



**Shropshire Council**  
**Good records management practice**  
**Primary schools**

Shropshire Council recognises that by efficiently managing its records, all Shropshire primary schools will be able to comply with its legal and regulatory obligations and to contribute to the effective overall management of Shropshire's schools.

School records provide evidence for protecting the legal rights and interests of the school and provide evidence for demonstrating performance and accountability. This guidance document provides the framework through which this effective management is achieved.

This guidance document applies to all records created, received or maintained by staff in primary schools during the course of carrying out its function. Records are defined as all those documents which facilitate the business carried out by the school and which are thereafter retained (for a life span according to the corporate retention schedule – education and skills section) to provide evidence of its transactions or activities.

Records may be created or received and then stored in hard copy format or electronically.

**School archive**

A small percentage of school records may be selected for permanent preservation as part of the institution's archives and for historical research. This should be done in liaison with the Shropshire Archives.

Where records have been identified as being worthy of permanent preservation, arrangements should be made to offer the records to Shropshire Archives.

A list of the records sent to the archives should be created to include the information above. The contact details for Shropshire Archives is as follows:

County Archivist  
Shropshire Archives  
Castle Gates  
Shrewsbury  
SY1 2AQ  
Tel: 01743 255350  
Email: [archives@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:archives@shropshire.gov.uk)

## **Responsibility**

Each school has a corporate responsibility to maintain its records and record keeping systems in accordance with the regulatory environment. The person with the overall responsibility is the Head of the School.

The person nominated with responsibility for records management in the school will give guidance about good records management practice and will promote compliance, so that information will be retrieved easily, appropriately and in a timely way. 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.

## **Relationships with existing policies**

This guidance document has been prepared within the context of:

- Freedom of Information Act
- Data Protection policy and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- With other legislation or regulations, including audit, equal opportunities and ethics affecting each school

## **Pupil records**

These guidelines are intended to help provide consistency of practice in the way in which pupil records are managed. The guidelines will assist schools by showing how pupil records should be managed and what kind of information should be maintained in the school.

## **Managing pupil records**

The pupil record is the core record charting an individual pupil's progress through the education system. The pupil record should accompany the pupil to every school they attend and should contain information that is accurate, objective and easy to access.

These guidelines assume that the pupil record is a principal record and that all information relating to the pupil will be found in the file (although it may spread across more than one file cover).

## **File covers for pupil records**

Some school may use a consistent file cover for the pupil record. This assists the secondary school to ensure consistency of practice when receiving records from many different primary schools. If, for example, primary schools have many different file covers for their files, the secondary school that the pupil files were transferred to would then be holding different levels of information for pupils, which had come from different primary schools.

By using pre-printed file covers all the necessary information is collated and the record looks tidy and reflects the fact that it is the principal record containing all the information about an individual child.

### **Recording information**

A pupil or their nominated representative have the legal right to see their file at any point during their education and even until the record is destroyed (when the pupil is 25 years of age or 35 years from date of closure for pupils with special educational needs).

This is their right of subject access under the Data Protection Act 1998. It is important to remember that all information should be accurately recorded, objective in nature and expressed in a professional manner.

### **Opening a file**

The pupil record starts its life when a file is opened for each new pupil as they begin school. This is the file which will follow the pupil for the rest of his/her school career. If pre-printed file covers are not being used then the following information should appear on the front of the paper file:

- Surname
- Forename
- DOB
- Special Educational Needs Yes/No (This is to enable the files of children with special educational needs to be easily identified for longer retention)

The file cover also contains a note of the date when the file was opened and the date when the file is closed if it is felt to be appropriate. Inside the front cover the following information is easily accessible:

- The name of the pupil's doctor
- Emergency contact details
- Gender
- Preferred name
- Position in family
- Ethnic origin [although this is "sensitive" data under the Data Protection Act 1998, the Department for Education require statistics about ethnicity]
- Language of home (if other than English)
- Religion [although this is "sensitive" data under the Data Protection Act 1998, the school has good reasons for collecting the information]
- Any allergies or other medical conditions that it is important to be aware of [although this is "sensitive" data under the Data Protection Act 1998, the school has good reasons for collecting the information]

- Names of parents and/or guardians with home address and telephone number (and any additional relevant carers and their relationship to the child)
- Name of the school, admission number and the date of admission and the date of leaving.
- Any other agency involvement e.g. speech and language therapist, paediatrician

It is essential that these files, which contain personal information, are managed against the information security guidelines. Items which should be included on the pupil record:

- If the pupil has attended an early years setting, then the record of transfer should be included on the pupil file
- Admission form (application form)
- Fair processing notice [if these are issued annually only the most recent need be on the file]
- Parental permission for photographs to be taken (or not)
- Years Record
- Annual Written Report to Parents
- National Curriculum and R.E. Agreed Syllabus Record Sheets
- Any information relating to a major incident involving the child (either an accident or other incident)
- Any reports written about the child
- Any information about a statement and support offered in relation to the statement
- Any relevant medical information (should be stored in the file in an envelope clearly marked as such)
- Child protection reports/disclosures (should be stored in the file in an envelope clearly marked as such)
- Any information relating to exclusions (fixed or permanent)
- Any correspondence with parents or outside agencies relating to major issues
- Details of any complaints made by the parents or the pupil

The following records should be stored separately to the pupil record as they are subject to shorter retention periods and if they are placed on the file then it will involve a lot of unnecessary weeding of the files before they are transferred on to another school:

- Absence notes
- Parental consent forms for trips/outings [in the event of a major incident all the parental consent forms should be retained with the incident report not in the pupil record]
- Correspondence with parents about minor issues
- Accident forms (these should be stored separately and retained on the school premises until their statutory retention period is reached. A copy could be placed on the pupil file in the event of a major incident)

## **Transferring the pupil record to the secondary school**

The pupil record should not be weeded before transfer to the secondary school unless any records with a short retention period have been placed in the file. It is important to remember that the information which may seem unnecessary to the person weeding the file may be a vital piece of information required at a later stage.

Primary schools do not need to keep copies of any records in the pupil record, except if there is an ongoing legal action when the pupil leaves the school. Custody of and responsibility for the records passes to the school the pupil transfers to.

If files are sent by post, they should be sent by registered post with an accompanying list of the files. Where possible, the secondary school should sign a copy of the list to say that they have received the files and return that to the primary school. Where appropriate, records can be delivered by hand with signed confirmation for tracking and auditing purposes.

Electronic documents that relate to the pupil file also need to be transferred, or, if duplicated in a master paper file, destroyed. The following records should be stored separately to the pupil record as they are subject to shorter retention periods and if they are placed on the file then it will involve a lot of unnecessary weeding of the files once the pupil leaves the school.

- Absence notes
- Parental consent forms for trips/outings [in the event of a major incident all the parental consent forms should be retained with the incident report not in the pupil record]
- Correspondence with parents about minor issues
- Accident forms (these should be stored separately and retained on the school premises until their statutory retention period is reached. A copy could be placed on the pupil file in the event of a major incident)

## **Responsibility for the pupil record once the pupil leaves the school**

The school which the pupil attended until statutory school leaving age (or the school where the pupil completed sixth form studies) is responsible for retaining the pupil record until the pupil reaches the age of 25 years. This retention is set in line with the Limitation Act 1980 which allows that a claim can be made against an organisation by a minor for up to 7 years from their 18th birthday.

## **Safe destruction of the pupil record**

The pupil record should be disposed of in accordance with the safe disposal of records guidelines.

## **Transfer of a pupil record outside the EU area**

If you are requested to transfer a pupil file outside the EU area because a pupil has moved into that area, please contact the Local Education Authority for further advice.

## **Storage of pupil records**

All pupil records should be kept securely always. Paper records, for example, should be kept in lockable storage areas with restricted access, and the contents should be secure within the file. Equally, electronic records should have appropriate security. Access arrangements for pupil records should ensure that confidentiality is maintained whilst equally enabling information to be shared lawfully and appropriately, and to be accessible for those authorised to see it.