

St. Nathy's School Policies - Effective: September 2010

STUDENT RECORD KEEPING

Scope:

This is a policy which relates to the keeping of records relating to students in the school community and in particular supports effective teaching and learning. Student Records are defined as anything held in written or electronic form that refers to a student's educational progress.

In the spirit of a caring and supportive community, St. Nathy's College is anxious to ensure that a system of record keeping is established and maintained which supports the teaching and learning process and recognises the value of good communication. This policy is influenced by our school's Mission Statement where the school sets out to "...act as a centre of learning...within a fostered Christian environment." Such a policy will also promote a sense of community - with teachers, students and parents adopting a partnership approach. Policy development in the case of student records is a legal obligation for all schools, which will also ensure that good educational practice is in place in the school.

Rationale:

- The values underlying our school's Mission Statement in relation to Learning requires good practice in the area of record keeping and communications.
- Section 9 (g) of the Education Act 1998 requires that a school "ensures that parents of a student or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student, have access in a prescribed manner to records kept by that school relating to the progress of that student in his/her education".
- Section 20 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 requires that a school maintains a register of all students attending the school.
- Section 21 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 requires that a school maintains a daily record of attendance/non-attendance to include the reasons for nonattendance.

Goals:

- This policy statement in the area of record keeping will ensure that our school is promoting high quality teaching and learning.
- Teachers will be guided in their teaching to ensure that each student will receive an appropriate education.
- Students and parents will receive regular feedback which will assist the student/parents to monitor his/her progress in terms of setting and achieving appropriate learning targets in addition to meeting accepted standards of behaviour and attendance.
- Teachers will become aware at the earliest possible time of difficulties in relation to a student's

learning, behaviour and attendance. This will facilitate communication to commence between school and home in relation to these issues at the earliest possible opportunity.

- Excellent communication based on factual and accurate data will be a feature of the school.
- The school will meet statutory requirements under the relevant areas of legislation.
- Clarity will exist in the school community in relation to a system of record keeping including creation, maintenance, updating, use of, storage and access.
- The school will ensure that the information kept in individual student's records is accurate, secure and conforms to the terms of this policy.
- Parents/guardians and students over the age of 18 will have their requests for review of their records dealt with in accordance with this policy.

Content:

1. Record Keeping:

Student Records should be maintained in the following areas:

- a) Enrolment Details – application forms, reports from other schools, assessments etc.
- b) Pupils' academic progress including examination/assessment results.
- c) Reports/assessments in the area of special needs.
- d) Serious incidents of pupil misbehaviour.
- e) Attendance/non-attendance including reasons for non- attendance.
- f) References.
- g) Accidents/incidents.

N.B. *It is advisable to inform parents that a particular incident is being recorded.*

2. Form: (Note the Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003/See **Appendix1**)

- a) Manual
- b) Computerised

3. Access: The following have access to student records on the terms outlined below:

- a) Teachers/authorised members of staff.
- b) E.W.O. re: attendance as outlined in the Education Welfare Act 2000 through contact with the Principal or other designated school personnel.
- c) Parents, re: own child and students over the age of 18 re: own record, as per section 9 (g) of the Education Act 1998. Any such request should be made in writing to the Principal who will arrange an appointment for the purpose of reviewing the record. The parent/guardian and student over the age of 18 may see and make notes about the relevant record but must not enter any notes on the record. Upon completion of the review of the record the parent/guardian or student over the age

of 18, will acknowledge in writing that they had inspected the record and this acknowledgement becomes part of the record.

d) Other schools, in writing, at point of transfer of a student between schools.

e) Under the Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003.

f) Under the discovery process in legal proceedings.

g) Through the Freedom of Information Act 1997 when schools submit

documents to government departments and other agencies who come under the remit of FOI.

h) The Board of Management may refuse access to a record in exceptional circumstances (e.g. a report on a student's record which includes details of a particularly sensitive family matter etc.). This refusal to allow access to a record will be conveyed to the applicant within 21 days of the application being made (in writing) to the Board.

i) The School Principal must be made aware immediately by parents/guardians of the outcome of legal proceedings which may limit the right of one or both parents to access to information about their child.

j) Outside Requests: those who are not parents/guardians or students over the age of 18 will not have access to records, except in exceptional circumstances such as a request by the Gardai, health board personnel etc. All such requests must be made to the Principal and will only be released on the production of proof of identity and the reason for the request.

4. Guidelines re: Content:

a) Factual, which may include a teacher's professional opinion.

b) Brief – ensure that the entry clearly fulfils the purpose.

c) Up to date – regular review to be part of the school's administrative system i.e. updated through the inclusion of the latest assessment/examination reports and also the addition of details of serious incidents/accidents including the follow up action/outcomes etc.

d) Records should be written on the basis that “every thing may be seen by everybody” and in language that is easily understood and unambiguous.

5. Storage:

a) Secure/confidential – where will student records be located? How will this area be secured? Who is responsible for ensuring that the area is secure?

b) Procedures re: access – who has access? On what basis will a) teachers b) other school personnel c) parents/guardians/students over 18 and d) representatives of external agencies i.e. NEWB or Gardai, have access to student records?

c) Archival system – how long will different types of student records be stored for? Where will the records be stored i.e. is there an archival system? How will access to the archival system be managed?

6. Destruction:

- a) Definition of records to be kept indefinitely i.e. examination results and school registers/roll books.
- b) Definition of the period for which other records will be retained after a student has left a school e.g. 6 years. There is no legal obligation re: period of retention.
- c) System to be used in destruction of records.
- d) Schools need only retain records for a lengthy period in relation to serious situations or needs i.e. major behavioural issues or special learning needs.

Responsibilities re: Policy on Record Keeping:

- The Board of Management and the Principal, on a day to day basis, will ensure that the policy on record keeping is developed, implemented and evaluated.
- The Principal will be responsible for ensuring that a system of student records is established and that appropriate structures are put in place for the physical storage, security, maintenance and access to the records.
- The relevant Year Head, working in conjunction with the Class Tutors for each class in the given year, will be responsible for the maintenance and updating of the student records for each particular year. Other school personnel will update particular student records as the need arises i.e. Guidance Counsellor or Learning Support Teacher will include references to counselling and or learning support that the student either requires and/or has been provided with. The Year Head should be made aware of all additions to the record of a student in the year group under his/her care.
- Access by parents/guardians/students over 18 to records will be in writing to the Principal who in turn will authorise the Year Head to facilitate the request where appropriate.
- The School Secretary may be authorised by the Principal and/or Year Head to access student records for the purpose of updating and/or compiling a report on a particular student as directed.
- The designated personnel will be provided with clear guidelines and training on their responsibilities in relation to the creation, maintenance, security, access and destruction of the records under their care. The personnel will be made aware of the statutory obligations in relation to the keeping of records.

Success Criteria:

- An effective system of record keeping is established and maintained.
- Student records will be created, updated, maintained and securely stored.
- Relevant staff have access to the records.
- Parents/guardians and students, where appropriate, are aware of the record keeping system and are familiar with the process of accessing same.
- Parents/guardians and students are facilitated in the correction of a record where the information

relating to a student is shown to be incomplete, incorrect or misleading.

Monitoring Procedures:

A process of monitoring and regular evaluation of this policy will be conducted by the Principal, Deputy Principal and Year Heads on the implementation of this policy.

Review Procedures:

- Notwithstanding the need to make ongoing adjustments, the policy will be reviewed at regular intervals. A review committee will be established for this purpose.

Appendix 1

Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003.

Schools should note that DATA is defined as personal information held relating to an individual/employee in electronic or manual form. The duties of a data controller (school authority/employer) come under the Eight Data Protection Principles:

1. Obtain and process the information fairly.
2. Keep it only for one or more specified and lawful purposes.
3. Process it only in ways compatible with the purposes for which it was given to you initially.
4. Keep it safe and secure.
5. Keep it accurate and up to date.
6. Ensure that it is adequate, relevant and not excessive.
7. Retain it no longer than is necessary.
8. Give a copy of his/her personal data to any individual on request.

Commonly schools are obliged to register with the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner because they record “sensitive data” about their pupils on computer.

“Sensitive data” refers to personal data relating to: racial origin, political opinions, religious beliefs, physical or mental health, sexual life, criminal convictions. Even if a school doesn’t retain such “sensitive data” electronically the submission to the Department of Education/Science or other statutory bodies of information in relation to an individual’s health or learning disability would constitute grounds to be registered as a data controller.

Further information may be had by contacting :

The Data Protection Commissioner,

Block 6,

Irish Life Centre,

Lower Abbey Street, Dublin 1.

Telephone: 01-8748544.

Web: www.dataprotection.ie or by consulting the Data Protection Information Pack which was issued to all schools by the Department of Education and Science in September 2003.