



Department
for Education

Records and Information Management Policy

December 2023

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Version Control

Version	Date	Author	Change Description
v1.0	February 2021	Knowledge Information Management	Original policy
V2.5	December 2023	Knowledge Information Management	Updated to reflect DfE Policy on Policies. Published externally

Document Review

This policy must be reviewed annually (or more frequently as determined by the DPO) and revised based on changes in regulations, DfE's objectives, strategies, and technological advancements. Any revisions to be approved by the DfE Knowledge and Information Management Board.

Referenced Documents

All Data Management frameworks, policies and standards can be located on the DfE Gateway to Data Compliance Data Policies, Standards & Tools page.

1. Executive Summary

The Records and Information Management policy sets out the over-arching approach, methodology and responsibilities for the storage, access, retention and disposal of records and information in the Department for Education (DfE) and its Arm's Length Bodies .

This policy shall support effective records and information management in the department. Records and information management is vital to the delivery of the department's services in an orderly, efficient, and accountable manner.

1.1 Scope

Staff shall apply this policy to managing records and information regardless of format, that are received, created and stored in the course of departmental business. DfE staff should understand records and information procedures and practices and ensure the department's records are made accessible where appropriate, protected and stored securely, and disposed of at the right time.

1.2 Terminology

Term	Meaning/Application
SHALL	This term is used to state a Mandatory requirement of this policy
SHOULD	This term is used to state a Recommended requirement of this policy
MAY	This term is used to state an Optional requirement

1.3 Approval and Governance

This policy is owned by DfE Data Protection Officer.

All related data policies and data standards can be located on the intranet: Gateway to Compliance - Data Policies, Standards & Tools.

1.4 Contact

For any enquiries related to this policy document please contact the DfE using our secure contact form.

2. Records and Information Management Policy

2.1 Policy Principles

DfE is committed to the efficient management of its records and information to ensure the effective delivery of its services, to record its principal activities, meet its statutory obligations, and maintain its corporate memory.

This policy promotes the principles of best practice for Managing records and information as set out in the Code of Practice under Section 46 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (The Code) . The Records Management principles set out in the Code are: Value, Integrity and Accountability.

The aim of the Policy is to define and provide a framework for managing the department's records and information and to establish accountabilities that complement and align with the principles set out in the Code.

2.2 Governance – roles and responsibilities

DfE shall put in place and maintain the appropriate roles and responsibilities and governance structures for the effective management of records and information management.

2.3 Managing Digital Records and Information

2.3.1 Microsoft 365 (M365)

Staff shall by default create records and information digitally and store in M365 in order that they can be correctly managed, accessed, shared and disposed of at the end of their lifecycle, in accordance with this policy.

Staff shall use Workplaces, the DfE's name given to the system of SharePoint sites configured to formally manage the department's electronic records and information, for long-term storage of official records and information that have value to the wider Department (e.g. record decision-making).

DfE shall create and maintain guidance on the lifecycle management of Records and Information in M365 including in OneDrive, Workplaces and Teams.

2.3.2 Email

Staff shall ensure that any emails relating to business activities that contain evidence of decision-making or need to be retained for any statutory, regulatory or other business

need, are moved into Workplaces and then deleted from the mailbox. Mailboxes used by staff are not recognised as part of the official departmental record keeping system.

Staff should not store copies of email messages sent for information in Workplaces, as these are likely to be a copy of something someone else has recorded.

Staff should apply retention and disposal manually to their emails as per the DfE's retention and disposal schedule.

2.3.3 Non-Microsoft 365 Applications

All staff shall apply the Records and Information Management policy to content saved in non-corporate communication channels and non-Microsoft 365 applications (e.g. but not limited to Slack, Trello, Huddle, WhatsApp, Signal, private email, text messages and private messaging on social media platforms such as Facebook or LinkedIn). Official business that is conducted through these applications is still part of the department's official record.

The owners of the information stored in these applications should be solely responsible for searching this information for Freedom of Information purposes as well as the lifecycle management, including retention and disposal of this information in accordance with legislative requirements such as the Public Records Act and Data Protection Act.

There is guidance that communicates government policy on the use of non-corporate communication channels (NCCCs) for government business. This guidance sets out the limited circumstances in which NCCCs can be used for government business, in particular you should refer to section on the appropriate use of NCCCs before you use them.

Any information stored in non-Microsoft 365 applications that has long term corporate value to the department should be migrated into a Workplace in order that retention and disposal can be automated.

2.3.4 Digital Continuity

All staff should ensure digital continuity when handling and managing the department's digital records and information, regardless of where that information is stored. Digital continuity is the ability to use digital information in the way that you need, for as long as you need.

2.4 Physical Records and Information

The Records Management team should not accept 'new' paper records into the departmental offsite storage facility. DfE staff should discuss and agree exceptions with the Departmental Records Officer (DRO).

All staff should create new records and information in digital form or digitise their content for ongoing retention within a SharePoint Workplace.

The Records Management team shall manage paper records held in offsite storage and appraise policy files for transfer to TNA for permanent preservation before they reach 20 years of age in accordance with the Public Records Act 1958 (as amended).

2.5 Private Office

Both Private Office and policy areas should retain records. Policy areas shall retain a complete record of decisions made for evidential and knowledge management purposes and Private Office should keep a reference copy.

2.6 Arm's Length Bodies (ALBs)

The department's Arm's Length Bodies (ALB) should be responsible for the day-to-day arrangements for the management of their records and information.

DfE should maintain contact with the lead for Records and Information Management in each ALB (or the officer responsible for Records Management if there is no direct lead) and provide records management (including Public Records Acts compliance) advice and guidance.

2.7 Machinery of Government (MOG) Changes

Where records (in any format) are formally transferred from another government department following a machinery of government (MOG) change, DfE staff from the relevant business area(s) should draw up a transfer agreement or Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), with their counterparts in the receiving department, setting out ownership, retention periods and related considerations (e.g., data protection).

2.8 Records and Information Retention

The Records Management Team shall maintain the Department's records and disposal schedules.

Information Asset Owners shall develop retention periods for the information assets for which they are responsible and to discuss and agree these with the Departmental Records Officer and shall document on the Information Asset Register (IAR).

2.8.1 Retention Considerations

Each business area shall decide how long to retain records and information it is responsible for.

2.8.2 Retention and Disposal of Personal Data

Information Asset Owners should note if their assets contain personal data on the Information Asset Register and should complete a Record of Processing Activity (RoPA) entry.

2.9 Public Records Act Obligations

The department shall retain a capability to review disposal of files and transfer of files to TNA in accordance with its Public Records Act 1958 obligations.

The DfE Records Management Team should identify and make recommendations to TNA for the transfer of records of historical interest for permanent preservation.

Transfer will only take place with TNA's approval.

The Records Management Team should destroy records that are not transferred to TNA or required by the business.



Department
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