

Norfolk Record Office Information Leaflet 55

Guidance on the Preservation and Care of School Records

The importance of school records

School records are of immediate interest and value to the pupils and staff who have learned and taught in the particular institution. The records also have a much wider significance, to the community in which the school is situated, to the County of Norfolk and to the world beyond. Apart from church archives, few records document the history of a community as well as the records of schools. They are also documents of legal and administrative importance. For instance, former pupils may need certified copies of their entries in the admission registers in order to obtain jobs abroad or to avoid deportation.

Please remember that school records are the property of Norfolk County Council and must not be loaned or given to any third party, whether staff, governors or local historians.

Role of the Norfolk Record Office

The Norfolk Record Office is Norfolk County Council's official place of deposit for its own records, including school records. The Record Office has thousands of log books, admission registers and other records relating to closed schools which have been deposited by Children's Services and its predecessor, Norfolk Education Department. The Record Office also has a considerable number of records relating to existing schools which have been deposited by the Headteacher.

The Norfolk Record Office has excellent facilities, which were funded by a Lottery Grant and opened by HM The Queen in February 2004. The records are stored in purpose-built strongrooms where the temperature and humidity meet the British Standard 5454 and the documents are protected by an automatic inert gas fire-extinguishing system. There is a large, well-equipped searchroom where members of the public may carry out research.

The Record Office is always very happy to receive new deposits of school records. If you would like to arrange transfer, please contact the Norfolk Record Office, The Archive Centre, Martineau Lane, Norwich, NR1 2DQ and ask for Freda Wilkins-Jones, Senior Archivist (01603 222599 or 222685) <freda.wilkins-jones@norfolk.gov.uk> or Hannah Verge, Archivist (01603 222599 or 222726) <hannah.verge@norfolk.gov.uk>

Records kept in schools

For a list of records which should be preserved permanently, please see Appendix A.

For a list of records which should be preserved for limited periods, please see Appendix B.

If you have any queries about managing your current school records, please contact Maureen Dewath, Records and Efficiency Manager, Children's Services (01603 223491) <maureen.dewath@norfolk.gov.uk>.

Data Protection issues

At the request of Children's Services, school records deposited in the Norfolk Record Office are subject to the following closure periods: log books 50 years; punishment books 50 years; managers'/governors' minutes (reserved business) 30 years; admission registers 30 years; photographs of children 30 years. The log books in particular may contain sensitive material relating to staff, children and parents. Schools must observe these closure periods and the terms of the Data Protection Act when releasing information from their records.

Handling of records

The factor that most affects the condition of records is mechanical damage caused by usage and mishandling. Every time a record is handled, its life is shortened. Anyone consulting books and documents should first wash and dry his or her hands, place the records on a clean table, use a pencil to make notes, and ensure that there is no food or drink in the vicinity.

Photographs, negatives, transparencies or plates should be handled carefully, by the edges only. The best protection for prints and negatives is a polyester enclosure. This material is clear, strong and chemically inert. Original photographs should not be displayed, as they will fade with exposure to light, always display a copy.

Storage

Records should be stored in cool, dry, and well ventilated conditions. Variations in temperature and humidity will have harmful effects and so basements and attics should be avoided. Ideally, they should be boxed to keep them out of the light and kept away from direct sources of heat, such as radiators. They should be stored in a secure area, so that unauthorised persons cannot gain access.

For further advice on handling and storage issues please see Norfolk Record Office Information Leaflet 5, *Caring for your Books and Documents at Home*, which contains information relevant to schools and which is available on our website <http://archives.norfolk.gov.uk>. Our conservation team would be happy to give advice (01603 222599).

Surrogate copies of school records

If you wish to use the school records for a teaching project (for instance, the Victorians), the Record Office recommends that you make surrogate copies for use in the classroom and then deposit the originals here. Probably the easiest and least damaging way to copy books and documents is with a digital camera. Papers may be photocopied or scanned so long as they are not bigger than the scanner bed and do not need to be pressed down flat. Volumes should not be photocopied or scanned, as to do so would cause damage to the spine.

Loan of showcases

If you do decide to deposit your historical records in the Norfolk Record Office, you could consult them in our searchroom if you need to see them again. If you wished to borrow them back for important occasions, such as the anniversary of the founding of the school, we could lend you showcases (subject to availability) in which to display the documents. You would need to book in advance.

Appendix A: Records which should be preserved permanently

- ✓ Log books
- ✓ Admission registers and pupil lists
- ✓ Attendance registers (only in absence of admission registers)
- ✓ Punishment books
- ✓ Managers'/Governors' minute books and papers
- ✓ Headteacher's reports to Managers/Governors (if not included in the minutes)
- ✓ School Board minute books
- ✓ Infectious diseases registers
- ✓ Reports of HM Inspector of Schools and Diocesan Inspector of Schools and Ofsted reports
- ✓ Stock books
- ✓ School prospectus
- ✓ Instruments of management
- ✓ Documents relating to the foundation of the school: trust deeds, building accounts, lists of subscribers to building fund, etc.
- ✓ School policy documents covering such items as health and safety, bullying, behaviour, discipline, etc.
- ✓ School magazines and newsletters
- ✓ Photographs of the school and its activities (identified if possible)
- ✓ Programmes for school events (e.g., concerts, sports days, centenary celebrations)
- ✓ News cuttings and news cutting books relating to the school and its activities
- ✓ School plans
- ✓ School timetables
- ✓ Any documents relating to wartime evacuees
- ✓ PTA or Friends' Organization minutes
- ✓ Headteacher's and Secretary's diaries (relating to school business)

Appendix B: Records which should be preserved for limited periods

Certain types of records are required to be kept for a set number of years for legal and financial purposes. They include the categories listed below.

- ✓ Attendance registers
- ✓ Accident book
- ✓ Annual risk assessment of the school and the fire risk assessment
- ✓ Any inspection records of the premises or equipment
- ✓ Premises defects book
- ✓ Staff training records
- ✓ Schemes of work or lesson plans, e.g., for PE
- ✓ Risk assessments and planning material for school trip



If you need this leaflet in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language, please contact the County Archivist on 01603 222599 and we will do our best to help.

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