EVERY CHILD MATTERS ACADEMY TRUST
WELLGATE PRIMARY SCHOOL
Records Management Policy

The terms Trust and School (and levels within e.g. governors and trustees) are interchangeable and apply to all schools within the Trust

Introduction

The Trust recognises the necessity for the efficient management of its records to comply with its legal and regulatory obligations, and to contribute to the effective overall management of its schools.

Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to all records that are created, received or maintained by staff of the school in the course of carrying out its functions. 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. 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.

Responsibilities

The school has a corporate responsibility to maintain its records and record keeping systems in accordance with the regulatory environment. The person with overall responsibility for this policy is the Resources Committee.

The School Business Manager 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 a timely manner. Individual staff and employees must ensure that records for which they are responsible are accurate, and are maintained and disposed of in accordance with the school's records management guidelines.

Recording Systems

Information created by the school must be managed against the same standards regardless of the media in which it is stored.

Maintenance of Record Keeping Systems

- It is important that filing information is properly resourced and is carried out on a regular basis.
- It is equally important that the files are weeded of extraneous information where appropriate on a regular basis.

- Removing information from a file once a freedom of information request has been made will be a criminal offence (unless it is part of normal processing).
- Applying retention periods is straightforward provided files are closed on a regular basis.
- Once a file has been closed, it should be moved out of the current filing system and stored either in a record room in the school or in another appropriate place until it has reached the end of the retention period.
- Information security is very important especially when dealing with personal information or sensitive policy information. There are a number of basic rules:

  - all personal information should be kept in lockable filing cabinets which are kept locked when the room is unattended;
  - personal information held on computer systems should be adequately password protected. Information should never be left up on a screen if the computer is unattended;
  - files containing personal or sensitive information should not be left out on desks overnight;
  - sensitive personal information should not be sent by email unless encrypted;
  - if files need to be taken off the premises they should be secured in the boot of a car or in lockable containers;
  - teachers may access their files both at home and when away from school on an encrypted laptop using forticlient.
  - all computer information should be backed up regularly and the backup should be stored off the site; and
  - information contained in email, fax should be filed into the appropriate electronic or manual filing system once it has been dealt with.

The Safe Disposal of Information Using the Retention Schedule

Files should be disposed of in line with the attached retention schedule (see appendix). This is a process which should be undertaken on an annual basis during the month of July. All paper copies should be passed to the school office for logging and secure disposal. Other files can be bundled up and put in a skip or disposed of to the waste paper merchant. Loose papers should not be put in skips unless the skip has a lid.

Electronic data should be archived on electronic media and 'deleted' appropriately at the end of the retention period. It is the responsibility of individual members of staff to delete files from their laptops/ipads.

Monitoring and Review

This policy has been reviewed and approved by the Trust's Resources Committee.

<u>RETENTION PROTOCOLS FOR SCHOOLS</u>

This retention schedule contains the retention periods for the different records series created and maintained by schools in the course of their business. **The schedule refers to all information regardless of the media in which it is stored.**

Some of the retention periods are governed by statute. Others are guidelines following best practice. Every effort has been made to ensure that these retention periods are compliant with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Managing records using these retention protocols will be deemed to be "normal processing" under this legislation.

If records are to be kept for longer or shorter periods than laid out in this document the reasons for this need to be documented.

INTRODUCTION

1. The purpose of the retention schedule

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, schools are required to maintain a retention schedule listing the records, which the school creates in the course of its business. The retention schedule lays down the length of time which the record needs to be retained and the action which should be taken when it has no further administrative use.

School staff are expected to manage their current record keeping systems using the retention schedule and to take account of the different kinds of retention periods when they are creating new record keeping systems.

The retention schedule refers to all information, regardless of the media in which they are stored.

2. Benefits of a Retention Schedule

2.1. Managing records against the retention schedule is deemed to be "normal processing" under the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Provided members of staff are managing records using the retention schedule they cannot be found guilty of unauthorised tampering with files once a freedom of information request or a data subject access request has been made.

2.2. Members of staff can be confident about destroying information at the appropriate time.

2.3. Information that is subject to Freedom of Information and Data Protection legislation will be available when required.

2.4. The school is not maintaining and storing information unnecessarily.

3. What to do with records once they have reached the end of their administrative life

3.1. Where records have been identified for destruction they should be disposed of in an appropriate way. All records containing personal information or sensitive policy information should be shredded before disposal.

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires all schools to maintain a list of records which have been destroyed and who authorised their destruction. In this regard, following authorisation, the admin team must be advised in order that they can record at least:
- File reference (or other unique identifier)
- File title (or brief description)
- Number of files
- The name of authorising officer

3.2. Where records have been identified as being worthy of permanent preservation, arrangements should be made to transfer the records to the Archives and Local Studies Department. Contact by telephone 01226 773950 or email archives@barnsley.gov.uk