

Freedom of Information/Records Management Unit

Department of Education & Skills

Marlborough Street

Dublin D01 RC96

01 8896444

foi@education.gov.ie

From [REDACTED]
Sent: 06 September 2017 18:31
To: Freedom of Information <foi@education.gov.ie>
Subject: Re: FOI: 2017/386 [REDACTED]

Hi,

Thank you for your email. I can reduce the scope of point 2 as follows:

2. For the period from February 2016 to the present please can I also have:

- any other correspondence between your department and Educate Together dealing with the issues of (a) fire safety, (b) demand for Educate Together schools*
- any internal documents dealing substantively with Educate Together and/or its requests on these topics*
- correspondence between the minister/your department and the Department of Children and Youth Affairs in relation to Educate Together (all correspondence).*

Please let me know if that is ok.

best regards,

[REDACTED]

On 5 September 2017 at 12:52, Freedom of Information <foi@education.gov.ie> wrote:

Dear [REDACTED]

I refer to your FOI request, which was received on 29 August 2017 which you have made under the Freedom of Information Act 2014 for records held by the Department of Education and Skills.

For ease of reference, your request has been arranged in numerical order as follows:

Marriott, Liz

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 12 September 2017 09:34
To: Freedom of Information <foi@education.gov.ie>
Subject: Re: FOI: 2017/386 - [REDACTED]

Hi Kathleen,
Yes I can further narrow down the scope as you suggest.
Best regards,
[REDACTED]

On 11 September 2017 at 18:12, Freedom of Information <foi@education.gov.ie> wrote:

Dear [REDACTED]

I refer to your FOI request – outlined below and this Unit's response advising that the scope of Part 2 of your request would be considered voluminous and may not be feasible to process due to the interference with and disruption of work in several functional areas within the Department.

I refer to your clarifications received below where you have reduced the scope of Part 2 of your request to the following:

2. *For the period from February 2016 to the present please can I also have:*
 - *any other correspondence between your department and Educate Together dealing with the issues of (a) fire safety, (b) demand for Educate Together schools*
 - *any internal documents dealing substantively with Educate Together and/or its requests on these topics*
 - *correspondence between the minister/your department and the Department of Children and Youth Affairs in relation to Educate Together (all correspondence).*

I can advise that in relation to the last bullet point above your request remains too broad, i.e. *all correspondence* and would require consultation with several large functional areas within the Department to encompass possible relevant records, i.e. Early Years Unit, Special Education, and also may include other functional areas. In addition the length of time required to consider the records relevant to your request in order to determine their relevance and whether they are appropriate for release would cause a substantial interference and disruption of work in these areas.

Is it possible to narrow the scope of the last bullet point to:

- *correspondence between the minister/your department and the Department of Children and Youth Affairs in relation to Educate Together (on these topics).*

If you wish to consider revising the wording of your request to, we may be able to proceed with consideration of your request

Should you wish to discuss the above please contact this unit directly.

Regards

Kathleen McAuliffe

"I would like to make a freedom of information request in relation to contact between your department and Educate Together.

1. *Some meetings are detailed in these lobbying returns:*

<https://www.lobbying.ie/return/17922/educate-together>

<https://www.lobbying.ie/return/14292/educate-together>

Please can I have any correspondence between your department and Educate Together in relation to these meetings with Educate Together and meeting records e.g. agendas, briefing notes, speaking notes, minutes, presentations.

2. *For the period from February 2016 to the present please can I also have:*

any other correspondence between your department and Educate Together

any internal documents dealing substantively with Educate Together and/or its requests (not including individual school inspections)

correspondence between the minister/your department and the Department of Children and Youth Affairs in relation to Educate Together."

We have made preliminary enquiries within the Department where it would reasonably be expected to find the records that you seek and can advise that under the provisions of section 15(1)(c) of the Freedom of Act 2014, your request in its current format would be considered a voluminous request and may not be feasible to process due to the interference with and disruption of work in several functional areas within the Department.

15(1) A head to whom an FOI request is made may refuse to grant the request where –

(c) in the opinion of the head, granting the request would, by reason of the number or nature of the records concerned or nature of the information concerned, require the retrieval and examination of such number of records or an examination of such kind of records concerned as to cause a substantial and unreasonable interference with or disruption of work (including disruption of work in a particular functional area) of the FOI body concerned.

The scope of Part 2 of your request is considered voluminous due to the following –

- The Department may correspond and interact on a regular basis with Educate Together on a wide range of issues, therefore consultation would be required with several large functional areas within the Department to encompass records covered by this part of your request, i.e. Forward Planning, various areas within the School Building Unit (such as Schools Capital Appraisal Unit, Major Projects, Site Acquisitions), School Governance Unit, Central Policy Unit, to name but a few.

- The length of time required to consider the records relevant to your request in order to determine their relevance and whether they are appropriate for release would cause a substantial interference and disruption of the work of the Department

Under the provisions of section 15(4) of the Freedom of Information Act 2014, there is an obligation on the public body concerned to assist the requester in narrowing the scope of his/her request so it no longer falls to be refused under 15(1)(c).

I wish to take this opportunity to offer assistance to you to narrow the scope of your request. The best way to make your request more manageable while fulfilling your objective would be to:

- Narrow the scope of Part 2 of your request to one specific topic/subject matter regarding Educate Together

To assist you in identifying areas relevant to your request, section 8 of the FOI Act 2014, requires FOI bodies to prepare and publish as much information as possible in an open and accessible manner on a routine basis. This Publication Scheme can be access via the Departments website - <http://www.education.ie/en/The-Department/FOI/Publication-Scheme/>

