

RECORDS MANAGEMENT POLICY

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) is committed to having effective records management processes in place to support its business functions and ensure compliance with its legal obligations. Records management involves efficient and systematic control of the creation, receipt, maintenance, use and disposition of records, including processes for capturing and maintaining evidence of and information about business activities and transactions in the form of records.

2. Scope of the policy

- 2.1 The NCSE Records Management Policy (RMP) provides the overall policy framework adopted by the NCSE to ensure effective records management processes are developed, maintained and implemented.
- 2.2 The RMP applies to all records created, received or maintained in the course of carrying out NCSE business functions.
- 2.3 NCSE staff and external contractors engaged by the NCSE to have access to NCSE records, regardless of the location or format of those records, are required to comply with the NCSE RMP.
- 2.4 Data sharing agreements arranged with other public sector bodies and external contractors shall be in accordance with the requirements of the NCSE RMP.

3. Legislative Framework

- 3.1 The Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 (EPSN) sets out the functions of the NCSE. Section 41 provides that the NCSE *shall keep and maintain records for the purposes of identifying persons, to whom special educational and support services are being provided, identifying schools and other places where such services are provided to persons with special educational need and planning the provision of special education and support services*¹.
- 3.2 The NCSE collects and manages the personal data of NCSE staff and students in the performance of its statutory functions and in compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and Data Protection (Amendment) Act 2003. The NCSE is a registered Data Controller with the Data Protection Commissioners Office.
- 3.3 The NCSE is authorised under Social Welfare legislation to collect Personal Public Service Numbers (PPSNs).
- 3.4 The NCSE is a public service body and comes under the remit of the Freedom for Information Act 2014. The NCSE is required to maintain appropriate records for tax, procurement, ethics and other statutory² purposes in line with relevant legislation in order to demonstrate compliance and facilitate audit.

¹ The EPSN Act 2014 Section 20 sets out the function of the NCSE and Section 41 provides for specific records-keeping functions.

² This is not an exhaustive list and staff and others working on behalf of the NCSE must ensure they are cognisant of their responsibilities under the Official Secrets Act and any other relevant legislation in the discharge of their duties.

4. Types of Records

- 4.1 Records are retained in a range of formats³
- 4.2 The NCSE records classification scheme categorises the types of records managed in the NCSE.⁴

5. Records Retention

- 5.1 Retention periods for NCSE records are set out in the NCSE Records Retention and Disposal Schedule (RRDS).
- 5.2 The RRDS was developed with due regard to legislative obligations and efficient file management practices.
- 5.3 Records have a three-stage life cycle controlled by records retention procedures.
 - 5.3.1 Current: records are stored within the offices of the organisation. They are live records and may be added to or updated by staff in carrying out their functions.
 - 5.3.2 Non-current: records become non-current when they are needed for only occasional reference or in order to meet legal or financial obligations. When records are non-current they can be archived and stored in the Offsite Storage Centre.
 - 5.3.3 Inactive: inactive records are disposed of when they are no longer required by the NCSE with due regard to legislative obligations.

6. Responsibilities

- 6.1 Individual NCSE employees must ensure that records for which they are responsible are managed in accordance with documented procedures and are maintained and disposed of in accordance with the RMP.
- 6.2 Principal Officers are responsible for ensuring adherence to the RMP across business units.
- 6.3 The NCSE's Special Education Information Systems Unit (SIS Unit) is responsible for developing guidelines, training and support systems in consultation with staff and management in order to facilitate effective implementation of the RMP.

7. Related Policies and Procedures

- 7.1 NCSE guidelines and procedures related to records management:
 - NCSE Records Classification Scheme
 - NCSE Records Retention and Disposal Schedule
 - NCSE Data Protection Guidelines
 - NCSE IT Computer Usage Policy
 - Local Services Operational Guidelines – ref. Chapter 5 File Management
 - Special Education Administration System (SEAS) Guidelines
 - Offsite Storage procedures
 - Financial Policies & Procedures Manual
 - Central government produced guidelines and circulars.

8. Support

- 8.1 NCSE Head Office (SIS Unit) is available to answer queries on any aspects of the NCSE RMP at the contact address files@ncse.ie.
- 8.2 The RMP and related guidelines is available to employees. Training for employees can be arranged as required.

³ The FOI Act 2014, Section 2, explains that records can be retained in a range of formats including written material, printed material, electronic, visual images and sound recordings.

⁴ Emails are retained as official records in the NCSE and assigned to the relevant file. The NCSE IT Computer Usage Policy sets out NCSE policy on appropriate use of emails.

9. Review

9.1 The NCSE RMP and associated procedures will be reviewed and updated periodically.

10. Approval

10.1 The NCSE RMP has been approved by the Chief Executive Officer of the NCSE and is effective from October 2016.
