SCHOOL RECORDS MANAGEMENT POLICY

Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact the school office.

Policy

The purpose of this policy is to assist schools to understand and meet requirements for creating, storing and disposing of school records.

Summary

- Schools are responsible for creating, managing and disposing of school administration and student records.
- Records must only be disposed of with written approval of the school's principal, after the minimum retention period has been met. (Note: short-term information created through normal administrative practice can be destroyed without needing the written approval of the principal).
- As of July 2019, there is a 'freeze' on destroying records relating to child safety, health and wellbeing in schools and early childhood programs, until further notice.
- Schools should also review the School Records Retention Guide (staff login required) which provides information on common school records and their minimum retention periods.

Details

Schools are responsible for creating, managing and appropriately disposing of public records in accordance with the Public Records Act 1973 (Vic), standards issued by the Public Record Office Victoria (PROV) and policy and guidance issued by the Department.

Record creation

Schools must create full and accurate records of school functions and activities, including records relating to:

- school governance
- operations
- the handling of incidents, complaints and investigations

- student management

This includes both hardcopy (paper) and electronic records.

Permanent and temporary records

Schools are responsible for creating and managing temporary and permanent records.

A temporary record is a record that must be retained for a certain period of time (ranging from 12 months to 65 years) and can only be destroyed once that period has expired with the written approval of the school's principal.

Permanent records must be transferred to the State Archives when no longer needed for day-to-day activities at the school.

Contact Records and Digitisation Services on 1800 359 140 or archives.records@education.vic.gov.au if you would like assistance to transfer permanent value records at your school.

Common school records and minimum retention periods

The School Records Retention Guide outlines how long common types of school records need to be kept, to assist schools in assessing if records are ready for destruction. Instructions on how to use the guide is included in the guide on the How to use this guide tab.

The information in this guide is regularly updated however if it does not contain a record you would like to know the required retention period of, or you require further advice, contact Records and Digitisation Services on 1800 359 140 or archives.records@education.vic.gov.au

Records storage and access

Schools must have systems and processes for managing electronic and hardcopy records to ensure the authenticity, security, reliability and accessibility of these records.

All records must be stored in safe and secure locations to ensure their integrity and accessibility. Permanent records must be stored in conditions that ensure their long-term preservation. Schools may contact Records and Digitisation Services to arrange the transfer of permanent records and historic records to the State Archives if no longer needed.

Records destruction

Schools must not dispose of:

- any records that are reasonably likely to be required in a legal proceeding
- any record that may be required for a current Freedom of Information request
- permanent records or records that are of historic value (for example, records created in the 1800s or school anniversary publications)

NOTE: As at July 2019, there is a 'freeze' on destroying records relating to child safety, health and wellbeing in schools and early childhood programs, until further notice.

Schools may dispose of temporary records that have reached the required retention period (the minimum period the records must be kept for before they can be legally destroyed). The principal must approve the disposal in writing to provide evidence of the disposal activity.

Some records created through normal administrative practice may be destroyed without approval once administrative use has ended. These records include:

- working papers
- drafts
- duplicate copies of records stored elsewhere
- short-term facilitative records (such as phone messages)
- unsolicited 'junk mail'

Schools must securely dispose of records and ensure electronic and hardcopy records are destroyed in a way that ensures the records are unreadable and irretrievable. The Department recommends the use of secure disposal bins for hardcopy records.

The School Records Retention Guide outlines how long different types of records need to be kept to assist you in assessing if records are ready for destruction.

Definitions

Normal Administrative Practice

Working papers, drafts, duplicate copies of records stored elsewhere, short-term facilitative records (such as phone messages), and unimportant records such as unsolicited 'junk mail' which may be destroyed without approval once administrative use has ended.

Permanent records

A public record with enduring value to the Victorian community that must be transferred to the State Archives when no longer needed by the school.

Public records

Work-related records in any format or media made or received by staff or volunteers in Victorian government schools.

Temporary records

A public record that is required to be kept for a specific period of time for legislative or other requirements, before it can be destroyed.

COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included in staff induction processes and staff training
- Discussed at annual staff briefings/meetings
- Reminders in our school newsletter

- Hard copy available from school administration upon request

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	2022
Approved by	Principal and School Council
Next scheduled review date	August 2023