

Model Records Management Policy and retention guidelines

Background

Section 46 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires schools to follow a Code of Practice on managing their records. Under section 7 of the Code of Practice on the Management of Records, it states that:

‘Authorities should have in place a records management policy, either as a separate policy or as part of a wider information or knowledge management policy.’

The following model policy statement can be adopted by individual schools in its entirety or can be amended to reflect the needs of individual schools. It has been extracted from model action plan for developing records management complaint with the Lord Chancellor’s Code of Practice under Section 46 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 Model Action Plan for Schools. The policy should be approved by the governing board or other appropriate authority. Once the records management policy has been approved at the appropriate level it should be published as part of the publication scheme.

[Name of] School Records Management Policy

The School recognises that by efficiently managing its records, it will be able to comply with its legal and regulatory obligations and to contribute to the effective overall management of the institution. Records provide evidence for protecting the legal rights and interests of the school, and provide evidence for demonstrating performance and accountability. This document provides the policy framework through which this effective management can be achieved and audited. It covers:

- Scope
 - Responsibilities
 - Relationships with existing policies
1. Scope of the policy
 - 1.1 This policy applies to all records created, received or maintained by staff of the school in the course of varying out its functions.
 - 1.2 Records are defined as all those documents which facilitate the business carried out by the school and which are thereafter retained (for a set period) to provide evidence of its transactions or activities. These records may be created, received or maintained in hard copy or electronically.
 - 1.3 A small percentage of the school’s records will be selected for permanent

preservation as part of the institution's archives and for historical research. This should be done in liaison with the County Archives Service.

2. Responsibilities

2.1 The school has a corporate responsibility to maintain its records keeping systems in accordance with the regulatory environment. The person with overall responsibility for this policy is the Headteacher/Head of School.

2.2 The person responsible for records management in the school will give guidance for good records management practice and will promote compliance with this policy so that information will be retrieved easily, appropriately and in timely way. They will also monitor compliance with this policy by surveying at least annually to check if records are stored securely and can be accessed appropriately.

2.3 Individual staff and employees must ensure that records for which they are responsible are accurate, and are maintained and disposed of in accordance with school's records management guidelines.

3. Relationship with existing policies

This policy has been drawn up within the context of:

- Freedom of Information Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- and with other legislation or regulations (including audit, equal opportunities and ethics) affecting the school.

Approved by Governing Board on

Governing Board				
Basic file description	Data Protection Issues	Statutory Provisions	Retention Period	Action at the end of administrative life of the record
Agendas for Governing Board meetings	There may be data protection issues if the meeting is dealing with confidential issues relating to staff		One copy should be retained with the master set of minutes. All other copies can be disposed of.	Secure Disposal***
Minutes of Governing Board meetings	There may be data protection issues if the meeting is dealing with confidential issues relating to staff			
	Principal Set (signed)		Permanent	If the school is unable to store these then they should be offered to Essex Records Office (any records older than 6 years)
Reports presented to the Governing Board	There may be data protection issues if the report deals with confidential issues relating to staff		Reports should be kept for a minimum of 6 years. However, if the minutes refer directly to individual reports then the reports should be kept permanently.	Secure disposal or retain with the signed set of minutes.
Instrument of Government	No		Permanent	These should be retained in the school whilst the school is open and then offered to the Essex Records Office when the school closes.
Action plans created and administered by the Governing Board	No		Life of the action plan + 3 years	Secure Disposal
Policy documents created and administered by	No		Life of the policy + 3 years	Secure Disposal

the Governing Board				
Records relating to complaints dealt with by the Governing Board	Yes		Date of the resolution of the complaint + a minimum of 6 years then review for further retention in case of contentious disputes	Secure Disposal
Proposal concerning the change of a maintained school including Specialist Status Schools and Academies	No		Date proposal accepted or declined + 3 years	Secure disposal

***In this context Secure Disposal should be taken to mean disposal using confidential waste bins, or is the school has the facility, shredding using a cross cut shredder.