

RECORDS AND ARCHIVES MANAGEMENT POLICY



PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish the framework needed for effective record updating and management at Melbourne Montessori School. This policy provides guidance to employees on the creation, updating and use of School records, and sets minimum standards for classifying, managing, and storing those records. It therefore provides a consistent framework for the management of School information.

The School has a substantial volume of records relating to its teaching, students, staff, finances, and other activities. In order to efficiently conduct its business, the update, storage, retrieval and management of this information reserves is a significant issue.

A good record keeping program is fundamental to the School's commitment to administrative transparency and accountability. It enables the School to verify decisions and actions by providing essential up to date evidence in the form of records and ensures the preservation of the collective memory of the School. This policy seeks to ensure that the School's business is adequately documented through the creation and update of records that are then managed in accordance with better practice.

SCOPE

This policy is applicable to all areas of the School. It is intended to comply with relevant Victorian and Commonwealth legislation. The Policy establishes a framework for the control and management of records throughout the School from their creation to their ultimate disposal or retention as School archives.

For the purposes of this Policy, records comprise information in any format, including hard copy and electronic files, emails, data in computer systems, bound volumes, maps, plans, books, registers, forms, photographs, microfilm and microfiche.

Staff should be aware that electronic documents have the same status as paper documents. Both electronic and paper documents are bound by the same legislative requirements and are subject to the same degree of confidentiality and care. Therefore electronic records must be managed as part of a comprehensive record keeping program [see Appendix B – Electronic Records].

DEFINITIONS

Appraisal: the process of evaluating business activities to determine which records need to be captured and how long the records need to be kept, to meet business needs, the requirements of organisational accountability and community expectations.

Archive: the whole body of records of continuing value of an organisation or individual. Sometimes called 'corporate memory'.

Archives: those records that are appraised as having continuing value.

Business activity: umbrella term covering all the functions, processes, activities and transactions of an organisation and its employees.

Capture: an action which results in the registration of a record into a recordkeeping system.

Disposal: a range of processes associated with implementing appraisal decisions. These include the retention, deletion or destruction of records in or from record keeping systems. They may also include the migration or transmission of records between record keeping systems, and the transfer of custody or ownership of records.

Disposal Schedule: a systematic listing of records showing those records which have permanent value and those which can be destroyed after the period specified

Electronic records: records communicated and maintained by means of electronic equipment.

Evidence: information that tends to prove a fact. Not limited to the legal sense of the term.

Information systems: organised collections of hardware, software, supplies, policies, procedures and people, which store, process and provide access to information.

Non-current records: records which are no longer required for current business but are required to be retained for the minimum period prescribed by disposal schedules.

Record keeping: making and maintaining complete, accurate and reliable evidence of business transactions in the form of recorded information.

Record keeping systems: information systems which capture, maintain & provide access to records over time.

Records: records information in any form including data in computer systems, created or retrieved and maintained by an organisation or person in the transaction of business or the conduct of affairs and kept as evidence of such activity.

Vital Records: those records that are essential for the ongoing business of the School, and without which the School could not continue to function effectively.

Legislative Framework and Standards

State and Commonwealth legislation and International Standards establish the conditions and standards by which the School's records and archival management will be guided.

5.1 Legislation

The School must comply with the Victoria Public Records Act 1973 and the Commonwealth Archives Act 1983. The School may also be bound by the National Privacy Principles as set out in the Privacy Amendment (Private Sector) Act 2000.

5.2 Standard

The relevant International Standard on Records Management is ISO 15489. This standard has been adopted by Standards Australia and supersedes Australian Standard on Records Management AS4390.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF RECORD KEEPING

PRINCIPAL

The Principal has ultimate responsibility to ensure that the School complies with the legislation and standards specified in 5.1 and 5.2 of this Policy.

THE DEPUTY PRINCIPALS AND BUSINESS MANAGER

Senior Leaders are responsible for implementing and maintaining sound record keeping practices within their respective units. Senior leaders must ensure that records are created, maintained and stored in accordance with the standards outlined in this policy, and that no records are destroyed except as authorised by the Retention and Disposal Schedule or Normal Administrative Practice. (see Appendix A – Normal Administrative Practice).

Staff must create full and accurate records of all school functions and activities, including registers and records, relating to:

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

Updating of records must be undertaken in accordance with the procedure manual applicable to each position or the position description of each individual.

STAFF

Record keeping is not the province of systems administrators alone, but is an essential role of all employees. Every member of staff is responsible for making and updating such records as may be necessary to fully and accurately record the functions, activities, transactions, operations, policies, decisions, procedures, affairs, administration and management of the School. Staff members are to follow authorised procedures in carrying out records management functions, and must observe security, privacy and confidentiality requirements at all times. Records should be handled sensibly and with care and respect so as to avoid damage to the records and prolong their life-span.

CREATION OF RECORDS

All staff are required to create full and accurate records which adequately document the business activities in which they take part.

Records should be full and accurate to the extent necessary to:

- Facilitate action by employees, at any level, and by their successors;
- Make possible a proper scrutiny of the conduct of businesses by anyone authorised to undertake such scrutiny;
- Protect the financial, legal and other rights of the organisation, its clients and any other people affected by its actions and decisions.

CONTROL OF RECORDS**SECURITY**

Records must be made accessible to authorised users. School staff undertaking the normal course of their duties must have access to relevant School records. Personal information about staff and students of the School must be secured within all levels of the School records.

STORAGE

All records, both current and non-current, must be stored in such a way that they can be accessed and retrieved upon demand. When determining appropriate storage for non-current records, due consideration must be given to the protection afforded by the storage area, sensitivity of the records, retention period and access rate. Records should be stored in conditions that are clean and secure, with low risk of damage from fire, water, dampness, mould, insects and rodents. They should also be kept away from direct sunlight and other sources of light and heat. The storage area should be well ventilated and ideally maintained at a stable temperature and humidity.

Records in non-paper formats such as photographs, maps or computer disks require specialised storage conditions and handling process that take account of their specific physical and chemical properties. Irrespective of format, records of continuing value require higher quality storage and handling to preserve them for as long as that value exists.

DISPOSAL AND DESTRUCTION OF RECORDS

Staff may only destroy or dispose of records in accordance with Normal Administrative Practice [see Appendix A– Normal Administrative Practice].

The Retention and Disposal Schedule provides a listing of routine administration, personnel, accounting, student and property records across the School. It complies with legislation in Victoria and should be accepted as the minimum retention period for records.

Where records are scheduled for destruction this should be undertaken by methods appropriate to the confidentiality status of the records. All School records approved and eligible for destruction must be destroyed under confidential conditions, unless the material is widely published. If staff are uncertain of the status of a record, it should be treated as confidential and destroyed under confidential conditions.

Confidential records should be destroyed as follows:

- Destruction of paper records via shredding or placement in security bins. They must never be placed in unsecured bins or rubbish tips.
- Destruction of magnetic media such as floppy disks must be destroyed by reformatting at least once.
- Deleting files from magnetic media is not sufficient to ensure the destruction of the records. Backup copies of the records must also be destroyed.
- Destruction of optical media such as rewritable disks must be destroyed by cutting, crushing or other physical means.

AUDIT AND REVIEW

All record systems may be subject to audit and review to ensure compliance with legislative requirements and with the requirement of this policy.

To accommodate changes in legislation, technologies, programs and resources available to the School this policy is to be reviewed every 3 years.

Responsibility for Monitoring Implementation and Compliance

As employers, the Principal and School Board have the direct responsibility for ensuring the policy objectives are fulfilled and that the necessary resources are provided to achieve effective implementation.

REVIEWED

Approved by the Board June 11th 2021

Next Review: 2023