

# Freedom of Information Policy (Freedom of Information Act 2000)

| <b>Date of Issue</b> | <b>Authorised by</b> | <b>Next Review Date</b> |
|----------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| June 2016            | Board of Governors   | 2019                    |

## **FREEDOM OF INFORMATION POLICY (FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000)**

### **Statement of Commitment**

The LTE Group is committed to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 that enables public access to information held by public authorities, including further education colleges.

The LTE Group will implement the requirements of the Act and any subsequent amendments or regulations and the college's controls and procedures that will ensure integrity and security of data.

The LTE Group will implement the Act and will:

- Provide, maintain and periodically review a Publication Scheme, to include the maximum information which can reasonably be provided on a routine basis
- Provide information in accordance with the requirements and exemptions of the Act as set out in Schedule II to the Act, and within the specified timescales
- Advise enquirers on requests for information.

In addition, the LTE Group will aim to ensure that:

- A member of the Executive Team has overall responsibility for the implementation of Freedom of Information and the Publication Scheme. This is currently the Company Secretary & General Counsel.
- Staff are aware of their responsibilities under the Act.
- Staff are trained and supported to deal effectively with the requirements of the Act, including the need to deal with information requests, in whole or in part, in accordance with the Act.
- The requirements of the Act are considered in decision-making processes, such as the development of policy and procedures and the design and the implementation of information systems.
- The operation of the organisation is developed to meet the highest standards of openness and accountability.

### **Scope of the Policy**

The policy statement applies to the LTE Group and its activities governed by the Corporation under the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 (Freedom of Information Act 2000, c53 (1) (a) refers).

### **Monitoring**

A register of all requests made for information under the Freedom of Information Act and the action taken on each application will be maintained. The register will identify whether the same or similar information has previously been requested and provided, or refused and the reasons for the refusal. This will ensure consistency in dealing with the similar requests and identify repeated, duplicate or vexatious requests. It will also identify reoccurring requests for the same or similar information not already published and allow the Group to consider

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whether such information should be routinely published on the website or in another medium.

The LTE Group will register all complaints received about its Freedom of Information arrangements and will ensure learning points that arise from such complaints are used to improve related policies, procedures and guidance.

This policy will be reviewed in accordance with the group policy review cycle to ensure it remains up to date, effective and takes account of emerging good practice. Where new legal directions come into force, the policy will be reviewed in line with the commencement date of that legislation.

The Board of Governors (through the Audit Committee) will receive an annual report on requests received under the Freedom of Information Policy. The controls and procedures may also be subject to review by the Group auditors who make recommendations on the basis of their findings. Arrangements and procedures that may be affected by changes in legislation will be reviewed as necessary. Significant changes in arrangements or procedures arising from these will be notified to Governors.

### **Requests and charges**

Requests for information should be made in writing, by letter or email, to:

Information Services

c/o the Assistant Company Secretary

LTE Group

Whitworth House

Ashton Old Road

Openshaw

Manchester

M11 2WH

Email: [foi@LTEgroup.co.uk](mailto:foi@LTEgroup.co.uk)

If the request is too general, we will offer advice and assistance to determine the information required. We do not have the right to ask why information is being sought, but the information can be volunteered to assist the college in meeting the request.

The request will be dealt with promptly within the required response time of 20 working days, although this can be extended for a reasonable time for the consideration of whether the disclosure of normally exempt information would be in the public interest.

The Group's Charging Policy for Information Requests details the current costs charged for retrieval of information.

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### **Review and appeal**

If an applicant is dissatisfied with the handling of a request, they have the right to ask for an internal review. Internal review requests should be submitted within two months of the date of receipt of the response to the original letter and should be addressed to:

The Company Secretary & General Counsel  
LTE Group  
Whitworth House  
Ashton Old Road  
Openshaw  
Manchester  
M11 2WH

If not content with the outcome of the internal review, an applicant has the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF

### **Making a request (staff)**

No member of staff, whilst acting in their respective role, should make a request under the Freedom of Information Act without first receiving the authorisation of a member of the Executive Team.

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