

Newham Community Learning - Freedom of Information Policy

Last updated: January 2024

Applies to: Newham Community Learning

Approved by: Trust Board, September 2022 (operational points and personnel details added in January 2024 - no Board approval needed as approved by the Trust's Data Protection Officer)

[NCLTrust.net](https://www.ncltrust.net)

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1. Overview of the Policy Management Process

1.1. Document history

Date	Revision	Version number (substantive revisions are allocated a new whole number; minor revisions are designated by the addition of a consecutive decimal point)
Sept 2021	NCST Trust level Freedom of Information Policy in place	v1.0
Sept 2022	Reviewed, updated and released as a Newham Community Learning Policy	v1.1
Aug 2023	Update to phone number and CEO.PA email account	v1.2
Jan 2024	Update to section 2.1 regarding operational arrangements concerning the Trust's management of FOI requests	v1.3

1.2. Review and approval

The Freedom of Information Policy applies to the whole Trust. It is reviewed by the Executive Team (and/or their delegates) and is then presented to the Trust Board for approval (via a relevant board committee if appropriate).

It is reviewed in line with the Trust Policy Review Schedule.

2. Newham Community Learning - Freedom of Information Policy (including requests for environmental information made under the Environmental Information Regulations)

2.1. Introduction and purpose

Newham Community Learning (NCL) is an Academy Trust and as such it is a public authority for the purposes of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004).

This policy is for members of the public making requests. Requests regarding information held by any of the Trust's schools (as listed on [the website](#)) should be submitted via the Trust's Office, using the details provided below. Where requests are sent to individual schools, schools will use their best endeavours to ensure that the requests reach the Trust Office without delay.

The CEO's PA, who is part of Newham Community Learning's Central Team based at the Trust Office, is responsible for acknowledging requests, assessing the application of any exemptions, and responding to all requests received by the Trust unless they are requests which can be treated as normal day to day enquiries - ie. unless the information is already listed as publicly available under the Trust's Model Publication Scheme, available on the [Policies Page](#) of the website.

The CEO's PA will work with the Trust's schools, personnel at which will be responsible for collating the information requested and then sending it to the Trust Office, via the CEO's PA, to ensure a coordinated response is provided to any requester.

In this policy the person who makes the request is called 'the requester'.

2.2. Making a Freedom of Information Request

Any person may make a request by submitting it to ceo.pa@ncltrust.net.

Or by sending it to:

For the attention of the CEO's PA at the Trust Office, South East Building, Eastlea Community School, Exning Road, London, E16 4NL¹.

An FOI request must be made in writing. However, if, because of disability, it is difficult for you to put your request in writing then please telephone the CEO's PA at the Trust Office on 0330 053 4810, and we will write it down for you.

2.3. Making a Request for Environmental Information Request

¹ Please note that the Trust's office is not situated at Newham Community Learning's registered address.

Please do this the same way as for a Freedom of Information Request (see above).

2.4. Requests for information in the Trust's Publication Scheme

Requests for information covered by the Model Publication Scheme will be dealt with by staff in the usual course of their work as day to day enquiries. The usual response will be to point the requester to the information which is published on the Newham Community Learning website in accordance with our Model Publication Scheme. The response will be issued within the statutory time limit.

The documents which are available under the Model Publication Scheme can be found at the locations listed within the Model Publication Scheme or where published on the [Trust website](#)/on the relevant pages of the schools' websites.

2.5. Freedom of Information requests not covered by the Publication Scheme

If Freedom of Information or Environmental Information requests (other than those falling within the Model Publication Scheme) are received by staff members then they will forward them to the CEO's PA (ceo.pa@ncltrust.net) but requesters are asked to use this email address in the first instance.

2.6. Timescales for responses

Requests will be acknowledged within 5 school days. They will be responded to within the statutory timescale. For Freedom of Information Requests this is usually 20 school days but may be extended to a maximum of 60 ordinary working days. This is to allow for holiday periods when the schools are closed. A school day is one when pupils are in attendance. Therefore, staff training days on which the school is open to staff but not pupils are not 'school days' for this purpose.

For Environmental Information Requests, the timescale for a response is 20 working days, although we may extend this to 40 working days in certain circumstances. These circumstances will be explained to the requester if they apply. Unlike with Freedom of Information Requests, there is no law permitting the use of school days in calculating the timescale or to extend the deadline to allow for holiday periods when the schools are closed.

2.7. Responses to Requests

A response will usually state whether or not the requested information is held, although there are some permitted exceptions to this. It will provide the requested information or explain why Newham Community Learning cannot provide it, explaining any exemptions applied. It will explain what the requester can do if they are not happy with the response.

Any information will usually be supplied in electronic format as a pdf but any reasonable request for information in hardcopy will be complied with.