours of officer time, we will try to assist applicants to make refined requests which are more manageable.

5. Relationship with the Data Protection Act

5.1 The Courtyard Islington is under a legal duty to protect personal data as required by the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA), and subsequent GDPR legislation. The Courtyard Islington will carefully consider its responsibilities under the DPA before disclosing personal data about living individuals, including current and former officers, Directors, and users of its services.

6. Charges

6.1 Information will be provided electronically and free of charge where possible; however there may be circumstances where we need to charge for information e.g. if it is only available in paper form and there is a large amount of copying involved. If there will be a charge for disbursements e.g. photocopying or postage in order to provide the information, we will inform applicants as soon as possible to see if they wish to proceed; however such charges will usually be waived if they amount to less than £10.

6.2 Charges under these circumstances will be calculated at a rate of 10p per sheet of A4 for photocopying; postage will be calculated using Royal Mail's postage rates at the time the request is dealt with. Any other similar charges which may arise e.g. larger paper sizes will be reasonable and be calculated on the basis of the actual cost to The Courtyard Islington of providing the information to applicants.

7. Complaints about requests for information

7.1 Anyone who has made a request for information to The Courtyard Islington under the FOIA is entitled to request an internal review if they are unhappy with the way their request has been handled. Internal reviews will be carried out by a senior member of staff who was not involved with the original decision. Any internal review will consider whether or not the request was handled appropriately, in line with the requirements of the FOIA. Applicants wishing to ask for an internal review must do so within 40 working days of the date of The Courtyard Islington's response to their request.

7.2 The Courtyard Islington aims to respond to internal reviews within 20 working days of receipt.

7.3 Anyone who is unhappy with the outcome of an internal review is entitled to complain to the Information Commissioner.

8. Contact details

8.1 For advice and assistance from The Courtyard Islington, please contact the Finance and Operations Manager. Independent advice and information about the FOIA is available from the Information Commissioner's Office.