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MITCHARTERSCHOOL.ORG

RIGHT-TO-KNOW LAW POLICY

(Adopted July 20, 2022 pursuant to 65 P.S. § 67.504(a)) Effective Date: July 20, 2022

Authority

MITCS (“Agency”) adopts this policy pursuant to Section 504(a) of the Right-to-Know Law, 65 P.S. §§ 67.101-67.3104 (“RTKL”). The Agency has made this policy available to the public at its administrative office and on its public website along with the RTKL Uniform Request Form, a copy of which is attached to this Policy as Appendix A.

Definitions

All of the definitions set forth in the RTKL are incorporated into this policy by reference. See 65 P.S. § 67.102.

AORO. The Agency Open Records Officer designated by the Agency pursuant to Section IV of this policy.

Business day. The regular business hours of the Agency are **Monday through Friday from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm**. Business days exclude Saturday and Sunday and a weekday on which the Agency is closed for business.

Agency Website

The Agency maintains a public website at www.mitcharterschool.org. The following information is also posted on the Agency’s website: AORO contact information; contact information for the OOR; a form which may be used to file a RTKL request; and a copy of this policy. See 65 P.S. § 67.504(b).

Submitting a RTKL Request to the Agency

Open Records Officer. The Agency has designated an AORO to respond to RTKL requests. The contact information for the AORO is:

Dr. Chester Thompson, CEO, AORO
7 South 12th Street,
Midland PA 105
724-510-0944
chester.thompson@mitcharterschool.org

The contact information for the AORO is posted on the Agency website.

Request. Requests should be submitted in writing using the RTKL Uniform Request Form available on the Agency website and should be addressed to the AORO. If a requester chooses not to use the request form, the request should clearly indicate that it is seeking records under the RTKL. To allow the Agency to locate requested records and determine whether those records are public, requests for records should be specific and concise and clearly identify as precisely as possible the records sought. Requesters should clearly indicate the preferred method of access – paper copies, electronic copies or by inspection. Requesters should retain a copy of the request for their file, as a copy of the request is necessary should a requester appeal the Agency response.

Receipt of the request. For the purpose of calculating the response deadline, the Agency is deemed to have received the request on the business day that the AORO receives the request. Any request that is received by the Agency after the close of regular business hours shall be deemed to be received on the next business day. If the request is received by an Agency employee other than the AORO, the request will be forwarded to AORO as soon as practical.

Verbal requests. The Agency will respond to verbal requests for records at its discretion. Requesters submitting verbal requests for records should be aware that they may not pursue the remedies available to a requester under the RTKL.

Anonymous requests. The Agency will not respond to anonymous requests for records.

Response period generally. The Agency has 5 business days to respond to a request for records under the RTKL. If an Agency does not respond, the request is considered “deemed denied,” and a requester’s appeal rights commence.

Agency Response

Extension of time for response. The Agency is permitted to take an additional 30 calendar days to respond to any request for the reasons set forth in Section 902 of the RTKL. If the Agency invokes an extension, the Agency will inform the requester in writing, in accordance with the requirements set forth in Section 902(b)(2) of the RTKL.

Requester’s agreement to extend the response period. The requester may agree, in writing, to extend the Agency response period. The requester must agree to the extension during the initial 5 business-day response period or the extended 30 calendar day response period, if the Agency has invoked one.

Trade secrets. If a request involves records provided to the Agency by a third party and the third party previously provided the Agency with a written statement that the record contains a trade secret or confidential proprietary information, the Agency shall provide notice to the third party.

Final response. The Agency may grant a request, partially grant and partially deny a request, or deny a request in its entirety. The final response of the Agency will be in writing. Should the Agency fail to issue a response within the applicable response period, the request is deemed denied.

1. Granting access to records. The Agency may grant a request for records by issuing a response:
 - (1) granting access to inspect Agency records during the Agency’s regular business hours;
 - (2) sending copies of the records to the requester; or
 - (3) by notifying the requester that the records are available on the Agency website or other publicly accessible electronic means.

2. Denying or partially denying access to records. Should the Agency deny or partially deny a request for records through redaction or otherwise, the Agency will inform the requester of the denial or partial denial in writing. The response will describe the requested records, inform the requester that the Agency does not possess the responsive records or, if the records are exempt from public access, provide a citation to the relevant legal basis for withholding the requested records. Additionally, the response will provide the name, signature, title, business address and telephone number of the Open Records Officer who denied the request, as well as the date of the response and the procedure to appeal the denial. See 65 P.S. § 67.903.

Fees. The Agency will charge fees consistent with the RTKL Fee Structure, available at <http://www.openrecords.pa.gov/RTKL/FeeStructure.cfm>. The Agency may, in its discretion, choose to waive some or all of the fees owed on a case-by-case basis. The Agency will waive fees of less than \$5.00.

RTKL Appeals

Generally. To challenge the denial, partial denial, or deemed denial of a request for Agency records, an appeal may be filed using the OOR appeal form, available at <http://www.openrecords.pa.gov/Appeals/AppealForm.cfm>, or by contacting the OOR at the following address:

Office of Open Records
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
333 Market St., 16th Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17101-2234
openrecords@pa.gov

Requirements of an appeal. All appeals must be filed within 15 business days of the mailing date of the Agency's denial, partial denial, or deemed denial of the request. All appeals must be in writing; must state the grounds upon which the requester asserts that the requested records are public records; must address any grounds stated by the Agency for denying the request; and must include a copy of the request and the Agency's response, if any.

Agency Notification of Third Parties on Appeal

Agency must notify third parties. If records affect a legal or security interest of an employee of the agency; contain confidential, proprietary or trademarked records of a person or business entity; or are held by a contractor or vendor, the Agency must notify such parties of the appeal immediately and provide proof of that notice to the OOR within 7 business days from the date of the OOR's Official Notice of Appeal. Such notice must be made by (1) providing a copy of all documents included with the appeal to the OOR; and (2) advising that interested persons may request to participate in the appeal.

Record Retention

The Agency's record retention policy is available at its administrative offices for public review.

Notwithstanding any other existing record retention policy, once a RTKL request is received, the Agency shall maintain, preserve, retain, protect, and not destroy any and all records, both electronic and hard copy, that are potentially responsive to the request until such time as the request is fulfilled and all associated appeals are resolved.

MITCS RIGHT-TO-KNOW LAW REQUEST FORM

Good communication is vital in the RTKL process. Complete this form thoroughly and retain a copy; it may be required if an appeal is filed. You have 15 business days to appeal after a request is denied or deemed denied.

Submitted to Agency Name

.....
NAME ATTENTION (AORO)
.....
DATE OF REQUEST
.....

Submitted via: Email U.S. Mail Fax In Person

Person Making Request

.....
NAME COMPANY (IF APPLICABLE)
.....
ADDRESS
.....
CITY STATE ZIP EMAIL
.....
TELEPHONE FAX
.....

How do you prefer to be contacted if the agency has questions? Telephone Email U.S. Mail

Records Requested

Be clear and concise. Provide as much specific detail as possible, ideally including subject matter, time frame, and type of record or party names. RTKL requests should seek records, not ask questions. Requesters are not required to explain why the records are sought or the intended use of the records unless otherwise required by law. Use additional pages if necessary.

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Do you want copies?

- Yes, printed copies (default if none are checked)
- Yes, electronic copies preferred if available
- No, in-person inspection of records preferred (may request copies later)

RTKL requests may require payment or prepayment of fees. See the Official RTKL Fee Schedule for more details.

Please notify me if fees associated with this request will be more than

Do you want certified copies?

- Yes (may be subject to additional costs) No

- \$100 (or) \$

ITEMS BELOW THIS LINE FOR AGENCY USE ONLY

TRACKING DATE RECEIVED RESPONSE DUE (5 BUS. DAYS)
30-DAY EXTENSION? YES NO (IF YES, FINAL DUE DATE) ACTUAL RESPONSE DATE
REQUEST WAS: GRANTED PARTIALLY GRANTED & DENIED DENIED COST TO REQUESTER \$.....
 APPROPRIATE THIRD PARTIES NOTIFIED AND GIVEN AN OPPORTUNITY TO OBJECT TO THE RELEASE OF REQUESTED RECORDS.