



BALLYMENA ACADEMY

EST. 1828

Freedom of Information Policy

Policy ratified by Board of Governors: April 2025
Date of next Review: April 2028

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION POLICY

A. THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT

Ballymena Academy (the School) is committed to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and to the principles of accountability and the general right of access to information. This Policy outlines the School's response to FOIA and a framework for managing requests.

The information which the School routinely makes available to the public is included in the Publication Scheme (see below). Requests for other information will be dealt with in accordance with statutory guidance and this Policy.

The School recognises that under the FOIA, any person (the Enquirer) has a legal right to ask for access to information held by the School. The Enquirer is entitled to be told whether the School holds the information, and to receive a copy, subject to certain exemptions. The School will respond to all requests, telling the Enquirer whether or not the information is held, and supplying any information that is held, except where exemptions apply. The School will respond to each request within 20 working days, excluding school holidays. The Governors of the School reserve the right to have reimbursed any costs to the School, which result from a request for information, by charging a sum commensurate with the cost accruing from such a request. Information about such a cost will be communicated before any request is acted upon.

If any element of a request to the School includes personal information, this will be dealt with under the General Data Protection Regulation 2016/679 in accordance with the School's Data Protection Policy.

B. FOIA PUBLICATION SCHEME

One of the aims of the FOIA is that public authorities, including all maintained schools, should be clear and proactive about the information that they will make public.

To achieve this, the legislation requires the production of a "Publication Scheme", setting out:

- The classes of information published or intended to be published;
- The manner in which the information will be published; and
- Whether the information is available free of charge or on payment.

The scheme covers information already published and information which is to be published in the future. All information in our publication scheme is available either on the School website or in paper format.

Some information may not be made public, for example personal information.

This Publication Scheme conforms with the model scheme for schools approved by the Information Commissioner.

The Board of Governors is responsible for the maintenance of this scheme.

Aims and objectives

The School aims to provide a caring environment in which pupils can realise their full potential and pursue excellence in all their activities.

This publication scheme is a means of showing how this aim is being pursued.

Details relating to the realisation of this aim in different areas, e.g. moral and spiritual, personal, social, intellectual, vocational and cultural, are published in the Information Booklet (which accompanies the Prospectus), the Parents' Handbook and on the School website.

Categories of information published

The publication scheme gives information currently published or to be published in the future. This is split into categories of information known as "Classes". These are contained in Appendix 1 of this document.

The Classes of information available are organised into four broad topic areas:

- School Prospectus – information published in the School Prospectus.
- Governors' Documents – information published in the Governors' Annual Report and in other governing body documents.
- Pupils and Curriculum – information about policies that relate to pupils and the school curriculum.
- School Policies and other information related to the School – information about policies that relate to the School in general.

How to request information

For a paper version of any of the documents within the scheme (or to make a FOIA request for other information), please contact the school by telephone, email, fax or letter. Contact details are set out below:

Website: www.ballymenaacademy.org.uk
E-mail: info@balacademy.ballymena.ni.sch.uk
Tel: 028 2565 2782/3
Fax: 028 2563 0855
Address: Ballymena Academy
89 Galgorm Road
Ballymena
Co. Antrim
BT42 1AJ

When making your request, you should include:-

- your name
- a postal address and/or e-mail address where you can be contacted
- a detailed description of the recorded information you are requesting

To help process a request quickly, please clearly mark any correspondence “FREEDOM OF INFORMATION/PUBLICATION SCHEME REQUEST” (in CAPITALS).

Paying for information

Information published on our website is free, although costs may be made by an Internet service provider.

Single copies of information covered by the Publication Scheme are provided free unless stated otherwise in Appendix 1. If a request requires significant photocopying or printing, or a large postage charge, or an item such as some printed publications or videos is requested, a notification of cost will be issued before the request is processed.

Feedback and complaints

Comments and/or suggestions about the scheme are welcomed. Any comments about this Publication Scheme or if further assistance is required or to make a complaint then initially this should be addressed to:

The Principal,
Ballymena Academy,
89 Galgorm Road,
Ballymena,
Co. Antrim. BT42 1AJ

If not satisfied with the assistance, or if it has not been possible to resolve a complaint and a formal complaint needs to be made, then this should be addressed to the Information Commissioner’s Office, whose role is to ensure compliance with the FOIA and deal with formal complaints. They can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner’s Office,
3rd Floor,
14 Cromac Place,
Belfast.
BT7 2JB

or

Enquiry/information line: 028 9027 8757

Website: www.ico.org.uk

Classes of information currently published

School Prospectus for Ballymena Academy – this section sets out information published in the School Prospectus.

(a) School Prospectus

The statutory contents of the School Prospectus are as follows (other items may be included in the Prospectus at the school's discretion):

- the name, address and telephone number of the school, and the type of school
- the names of the Head Teacher and Chair of the Board of Governors
- information on the school policy on admissions
- a statement of the school's ethos and values
- details of any affiliations with a particular religion or religious denomination, the religious education provided, parents' right to withdraw their child from religious education and collective worship and the alternative provision for those pupils
- information about the school's policy on providing for pupils with special educational needs
- number of pupils on roll and rates of pupils' authorised and unauthorised absences
- National Curriculum assessment results for appropriate Key Stages, with national summary figures
- GCSE results in the school, locally and nationally
- a summary of GCE A/AS level results in the school locally and nationally
- the number of pupils studying for and percentage achieving other vocational qualifications
- the destination of school leavers¹
- the arrangements for visits to the school by prospective parents
- the number of places for pupils of normal age of entry in the preceding school year and the number of written applications/preferences expressed for those places

(b) Governors' Annual Report and other information relating to the governing body – this section sets out information published in the Governors' Annual Report and in other governing body documents.

The statutory contents of the Governors' Annual Report to parents are as follows (other items may be included in the annual report at the school's discretion):

- details of the governing body
- a financial statement, including gifts made to the school and amounts paid to governors for expenses
- a description of the school's arrangements for security of pupils, staff and the premises
- number of pupils on roll and rates of pupils' authorised and unauthorised absence
- National Curriculum assessment results for appropriate Key Stages (when applicable)
- GCSE/BTEC results in the school

- GCE A/AS and vocational qualification results in the school
- the number of pupils studying for and percentage achieving other vocational qualifications
- the destinations of school leavers*
- a statement of the extent to which proposals in the post-inspection action plan have been carried into effect (when applicable)

*Some information might be confidential or otherwise exempt from the publication by law – we cannot therefore publish this.

Ballymena Academy Scheme of Management (Voluntary Grammar)

- The manner in which the governing body is constituted
- The term of office
- Bodies entitled to appoint Governors

Minutes* of meetings of the Governing Body and its committees

Agreed minutes of meetings of the governing body and its committees
(From June 2004)

*Some information might be confidential or otherwise exempt from the publication by law – we cannot therefore publish this.

(c) Pupils and Curriculum Policies – This section gives access to information about policies that relate to pupils and the school curriculum.

Acceptable Use of Digital Resource
Admissions Policy
Administration of Medication in School
Anti-Bullying Policy
Assessment, Recording and Reporting Policy
Attendance Policy
CEIAG Policy
Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
Curriculum Policy
Data Protection Policy
Drugs Education Policy
Positive Behaviour Policy
Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy
Special Education Needs Policy
Suspensions and Expulsions Scheme

(d) School Policies and other information related to the school – This section gives access to information about policies and other information that relate to the school in general.

Charging and Remissions Policy
Code of Conduct for Parents attending Sports fixtures
Complaints procedure
Concussion
Critical Incident Management Policy
Details of school session and dates of school terms and holidays
Disciplinary Procedures for Teachers
Disposal of School Records
Educational Visits Policy
Equal Opportunities
E-Safety and Mobile Technologies Policy
Fraud Policy
Freedom of Information
Games Transport Permission
Grievance Procedures for Teachers
Health and Safety Policy
Managing Attendance at Work
Promotion of Effective Working Relationships with Parents/Guardians
Published reports referring expressly to the school
Privacy Notice
Salary Policy
School Calendar
School Magazine
Staff Development Policy
Subject Choice Information – Year 10, Year 12
Parents' Information Booklet
Parents' Information Leaflets Years 8 - 14