Records Management Policy

Scope of the Policy

This policy of Royal Blind applies to the management and running of the Royal Blind School. At this time it does not apply to other operations of Royal Blind Group.

The Royal Blind School recognises that efficient and effective management of its records is necessary to support its core functions and activities, to comply with its legal and regulatory obligations and to contribute to the effective overall management of the institution. This document provides the policy framework through which this effective management can be achieved and audited.

This policy is based upon the international standard for records management and the Lord Chancellor’s code of practice on the management of records under Section 46 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. It is also draws on best practice guidance and principles from organisations such as JISC and the UK National Archives.

What does the Policy apply to?

The policy applies to all records regardless of physical media or format, created, received or held as a result of carrying out the functions, activities and transactions of the Royal Blind School.

Records can include, but are not limited to, paper based documents and files, electronic content such as email, word processed documents, spreadsheets, presentations, databases, photographs in either electronic or hard copy format.

The main functions and activities include, but are not limited to, teaching and learning, research, administration and all supporting activities. For a fuller range of the school’s functions and activities, refer to the Business Plan.

Who does the Policy apply to?

The policy applies to all staff employed by Royal Blind. This includes all permanent and temporary employees, volunteers and contractors, consultants and secondees.

Regulatory environment

The school aims to adhere to record keeping and information management requirements that are set out in legislation, statutory and regulatory codes of practice, voluntary codes of practice, sector specific regulations, and guidance as well as Royal Blind’s policies and procedures. Whilst there are specific pieces of legislation relating to records in particular such as the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, and the Data Protection Act 1998, there are also numerous
other pieces of legislation and regulatory guidance that affect how the school manages its records.

**Roles and responsibilities**

School employees do not `own` records relating to school functions and activities but they do have responsibilities for managing them.

The Head Teacher has overall executive responsibility for records management policy and standards, and for supporting their application throughout the school.

Principal Teachers have responsibility for ensuring that local procedures are in place within their areas of responsibility and that records management is carried out in accordance with those procedures.

We aim to maintain a good standard of record keeping and information management within the school. We will do this by:

- Ensuring that records management policies and standards are kept up to date and that they are relevant to the needs and obligations of the school.
- Developing appropriate procedures and guidance
- Communicating procedures and guidance on record keeping and information management within the school.

Individual managers within the school are responsible for the following:

- Ensuring current operating procedures are efficient and fit for purpose.
- Identifying and communicating deficiencies in current practices to the Head Teacher.
- Ensuring compliance with the school’s record keeping standards.
- Ensuring adequate resources for records management activities.

**Standards**

**Definition of a record**

Records are defined as "information created, received, and maintained as evidence and information by an organisation or person, in pursuance of legal obligations or in the transaction of business."

**Qualities inherent in The Royal Blind School’s records**

**Authenticity**

An authentic record is one that can be proven to be what it purports to be, to have been created or sent by the person purported to have created or sent them, and to have been created or sent at the time purported.

**Reliability**
The contents of a record should be trusted as a full and accurate representation of the activities or transactions to which they relate. Records must be sufficient in content, context and structure to reconstruct the relevant activities and transactions that produced it.

**Integrity**

The integrity refers to it being complete and unaltered. A record should be protected against unauthorised alteration. Any authorised annotation, addition or deletion to a record should be explicitly indicated and traceable.

**Useability**

A useable record is one that can be located, retrieved, presented and interpreted.

**Secure**

Records must be securely maintained to prevent unauthorised access, alteration, damage or removal. They must be stored in a secure environment, the degree of security reflecting the sensitivity and importance of the contents. Where records are migrated across changes in technology, the school must ensure that the evidence preserved remains authentic and accurate.

**Processes and procedures**

**Capture and control of records**

All records created or received by staff during the course of school business are to be captured into appropriate recordkeeping systems. Records should be captured as soon as possible after creation so that they are readily available to support the school’s business.

All business applications that store records must be designed to ensure that the integrity of the records and the qualities highlighted above and their associated metadata is managed and retained for the retention period of the records contained in the business application. Where a business application is being replaced or superseded by another business application the process of migrating records and all associated metadata from one application to the other must be fully documented to ensure the integrity of the records. Where a business application is to be decommissioned provision must be made for maintenance or transfer of the records so that they remain accessible for the required retention period. Such applications must ensure the qualities inherent in records outlined above.

**Storage and handling of records**

Records should be stored on media that ensures the above qualities set out for school records for as long as they are required. Appropriate procedures and processes should be put in place to ensure the physical and intellectual security of school records. Records require storage conditions and handling processes that take
into account their specific physical properties. Storage conditions and handling processes should be designed to protect records from unauthorised access, loss or destruction and from theft and disaster.

**Access to records**

Access to records is governed by the nature of the content, the statutory and regulatory framework within which the school operates and the business needs and requirements of the school. The school must take into account these three elements and develop an appropriate framework that will protect records from unauthorised access, disclosure, deletion, alteration and destruction.

**Tracking of records**

Tracking is required to ensure retrieval, prevent the loss of records, monitor use, maintain security and audit transactions. Systems should be set up and in place to ensure such an audit trail.

**Disposal of records**

Disposition is the process of deciding whether to keep, move or destroy records. The authority to do this is set out within the retention and disposal schedules. Working practices must adhere to retention schedules that clearly indicate the type of record, how long they should be retained for, and the trigger mechanisms for determining the start and finish of the retention period. Destruction must always be appropriately authorised and recorded.

**Links to other Information Management Policies.**

The school has developed policies that cover other aspects of information management, and these complement the Records Management Policy. The Records Management Policy should also be taken into account when referring to and complying with these other policies.

Richard Hellewell

Chief Executive

3 August 2016