

SOUTH EASTERN EDUCATION & LIBRARY BOARD

RECORDS MANAGEMENT POLICY

1.0 Scope of Policy

1.1 Introduction

The British Standard ISO 15489-1:2001 defines "records management" as the field of management responsible for the efficient and systematic control of the creation, receipt, maintenance, use and disposal of records, including processes for capturing and maintaining evidence of and information about business activities and transactions in the form of records.

The South Eastern Education and Library Board recognises that its records are an important public and corporate asset. The Board is dependant on its records in order to operate efficiently and effectively. The Board's records are its corporate memory, providing evidence of actions and decisions and representing a vital asset to support our daily functions and operations. Since the Public Records Act (NI) came into force in 1923, there has been a responsibility placed on all public authorities to keep, maintain, review and legally dispose of records. On 1st January 2005, the Freedom of Information Act came into force and it changed the scope and purpose of Records Management by providing for wide ranging statutory access and enforcement mechanisms.

1.2 Purpose of the Policy Statement

The purpose of this corporate policy is to maintain a framework for the creation, and management of the records within the South Eastern Education & Library Board. The Board realises that an effective control structure will improve accountability, promote ethical and professional business practices and enhance communications and decision-making. Our aim is to ensure that records are managed effectively throughout the Board in accordance with professional principles and the legislative requirements. The Board is therefore committed to fulfilling its responsibilities under the Public Records Act (NI) 1923; the Disposal of Documents Order (No 167) 1925; the Data Protection Act 1998, the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004, The Limitations (NI) Order 1989.

Under Section 46 of the Fol Act, the Lord Chancellor issued a Code of Practice providing guidance to Public Authorities with regard to the keeping, maintenance, reviewing and disposing of records. Within this Code, one of the key practices is that public Authorities should have a Records Management Policy Statement, which has been endorsed by

the Chief Executive and Senior Management and made available to staff at all levels of the organisation. Also, that the “records management” function should be recognised as a specific corporate programme within an organisation and should receive the necessary levels of organisational support to ensure effectiveness.

1.3 Target Audience/Applicability

All Board employees (including temporary staff and those working for the Board on a contract basis).

2.0 The Policy

2.1 The Records Management Policy Statement

In this policy statement a framework is defined for managing the Board’s records to ensure that the Board creates and captures authentic and reliable records to demonstrate evidence, accountability and information about its decisions and activities. Also, to ensure that the Board:-

- maintains records securely and preserves access to them;
- appropriately disposes of those records that are no longer required;
- protects vital records, which it needs in order to function effectively;
- maintains records to meet the Board’s business needs;
- addresses the needs of the Board’s stakeholders, including the general public, its employees, PRONI (Public Record Office of Northern Ireland) the Dept Of Education and the Dept of Employment & Learning;
- conforms to any legal and statutory requirements relating to record-keeping; and
- complies with government directives.

All business related records include both manual and electronic records and in the absence of an Electronic Document and Records Management System, the printed copy will be the primary record.

2.2 Roles & Responsibilities

- The Chief Executive of the South Eastern Education & Library Board is responsible for managing and overseeing the Board’s duties in relation to “records management” as set out in this policy;
- The Freedom of Information Unit will provide the link between records management practices, Data Protection, Freedom of Information and the Environmental Information Regulations. It will also work with PRONI in the maintenance of the Corporate Retention/Disposal Schedule;

- Senior Managers/Unit Managers will be responsible for the management of their records, in accordance with this policy, ensuring that staff are aware of record keeping issues and in particular those staff with specific records management duties;
- All Board employees will be responsible for creating and maintaining records in relation to their work that are authentic and reliable;
- The Freedom of Information Unit, in conjunction with the Board's Strategic Units and PRONI, will continue to provide guidance to Board Units and individuals on the retention and management of their records.

2.3 Records Management Awareness

As all Board employees are involved in creating, maintaining and using records, it is important that everyone understands their responsibilities in relation to record management. The Freedom of Information Unit, through its awareness programme, will continue to support Board Units, Managers and Staff in understanding the importance of records management in relation to the Data Protection Act (1998), the Freedom of Information Act (2000) and the Environmental Information Regulations (2004).

2.4 Records Creation and Record Keeping

Each Unit within the Board must have in place a record keeping system (paper and/or electronic) that documents its activities and provides for the quick and easy retrieval of information. It must also take into account the legal and regulatory environment specific to their area of work. Such a system must include:

- records that are arranged and indexed to achieve their quick and efficient retrieval;
- a file register for each Board Unit, which must be updated when files are created, archived or deleted;
- procedures and guidelines for referencing, titling and version control in accordance with Board standards;
- the ability to cross reference paper and electronic records;

2.5 Record Maintenance

The Board's record keeping systems must be maintained to ensure that the records are properly stored and protected and can easily be located and retrieved. This will include:

- ensuring that adequate storage accommodation is provided for the records;
- the use of a tracking system to monitor the movement and location of their records;

- controlling the access to information and identifying vital, sensitive or confidential records, which should be protected and securely held with restricted access, including a business recovery plan; and
- the transfer of non-current records to a designated archive area.

2.6 Record Retention & Disposal

With increasing public access to our records, it is important that the disposal of records happens as part of the managed process and to this end Corporate Retention/Disposal guidelines have been produced by the FoI Unit to include the procedures for appraising, selecting and documenting records for disposal. Each Unit should ensure that:

- records are reviewed and disposed of in accordance with the Board's "Disposal of Records Schedule";
- any records selected for permanent preservation are transferred to PRONI;
- details of the disposal/transfer of records are recorded on the electronic Files Register; and
- records subject to an information request are not destroyed.

2.7 Review of Policy

This Policy will be reviewed at regular intervals (at least once every 3 years) and if appropriate will be amended to reflect any change in legislation, best practice in records management or Board processes.

Other relevant information:

- Records Management Handbook
- Data Protection Policy
- Data Protection/Freedom of Information Handling Procedures
- Information Security Policy
- Disposal of Records Schedule

All of the above documents can be viewed on the Board's Intranet and website.

v2.0 (Oct 2009.)

SEELB Records Management Policy Version Control

Version	Date	Notes
1.0	3 March 2003	Approved by General Purposes Committee
2.0	1 July 2009	Approved by SEELB I.T. Executive Committee
2.0	12 October 2009	Approved by SEELB Commissioners