

State Records Authority NSW

Functional Retention and Disposal Authority: FA387

This authority covers records documenting the function of primary and secondary education

This retention and disposal authority is approved under section 21(2)c of the *State Records Act 1998* following prior approval by the Board of the State Records Authority NSW in accordance with section 21(3) of the Act.

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Functional Retention and Disposal Authority

Authority no FA387

SR file no 17/0225

Scope This retention and disposal authority covers records documenting the function of primary and secondary education.

Public office Department of Education

Issued date 23/10/2017

Revised 16/01/2019
Amended to provide coverage for allegations of child sexual abuse (entry 2.0.4)

08/10/2024
Amended coverage for identity verification documents submitted as part of enrolment or other purposes (entries 3.0.4 and 3.0.21)

About the Functional Retention and Disposal Authority

Purpose of the authority

The purpose of this retention and disposal authority is to identify those records created and maintained by NSW public offices which are required as State archives and to provide approval for the destruction of certain other records created and maintained by NSW public offices, after minimum retention periods have been met.

The approval for disposal given by this authority is given under the provisions of the *State Records Act 1998* only and does not override any other obligations of an organisation to retain records.

The retention and disposal of State records

The records retention and disposal practices outlined in this authority are approved under section 21(2)(c) of the *State Records Act 1998 (NSW)*. Part 3 (Protection of State Records) of the Act provides that records are not to be disposed of without the consent of the State Archives and Records Authority of New South Wales (State Archives and Records NSW) with certain defined exceptions. These exceptions include an action of disposal which is positively required by law, or which takes place in accordance with a normal administrative practice (NAP) of which State Archives and Records NSW does not disapprove. Advice on the State Records Act can be obtained from State Archives and Records NSW.

The authority sets out how long the different classes of records generated by an organisation must be kept to meet its legal, operational and other requirements, and whether the records are to be kept as State archives. State Archives and Records NSW reviews and approves organisations' retention and disposal authorities under the *State Records Act*. It is the duty of a public office, in submitting a draft retention and disposal authority for approval, to disclose to State Archives and Records NSW any information which affects the retention of the records covered by the authority.

State Archives and Records NSW's decisions take into account both the administrative requirements of public offices in discharging their functional responsibilities and the potential research use of the records by the NSW Government and the public. One of State Archives and Records NSW's functions is to identify and preserve records as State archives. These are records which document the authority and functions of Government, its decision-making processes and the implementation and outcomes of those decisions, including the nature of their influence and effect on communities and individual lives. Criteria for the identification of State archives are listed in *Building the Archives: Policy on records appraisal and the identification of State archives*. The Policy also explains the roles and responsibilities of State Archives and Records NSW and of public offices in undertaking appraisal processes and disposal activities.

Implementing the authority

This retention and disposal authority covers records controlled by the public office and applies only to the records or classes of records described in the authority. The authority should be implemented as part of the records management program of the organisation. Two primary objectives of this program are to ensure that records are kept for as long as they are of value to the organisation and its stakeholders and to enable the destruction or other disposal of records once they are no longer required for business or operational purposes.

The implementation process entails use of the authority to sentence records. Sentencing is the examination of records in order to identify the disposal class in the authority to which they belong. This process enables the organisation to determine the appropriate retention period and disposal action for the records. For further advice see *Implementing a retention and disposal authority*.

Where the format of records has changed (for example, from paper-based to electronic) this does not prevent the disposal decisions in the authority from being applied to records which perform the same function. The information contained in non paper-based or technology dependant records must be accessible for the periods prescribed in the classes. Where a record is copied, either onto microform or digitally imaged, the original should not be disposed of without authorisation (see the *General Retention and Disposal Authority – Original or source records that have been copied*). Public offices will need to ensure that any software, hardware or documentation required to gain continuing access to technology dependent records is available for the periods prescribed.

Disposal action

Records required as State archives

Records which are to be retained as State archives are identified with the disposal action 'Required as State archives'. Records that are identified as being required as State archives should be stored in controlled environmental conditions and control of these records should be transferred to State Archives and Records NSW when they are no longer in use for official purposes.

The transfer of control of records as State archives may, or may not, involve a change in custodial arrangements. Records can continue to be managed by the public office under a distributed management agreement. Public offices are encouraged to make arrangements with State Archives and Records NSW regarding the management of State archives.

Transferring records identified as State archives and no longer in use for official purposes to State Archives and Records NSW should be a routine and systematic part of a public office's records management program. If the records are more than 25 years old and are still in use for official purposes, then a 'still in use determination' should be made.

Records approved for destruction

Records that have been identified as being approved for destruction may only be destroyed once a public office has ensured that all other requirements for retaining the records are met. Retention periods set down in this authority are *minimum* periods only and a public office should keep records for a longer period if necessary. Reasons for longer retention can include legal requirements, administrative need, government directives and changing social or community expectations. A public office **must not** dispose of any records where the public office is aware of possible legal action (including legal discovery, court cases, formal applications for access) where the records may be required as evidence.

Once all requirements for retention have been met, destruction of records should be carried out in a secure and environmentally sound way. Relevant details of the destruction should be recorded. See *Destruction of records: a practical guide*.

Organisations should review functional retention and disposal authorities regularly to ensure that they remain relevant as the organisation's functions and activities, operating environment and requirements for records change. Retention requirements may change over time. This can occur when:

- business needs or practices change
- new laws, regulations or standards are introduced
- new technology is implemented
- government administration is restructured and functions are moved between entities, or
- unforeseen or new community expectations become apparent.

State Archives and Records NSW recommends that organisations check any functional retention and disposal authorities more than 5 years old to ensure that the retention periods and disposal actions remain relevant.

Regardless of whether a record has been approved for destruction or is required as a State archive, a public office or an officer of a public office **must not** permanently transfer possession or ownership of a State record to any person or organisation without the explicit approval of State Archives and Records NSW.

Administrative change

This retention and disposal authority has been designed to link records to the functions they document rather than to organisational structure. This provides for a stable retention and disposal authority that is less affected by administrative change. The movement of specified functions between branches or units within the public office does not require the authority to be resubmitted to State Archives and Records NSW for approval. However, when functions move from one public office to another the public office that inherits the new function should contact State Archives and Records NSW to discuss use of any existing retention and disposal authority approved for use by a predecessor organisation.

Amendment and review of this authority

State Archives and Records NSW must approve any amendment to this authority. Public offices that use the authority should advise State Archives and Records NSW of any proposed changes or amendments to the authority.

State Archives and Records NSW recommends a review of this authority after five years to establish whether its provisions are still appropriate. Either the public office or State Archives and Records NSW may propose a review of the authority at any other time, particularly in the case of change of administrative arrangements, procedures or to operating environments which are likely to affect the value of the records covered by this authority.

In all cases the process of review will involve consultation between State Archives Records NSW and the public office. If the process of review reveals that this authority requires amendment, the necessary amendments should be made and approved.

Contact Information

State Records NSW
PO Box 516
Kingswood NSW 2747
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Functional Retention and Disposal Authority Primary and secondary education

Authority number: FA387

Dates of coverage: Open

No.	Description of records	Disposal action
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1.0 CURRICULUM

The approaches to teaching and learning through a set course of study.

1.0.1	<p>Careers/work experience</p> <p>Records relating to careers counselling, work experience placements and traineeships. Records include: careers counsellor notes, agreements with employers, workplace risk assessment, student attendance diaries.</p>	Retain minimum of 3 years after action completed, then destroy
1.0.2	<p>Curriculum implementation</p> <p>Records relating to the delivery of the curriculum as described in scope and sequence of learning units. Records include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the program, teacher program documents, program register, assessment plan, timetables showing allocation of time and teachers for each key learning area/year/class, texts used, and school-created learning resources • individual pattern of study, contact log, monitoring sheets for completion of work for distance education students • early childhood educational programs. 	Retain minimum of 2 years after action completed, then destroy
1.0.3	<p>Curriculum assessment</p> <p>Samples of marked student work representing a range of outcomes.</p> <p>See STUDENT MANAGEMENT - Assessment and reporting for other student works that are not required for auditing purposes.</p>	Retain minimum of 2 years after action completed, then destroy

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SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

2.0 SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

The function of managing activities of the school according to departmental guidelines and school policies.

See General Retention and Disposal Authority *Administrative records* **FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT** for records relating to financial transactions.

See General Retention and Disposal Authority *Administrative records* **PERSONNEL - Employee service history** for records relating to working with children checks for locally selected employees, contractors, volunteers and trainees.

See General Retention and Disposal Authority *Administrative records* **PERSONNEL - Misconduct** for records relating to investigation and handling of complaints relating to individual employees, including allegations and cases of child sexual abuse

See General Retention and Disposal Authority *Administrative records* **PROPERTY MANAGEMENT - Security** for records relating to school sign-in sheets for visitors etc

See General Retention and Disposal Authority *Administrative records* **PUBLICATION - Production** for records relating to the drafting of publications.

See General Retention and Disposal Authority *Administrative records* **PROPERTY MANAGEMENT** for records relating to the design, construction and maintenance of schools.

2.0.1	<p>Celebrations, ceremonies, functions</p> <p>Key records relating to celebrations, ceremonies and functions of major importance to the school, e.g. those marking major anniversaries of significant structures or events (such as laying of foundation stones, first general assembly, opening ceremonies, school productions, etc.). Records include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • programs • selected official photographs of the event • reports. <p>Note: Other categories of records, such as visitors books signed by VIP or eminent persons, visiting clergy books, or photographs of teachers, classes, school buildings and grounds held may also be eligible for transfer as State archives. Contact State Archives and Records to discuss.</p>	Required as State archives
2.0.2	<p>Records relating to celebrations, ceremonies and functions that are not of major importance to the school, e.g. receptions, assemblies, fundraising events, and administrative arrangements for all celebrations, ceremonies and functions. Includes contact between the school and media organisations. Records include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • programs, photographs, reports • invitations and acceptances 	Retain minimum of 1 year after action completed, then destroy

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<i>SCHOOL MANAGEMENT</i>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • catering arrangements • venue bookings • organisation of entertainment • accommodation and transport arrangements • information and articles provided to media • related correspondence. 	
2.0.3	<p>Circulars/instructions</p> <p>Instructions and advisings from the Department, and circulars originating in the school, including circulars sent to parents and carers. Includes weekly communications from school executive, head teachers.</p>	Retain minimum of 1 year after action completed, then destroy
2.0.4	<p>Incident management</p> <p>Reports of incidents to an officer, directorate or agency outside the school, where the incident is serious and has the potential to impact on the organisation as a whole, for example allegations of child sexual abuse, criminal activity, missing child or young person.</p>	Retain minimum of 45 years after action completed, then destroy
2.0.5	<p>Planning</p> <p>School management plans.</p>	Required as State archives
2.0.6	<p>Policy & procedures</p> <p>Records relating to the implementation of departmental and local policies at individual schools, including welfare, curriculum, discipline and safety, for example, guides to sharing sensitive personal information, anti-bullying programs. Includes procedures and processes to ensure that risk is managed and records relating to measures to ensure that all staff have been made aware of departmental policy, and related school and departmental procedures and guidelines, for example, schedule of relevant professional learning, attendance register of staff, memos circulated to staff regarding procedures.</p> <p>Note: Policies relating to the handling of allegations of child sexual abuse should be retained for a minimum of 45 years.</p>	Retain minimum of 5 years after superseded, then destroy
2.0.7	<p>Publications</p> <p>Records relating to general promotional or explanatory information about the school, its services and activities, including print, and online information services. Includes general information distributed internally, published on the website, social media, internal and external newsletters, calendars of events, the school handbook.</p>	Retain until administrative use ceases, then destroy

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<i>SCHOOL MANAGEMENT</i>		
2.0.8	<p>Reporting</p> <p>Records relating to reporting on the school's core functions, performance and major developments, e.g. annual school reports, substantial ad hoc reports, etc.</p> <p>Note: this includes observation books, reports by school inspectors, reports on the establishment and closure of a school, substantial investigations of school facilities, programs and policies etc.</p>	Required as State archives
2.0.9	<p>Rostering and timetables</p> <p>Records relating to teacher duty rosters as implemented, including teacher playground duties and sporting rosters. Includes variation sheets for staff, staff sign on books.</p>	Retain minimum of 3 years after action completed, then destroy
2.0.10	Records relating to compilation of timetables.	Retain minimum of 4 months after action completed or until timetable comes into effect, whichever is longer, then destroy
2.0.11	<p>Working groups</p> <p>Records relating to working groups which consider operational and administrative matters e.g. learning and support teams, student representative council, positive behaviours teams, technology, curriculum, timetable, enrolment panels etc. Records include: notes of meetings, agendas etc.</p> <p>See General Retention and Disposal Authority <i>Administrative records</i> COMMITTEES for records relating to formal committees such as finance committees, WH&S committees, executive committees, and administrative arrangements for committees.</p>	Retain minimum of 2 years after action completed, then destroy

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STUDENT MANAGEMENT

3.0 STUDENT MANAGEMENT

The function of managing student enrolment, attendance, wellbeing, behaviour and school relationships with their parents and carers.

See General Retention and Disposal Authority *Administrative records* **PERSONNEL - Misconduct** for records relating to investigation and handling of complaints relating to individual employees.

3.0.1	<p>Accidents and incidents</p> <p>Records relating to the management of accidents, incidents, injury, trauma, bullying and illness involving students, including records documenting actions taken in response by staff, ambulance reports, and copies of relevant records such as attendance registers.</p> <p>See 3.0.19 for records relating to allegations of child abuse.</p>	Retain minimum of 25 years after action completed, then destroy
3.0.2	<p>Lists of student accident, injury, trauma and illness related events, for example, registers of injuries, accidents, first aid, sick bay and medicines administered, medications books, and epipens currency checks.</p>	Retain minimum of 2 years after action completed, then destroy
3.0.3	<p>Admission</p> <p>Registration records or equivalent summary records of enrolled and admitted students.</p> <p>Note: where no admission registers exist, other records that document attendance at school will be considered for transfer as State archives.</p>	Required as State archives
3.0.4	<p>Records of admitted students meeting the requirements to enrol or maintain enrolment, and the assessment of their applications. Includes enrolment forms, evidence of entitlement or authority to enrol, preliminary applications, assessments of EOI / application, attendance reports to external bodies, e.g. International Student Centre.</p> <p>Note: See 3.0.21 for identity verification documents submitted as part of enrolment or other purposes.¹</p>	Retain until student reaches the age of 25 or minimum of 7 years after action completed, whichever is longer, then destroy
3.0.5	<p>Records of students who applied to enrol and who were not admitted or did not attend. Includes withdrawn or rejected expressions of interest, applications, signed enrolment forms, waiting lists.</p>	Retain minimum of 1 year after action completed, then destroy

¹ Note added October 2024.

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<i>STUDENT MANAGEMENT</i>		
3.0.6	<p>Assessment and reporting</p> <p>Submitted student works (including posters, projects, assignments, etc.) that are not collected by students.</p>	Retain minimum of 4 months after results finalised, then destroy
3.0.7	<p>Assessment material, class results, data and mark books held by individual teachers. Includes internally set and vocational education and training assessment tasks, records of vocational education and training units of competence and achievement.</p> <p>Includes records relating to the school management of student registrations with external bodies such as BOSTES, such as subject selection information, student subject selections signed entries, appeals and applications related to the Higher School Certificate, Record of School Achievement, nil award letters to students.</p>	Retain minimum of 1 year after examination or assessment result issued, then destroy
3.0.8	Reporting on student achievement and attendance to parents, for example half-yearly and yearly reports.	Retain until student reaches the age of 25 or minimum of 7 years after action completed, whichever is longer, then destroy
3.0.9	Individualised assessments of need and plans to support students to engage with the curriculum, for example learning plans, individual education plans, independent learning plans, student learning support plans, personalised learning and support plans, action plans (for individual students), and learning adjustments.	Retain until student reaches the age of 25 or minimum of 7 years after action completed, whichever is longer, then destroy
3.0.10	<p>Attendance</p> <p>Records relating to the management of absences from school, including communications with parents and carers and departmental action in response. Includes explanations from parents and carers, notification re non-completion of work by distance education students, attendance and behaviour observations by distance education staff.</p>	Retain minimum of 3 years after action completed, then destroy
3.0.11	<p>Management of all exemptions, and of attendance where reporting beyond the school is required.</p> <p>Includes: exemptions from attendance, compulsory schooling undertaking, Home School Liaison Program applications, and annual summary of each student's absences as included in report to parents.</p>	Retain until student reaches the age of 25 or minimum of 7 years after action completed, whichever is longer, then destroy

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<i>STUDENT MANAGEMENT</i>		
3.0.12	Daily attendance registers or rolls, for example the records maintained in OASIS. Includes special circumstances registers maintained at school of enrolment, attendance at each lesson in secondary school, permission slips for students to be out of class, excursion rolls, etc.	Retain minimum of 3 years after action completed, then destroy
3.0.13	Awards Records relating to the management of appointments and awards to students. Includes academic, merit, sporting, and other awards, appointment of captains, school duxes, SRC etc. Includes lists of students and letters of advice.	Retain minimum of 1 year after action completed, then destroy
3.0.14	Behaviour Records relating to disciplinary action including suspension and expulsion. Includes notes from disciplinary interview with student, letters, appeals, notification to Director.	Retain until student reaches the age of 25 or minimum of 7 years after action completed, whichever is longer, then destroy
3.0.15	Excursions and variations to routine Records relating to planning for and approval to conduct excursions, camps, incursions, sporting carnivals, and performances etc. Includes risk assessment and authorisation to conduct.	Retain minimum of 5 years after action completed, then destroy
3.0.16	Communication between the school and parents and carers about planned excursions (with or without overnight stay, overseas travel) and variations to routine, including parent permission to participate, use electronic devices, attend hospital school, or election to opt out of activities. Includes information to parents, excursion package, residential package for distance education residential facility usage, signed permission from parent or carer.	Retain minimum of 2 years after action completed or minimum of 2 years after excursion completed, whichever is longer, then destroy
3.0.17	Welfare Reports, plans, parent interactions and orders pertaining to the welfare of students. Includes: medical plans, anaphylaxis and asthma plans, students' health risk summaries, student risk assessments, court orders related to access, apprehended violence, requests for student assistance, counsellor reports, notes of parent interviews relating to contentious issues and action by school in response.	Retain minimum of 25 years after action completed, then destroy
3.0.18	Emergency contact forms.	Retain until superseded or student no longer

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<i>STUDENT MANAGEMENT</i>		
		enrolled, then destroy
3.0.19	Records relating to allegations of child abuse, including copies forwarded to other agencies.	Retain minimum of 99 years after date of incident, then destroy
3.0.20	Supervision of residential care in boarding schools. Examples include: supervision rosters, ledgers maintained by duty staff, witness statements or evidence pertaining to incidents, health, safety and child protection matters involving boarding school students.	Retain minimum of 99 years after action completed, then destroy
3.0.21	Records (and copies of records) used to verify the identity of an individual for enrolment and other processes. Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • primary documents such as birth certificate, passport or citizenship certificate • secondary documents such as Medicare cards.² 	Retain original until verification and validation process is complete, then return to owner. If a copy is made retain copy until verification and validation process is complete, then destroy.

² Class added October 2024

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LEGACY RECORDS

4.0 LEGACY RECORDS

4.0.1	All school records created before 1900.	Required as State archives
4.0.2	<p>Pre-1950:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • punishment books and registers • lesson and program registers and other records documenting the particulars of lessons to be taught • assessments of student's attainment in particular subjects, including assessment records of students completing sixth grade, and results for a particular class or grade of students (half-yearly, yearly and other examinations) • statistics, abstracts, returns and other reports prepared on a term, annual or other periodic basis, for example annual return of infectious diseases, age-grade distribution of pupils, class size returns, attendance returns, distribution of studies abstract • photographs of teachers, students, school buildings and grounds where the school or locality can be identified. 	Required as State archives
4.0.3	<p>Pre-1950:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • records of the routine operational management of the school, including accounts, stores, etc. Includes correspondence, reports and papers relating to minor, routine, general or administrative matters. • photographs where the subject matter cannot be identified or does not appear to relate directly to the school • visitor books where the names of eminent or famous persons have not been identified. 	Retain until administrative or reference use ceases, then destroy