



RECORDS MANAGEMENT

Retention Guidelines for Schools



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1. The purpose of the retention schedule

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, schools are required to maintain a retention schedule listing the record series which the school creates in the course of its business. The retention schedule lays down the length of time which the record needs to be retained and the action which should be taken when it is of no further administrative use.

Members of staff are expected to manage their current record keeping systems using the retention schedule and to take account of the different kinds of retention periods when they are creating new record keeping systems.

The retention schedule refers to all information, regardless of the media in which they are stored.

2. Benefits of a retention schedule

There are a number of benefits which arise from the use of a complete retention schedule:

- (a) Managing records against the retention schedule is deemed to be “normal processing” under the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Provided members of staff are managing record series using the retention schedule they can not be found guilty of unauthorised tampering with files once a freedom of information request or a data subject access request has been made.
- (b) Members of staff can be confident about destroying information at the appropriate time.
- (c) Information which is subject to Freedom of Information and Data Protection legislation will be available when required.
- (d) The school is not maintaining and storing information unnecessarily.

3. Maintaining and amending the retention schedule

Where appropriate the retention schedule should be reviewed and amended to include any new record series created and remove any obsolete record series.

4. What to do with records once they have reached the end of their administrative life

4a. Destruction of Records

Where records have been identified for destruction they should be disposed of in an appropriate way preferably by shredding. All records containing personal information, or sensitive policy information should definitely be shredded before disposal.

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires the school to maintain a list of records which have been destroyed and who authorised their destruction. Members of staff should record at least:

- File reference (or other unique identifier);
- File title (or brief description);
- Number of files;
- The name of the authorising officer;

This could be kept in an Excel spreadsheet or other database format.

4b. Transfer of records to the Archives

Where records have been identified as being worthy of permanent preservation, arrangements should be made to transfer to the Head of Collections, Northumberland Collections Service, Northumberland Museum and Archives, Queen Elizabeth II Country Park, Woodhorn, Ashington, Northumberland, NE63 9YF.

4c. Transfer of information to other media

Where lengthy retention periods have been allocated to records, members of staff may wish to consider converting paper records to other media such as microform or digital media. The lifespan of the media and the ability to migrate data where necessary should always be considered.

5.1 Child Protection

The retention and use of records relating to child protection matters concerning pupils, and child protection allegations against staff requires specific guidance in this schedule. This will be subject to update following implementation of the recommendations by Sir Michael Bichard.

Basic file description	Data Prot Issues/ F.O.I	Statutory Provisions	Retention Period	Action at the end of the administrative life of the record	Action when school closes
Child Protection files	Yes	Education Act 2002, s175, related guidance 'Safeguarding Children in Education', September 2004.	DOB +25 years	Offer to Head of Collections, Northumberland Collections Service, Woodhorn, Northumberland	Child protection information must be copied and sent under separate cover to new school whilst the child is still under 18. Where a child is removed from the school roll to be educated at home, the file should be copied to the Local Authority.
Allegation of a child protection nature against a member of staff, including where the allegation is unfounded	Yes	Employment practices Code: Supplementary Guidance 2.13.1 (Records of Disciplinary and Grievance) Education act 2002 guidance 'Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against Teachers and Other Staff' November 2005	Until the person's normal retirement age, or 10 years from the date of the allegation if that's longer.	Offer to Head of Collections, Northumberland Collections Service, Woodhorn, Northumberland	Employment practices Code: Supplementary Guidance 2.13.1 (Records of Disciplinary and Grievance) 'Records of allegations about workers who have been investigated and found to be without substance should not normally be retained once an investigation has been completed. There are some exceptions to this where for its own protection the employer has to keep a limited record that an allegation was received and investigated, for

					<p>example, where the allegation relates to abuse and the worker is employed to work with children or other vulnerable individuals’.</p> <p>Summary record to be retained on confidential personnel file and a copy given to the person concerned.</p>
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5.2 Governors

Basic File Description	Data Prot Issues	Statutory Provisions	Retention Period	Action at the end of the administrative life of the record	Action when school closes
Minutes					
• <i>Principal set (signed)</i>	No		Retain in school for seven years from date of meeting	SHRED	SHRED (LA has copies).
• <i>Inspection copies</i>	No		Date of meeting plus three years.	SHRED	
Agendas	No		Retain in school for seven years from date of meeting.	SHRED	SHRED (LA has copies).
Reports	No		Retain in school for seven years from date of meeting	SHRED	SHRED (LA has copies).
Instruments of Government	No		Retain in school whilst school is open		SHRED (LA has copies).
Trusts and Endowments	No		Retain in school whilst operationally required	Offer to Head of Collections, Northumberland Collections Service, Woodhorn, Northumberland	Offer to Head of Collections, Northumberland Collections Service, Woodhorn Northumberland.
Action Plans	No		Date of action plan plus three years.	DESTROY	

Policy documents	No		Retain in school whilst policy is operational.	SHRED	SHRED
Complaints files	Yes		Retain in school for the first seven years.	Review for further retention in the case of contentious disputes. Destroy routine complaints. Complaints alleging possible harm to a young person by a member of staff are covered in 5.1 above.	Send to Modern records, Woodhorn Northumberland with the appropriate destruction date.
Annual Reports required by the Department for Education and Skills	No	Education (Governors' Annual Reports) (England)(Amendment) Regulations 2002. SI 2002 No 1171.	Seven years from the date of the meeting.	SHRED	Offer to Head of Collections, Northumberland Collections Service, Woodhorn Northumberland.
Proposals for schools to become, or be established as specialist status schools.	No		Current year plus three years.	Offer to Head of Collections, Northumberland Collections Service, Woodhorn Northumberland.	

5.3 Management

Basic File Description	Data Prot Issues	Statutory Provisions	Retention Period	Action at the end of the administrative life of the record	Action when school closes
Log Books. Books where the headteacher or another member of staff keeps a record of what happens in the school, this may include details of events, photographs and other information.	Yes ¹		Retain in the school for seven years from the date of the last entry	Offer to Head of Collections, Northumberland Collections Service, Woodhorn Northumberland.	Offer to Head of Collections, Northumberland Collections Service, Woodhorn Northumberland..

¹ From 1 January 2005 under the Freedom of Information Act subject access is permitted into unstructured filing systems and log books and other records created within the school. However details about the activities of individual pupils and members of staff will still become subject to the Data Protection Act 1998.

Minutes of the Senior Management Team and other internal administrative bodies.	Yes ¹		Retain in the school for five years from meeting.	Offer to Head of Collections, Northumberland Collections Service, Woodhorn Northumberland or SHRED..	Offer to Head of Collections, Northumberland Collections Service, Woodhorn Northumberland or SHRED.
Reports made by the headteacher or the management team.	Yes ¹		Retain in the school for three years from meeting.	Offer to Head of Collections, Northumberland Collections Service, Woodhorn Northumberland or SHRED	Offer to Head of Collections, Northumberland Collections Service, Woodhorn Northumberland or SHRED.
Records created by headteachers, deputy headteachers, heads of year and other members of staff with admin responsibilities (except child protection records which are dealt with in 5.1 above)	Yes ¹		Closure of file plus six years	SHRED	Send to Modern records, Woodhorn Northumberland with the appropriate destruction date.
Correspondence created by headteachers, deputy headteachers, heads of year and other members of staff with administrative responsibilities	No		Date of correspondence plus three years	SHRED	Send to Modern records, Woodhorn Northumberland with the appropriate destruction date.
Professional development plans	Yes		six years.	SHRED	Send to Modern records, Woodhorn Northumberland with the appropriate destruction date.
School development plans	No		six years.	SHRED	Send to Modern records, Woodhorn Northumberland with the appropriate destruction date.

5.4 Pupils

Basic file description	Data Prot Issues	Statutory Provisions	Retention Period	Action at the end of the administrative life of the record	Action when school closes
Admission Registers	Yes		Retain in the school for six years from the date of the last entry.	Offer to Head of Collections, Northumberland Collections Service, Woodhorn Northumberland	Offer to Head of Collections, Northumberland Collections Service, Woodhorn Northumberland
Attendance registers	Yes		Date of register plus three years.	Offer to Head of Collections, Northumberland Collections Service, Woodhorn Northumberland	Offer to Head of Collections, Northumberland Collections Service, Woodhorn Northumberland.
Pupil record cards <ul style="list-style-type: none">Primary	Yes		Retain for the time which the pupil remains at the primary school.	Transfer to the secondary schools (or other primary school) when the child leaves the school. In the case of exclusion it may be appropriate to transfer the record to the Behaviour Service.	Transfer to pupil's new secondary school (or other primary school). Alternatively, Behaviour Service if pupil excluded at time of closure. If transfer school unknown, send to Modern records, Woodhorn Northumberland with the appropriate destruction date.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Secondary			Date of birth of the pupil plus 25 years ²	SHRED	
Pupil files (NB. All child protection records must be kept as part of the child's file.)					
Special Educational Needs files,	Yes		Date of birth of the pupil	Offer to Head of Collections,	Offer to Head of

² In the case of exclusion it may be appropriate to transfer the record to the Behaviour Service

reviews and Individual Education Plans.			plus 25 years ³ .	Northumberland Collections Service, Woodhorn Northumberland	Collections, Northumberland Collections Service, Woodhorn Northumberland
Letters authorising absence.	No		Date of absence plus two years	SHRED	Send to Modern records, Woodhorn Northumberland with the appropriate destruction date.
Absence books.			Current year plus six years	SHRED	
Examination results	Yes		Year of examinations plus six years.	SHRED	Any certificates left unclaimed should be returned to the appropriate Examination Board.
• <i>Public</i>	No				
• <i>Internal examination results</i>	Yes		Current year plus five years ⁴ .	SHRED	
Any other records created in the course of contact with pupils	Yes/No		Review at the end of three years. Either allocate a further retention period or	SHRED	Either transfer to pupil's new school or offer to Head of Collections, Northumberland Collections Service, Woodhorn Northumberland
Statement maintained under The Education Act 1996 – Section 324	Yes	Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 Section 1.	Date of birth plus 26 years.	unless legal action is pending offer to Head of Collections, Northumberland Collections Service, Woodhorn Northumberland	
Proposed statement or amended statement	Yes	Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 Section 1.	Date of birth plus 26 years.	unless legal action is pending offer to Head of Collections, Northumberland Collections Service, Woodhorn Northumberland .	
Advice and information to parents regarding educational needs	Yes	Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 Section 2.	Closure plus 26 years.	unless legal action is pending offer to Head of Collections, Northumberland Collections Service, Woodhorn Northumberland	
Accessibility Strategy	Yes	Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 Section 14	Closure plus 26 years.	unless legal action is pending offer to Head of Collections, Northumberland	

³ A child may make a claim for negligence for seven years from their 18th birthday. To ensure that all records are kept until the pupil reaches the age of 25 this retention period has been applied.

⁴ If these records are retained on the pupil file or in their National Record of Achievement they need only be kept for as long as operationally necessary.

				Collections Service, Woodhorn Northumberland .	
Children's SEN Files	Yes		Closure plus 26 years.	SHRED unless legal action is pending when a further review date should be applied.	

5.5 Curriculum

Basic file description	Data Prot Issues	Statutory Provisions	Retention Period	Action at the end of the administrative life of the record	Action when school closes
Curriculum development	No		Current year plus six years.	SHRED	Send to Modern records, Woodhorn, Northumberland with appropriate destruction date.
Curriculum returns	No		Current year plus three years.	SHRED	SHRED (LA has copies)
School syllabus	No		Current year plus one year.	It may be appropriate to review these records at the end of each year and either allocate a new retention period or SHRED.	SHRED
Schemes of work	No		Current year plus one year.	It may be appropriate to review these records at the end of each year and allocate a new retention period or SHRED.	SHRED
Timetable	No		Current year plus one year.	It may be appropriate to review these records at the end of each year and allocate a new retention period or SHRED.	
Class record books	No		Current year plus one year.	It may be appropriate to review these records at the end of each year and allocate a new retention period or SHRED.	
Mark books	No		Current year plus one	It may be appropriate to	

			year.	review these records at the end of each year and allocate a new retention period or SHRED	
Record of homework set	No		Current year plus one year.	It may be appropriate to review these records at the end of each year and allocate a new retention period or SHRED	
Pupils' work	No		Current year plus one year.	It may be appropriate to review these records at the end of each year and allocate a new retention period or SHRED	Pass to pupil or SHRED
Examination results	Yes		Current year plus six years.	SHRED	Send to Modern records, Woodhorn Northumberland with the appropriate destruction date.
SATs records	Yes		Current year plus six years.	There is no obligation to keep individual pupil records, only a school summary of the results. SHRED.	SHRED (LA has copies)
PANDA reports	Yes		Current year plus six years.	SHRED.	
Value added records	Yes		Current year plus six years.	SHRED.	

5.6 Personnel					
Basic file description	Data Prot Issues	Statutory Provisions	Retention Period	Action at the end of the administrative life of the record	Action when school closes
Timesheets, sick pay	Yes	Financial Regulations	Current year plus six years.	SHRED.	Send to Modern records, Woodhorn Northumberland with the appropriate destruction date.
Staff Personal files	Yes		Termination plus seven years.	SHRED	
Interview notes and recruitment records.	Yes		Date of interview plus six months.	SHRED	
Disciplinary proceedings for all matters except those relating to child protection issues – see 5.1 above:	Yes				
• <i>Informal warning</i>			Date of warning plus six months.	SHRED If a letter is on a personal file, it must be weeded from the file.	Send to the Local Authority
• <i>Written warning</i>			Date of warning plus one year.	SHRED If a letter is on a personal file, it must be weeded from the file.	
• <i>Final warning</i>			Date of warning plus two years.	SHRED If a letter is on a personal file, it must be weeded from the file.	Send to the Local Authority.
• <i>Case not found (except child protection allegations – see 5.1 above)</i>			Date of warning plus 2 years.	SHRED If a letter is on a personal file, it must be weeded from the file.	

Records relating to accident or injury at work	Yes		Date of incident plus 12 years.	Review at the end of this period. In the case of serious accidents a further retention period may need to be applied.	Send to Modern records, Woodhorn Northumberland with the appropriate destruction date.
Annual appraisals or performance management	No		Current year plus five years.	SHRED	Send to Modern records, Woodhorn Northumberland with the appropriate destruction date.
Salary cards	Yes		Last date of employment plus 85 years	SHRED	Send to Modern records, Woodhorn Northumberland with the appropriate destruction date.
Maternity pay records	Yes	Statutory Maternity Pay (General) Regulations 1986 (SI 1986/1960), revised 1999 (SI 1999/567)	Current year plus three years.	SHRED	
Records held under Retirement Benefits Schemes (Information Powers) Regulations 1995	Yes		Current year plus six years.	SHRED	

5.7 Health and Safety

Basic file description	Data Prot Issues	Statutory Provisions	Retention Period	Action at the end of the administrative life of the record	Action when school closes
Accessibility Plans		Disability Discrimination Act	Current year plus six years.	SHRED.	Send to Modern records, Woodhorn Northumberland with the appropriate destruction date.

Accident Reporting (includes yellow book B1510)	Social Security (Claims and Payments) Regulations 1979 Regulation 25. Social Security Administration Act 1992 Section 8. Limitation Act 1980.				
• Adults – Accident Book	Yes		Last entry in the accident book plus three years.	Send to Internal Audit Risk Management Division of the County Council	Send to Internal Audit Risk Management Division of the County Council
• Adults – Internal reports	Yes		Current year plus three years	Send to Internal Audit Risk Management Division of the County Council	
• Children	Yes		Date of birth plus 25 years. ⁵	SHRED	Send accident reports, incident reports and investigation forms to Internal Audit Risk Management Division of the County Council. Others send to Modern records, Woodhorn Northumberland with the appropriate destruction date.
COSHH			Current year plus 10 years	Review (where appropriate an additional retention period may be allocated)	
Incident reports and investigation forms.	Yes		Current year plus 20 years.	SHRED	
Policy Statements			Date of expiry plus one year.	SHRED	
Risk Assessments			Date assessment superseded plus three years.	SHRED	
Process of monitoring of areas where employees and persons are likely to have come in contact with asbestos .			Last action plus 40 years.	SHRED	Send to Modern records, Woodhorn Northumberland with the appropriate destruction date.
Process of monitoring of areas where employees and persons are likely to have come in contact with radiation .			Last action plus 50 years.	SHRED	

⁵ A child may make a claim for negligence for seven years from their 18th birthday. To ensure that all records are kept until the pupil reaches the age of 25 this retention period has been applied.

Fire Precautions log books			Current year plus six years.	SHRED	Send to Modern records, Woodhorn Northumberland with the appropriate destruction date.
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5.8 Administration

Basic file description	Data Prot Issues	Statutory Provisions	Retention Period	Action at the end of the administrative life of the record	Action when school closes
Employer's Liability certificate			Permanent whilst the school is open.	Keep for 40 years after the school has closed	The Employers Liability certificate should be sent to Modern records, Woodhorn Northumberland with the appropriate destruction date. The Head of Collections may be interested in any school brochures, PTA and old pupils association or prospectus; otherwise SHRED
Inventories of equipment and furniture			Disposal of last item plus six years or date superseded plus six years.	SHRED	
School brochures and Prospectus			Current year plus three years.	Offer to Head of Collections, Northumberland Collections Service, Woodhorn Northumberland or SHRED	
Circulars to staff, parents and pupils			Current year plus one year.	SHRED	
Newsletters, ephemera			Current year plus one year	Review to see whether a further retention period is required or SHRED	
Visitors' book			Current year plus two years	Review to see whether a further retention period is required or SHRED	
PTA and Old Pupils' Associations			Current year plus six years.	Review to see whether a further retention period is required or SHRED	

5.9 Finance					
Basic file description	Data Prot Issues	Statutory Provisions	Retention Period	Action at the end of the administrative life of the record	Action when school closes
Annual Accounts		Financial Regulations	Current year plus six years.	SHRED	Contact Internal Audit approximately 2 months prior to closure to arrange a closure audit. If appropriate send to Modern records, Woodhorn Northumberland with the appropriate destruction date.
Loans and grants		Financial Regulations	Date of last payment on loan plus 12 years.	Review to see whether a further retention period is required or SHRED	
Contracts			Contract completion date plus 12 years	SHRED	Contact Internal Audit approximately 2 months prior to closure to arrange a closure audit. If appropriate send documents to Modern records, Woodhorn Northumberland with the appropriate destruction date.
• Under seal			Contract completion date plus 6 years	SHRED	
• Under signature			Current year plus two years	SHRED	
• Monitoring records					
Copy orders			Current year plus two years.	SHRED	If appropriate send to Modern records, Woodhorn Northumberland with the appropriate destruction date.
Budget reports, budget monitoring etc.			Current year plus three years.	SHRED	
Invoices, receipts and other records covered by the Financial Regulations		Financial Regulations	Current year plus six years.	SHRED	
Annual Budget and background papers			Current year plus six years.	SHRED	
Order books and requisitions			Current year plus six years.	SHRED	
Delivery documentation			Current year plus six years.	SHRED	

Debtors' Records		Limitation Act 1980	Current year plus six years.	SHRED	
School Fund – Unused cheque books and cheque stubs			Current year plus six years.	SHRED	
School Fund – Paying in books			Current year plus six years.	SHRED	
School Fund – Ledger			Current year plus six years.	Offer to Head of Collections, Northumberland Collections Service, Woodhorn Northumberland	
School Fund – Invoices			Current year plus six years.	SHRED	
School Fund – Receipts print outs			Current year plus six years.	SHRED	
School Fund – Bank statements			Current year plus six years.	SHRED	
School Fund – School Journey books			Current year plus six years.	SHRED	
Applications for free school meals, travel, uniforms etc. (if originals held)			Whilst child at school.	SHRED	
Free school meals registers (if originals held)	Yes	Financial Regulations	Current year plus six years.	SHRED	
Petty cash books		Financial Regulations	Current year plus six years.	SHRED	

5.10 Property

Basic file description	Data Prot Issues	Statutory Provisions	Retention Period	Action at the end of the administrative life of the record	Action when school closes
Title Deeds			Permanent.	These should follow the property.	Offer Title Deeds and Plans to the Head of Collections, Northumberland Collections Service, Woodhorn Northumberland. Send others to Modern records, Woodhorn
Plans			Permanent.	Retain in school whilst operational	
Maintenance and contractors		Financial Regulations	Current year plus six years	SHRED	
Leases			Expiry of lease and six years.	Offer to Head of Collections, Northumberland Collections Service, Woodhorn	

				Northumberland	Northumberland with the appropriate destruction date.
Lettings			Current year plus three years.	Offer to Head of Collections, Northumberland Collections Service, Woodhorn Northumberland	
Burglary, theft and vandalism report forms			Current year plus six years.	Offer to Head of Collections, Northumberland Collections Service, Woodhorn Northumberland	
Maintenance Log Books			Last entry plus ten years	SHRED	
Contractors' Reports			Current year plus six years	SHRED	

5.11 Local Authority

Basic file description	Data Prot Issues	Statutory Provisions	Retention Period	Action at the end of the administrative life of the record	Action when school closes
Secondary transfer sheets (Primary)	Yes		Current year plus two years.	SHRED	SHRED (LA has copies).
Attendance returns	Yes		Current year plus one year.	SHRED	
Circulars from LA			Whilst operationally required.	SHRED	SHRED

5.12 DfES

Basic file description	Data Prot Issues	Statutory Provisions	Retention Period	Action at the end of the administrative life of the record	Action when school closes
OFSTED reports and papers			Replace former report with any new inspection report.		Offer Ofsted reports to Head of Collections, Northumberland Collections Service, Woodhorn Northumberland. Others send to Modern records, Woodhorn Northumberland with the appropriate
Returns			Current year plus six years.	SHRED	

					destruction date.
Circulars from DfES			Whilst operationally required.	SHRED	SHRED
5.13 Connexions					
Basic file description	Data Prot Issues	Statutory Provisions	Retention Period	Action at the end of the administrative life of the record	Action when school closes
Service Level Agreements			Until superseded.	SHRED	send to Modern records, Woodhorn Northumberland with the appropriate destruction date.
Work experience agreement			Date of birth of child plus 18 years.	SHRED	
5.14 School Meals					
Basic file description	Data Prot Issues	Statutory Provisions	Retention Period	Action at the end of the administrative life of the record	Action when school closes
Dinner Register			Current year plus three years.	SHRED	SHRED
School Meals Summary Sheets			Current year plus three years.	SHRED	