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Date: 13-03-26
Our ref: FOI_10599

This matter is being dealt with by: Customer Enabling Services

Dear Jamie

Freedom of Information Act 2000

I refer to your Freedom of Information Request received on the **09-02-26** requesting information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 regarding any information relating to: Retention periods and disposal controls for pupil records, SEND, exclusions and EOTAS

The following response has been provided by the Council's Together for Children and Finance departments.

1. Retention schedule entries and retention periods Please provide the recorded retention schedule entries (or equivalent documented retention rules) used by the council for the following categories, including the retention period and the trigger point (for example, DOB plus X years, closure of case, end of academic year, end of financial year):

- a) maintained school pupil file / educational record**
- b) records held by the local authority relating to an individual pupil's education**
- c) exclusion records (fixed-term and permanent), including panel or decision paperwork**
- d) SEND records held by the local authority (assessments, notes, decisions, panel minutes, plans)**
- e) EOTAS / home tuition / alternative provision records, including placement decisions and commissioning referrals**

f) education finance and commissioning records relating to alternative provision or tuition (purchase orders, invoices, provider contracts, budget monitoring)

This information is considered exempt from release under S22 of the Freedom of Information Act, as it is information that is due for future publication. Together for Children Sunderland is currently reviewing and updating its Record Management procedures including retention schedules, which we anticipate will be published on the Company's website by July 2026.

2. Version in force 2010 to 2014

If your retention schedule has changed since 2010, please provide either:

- a) the version that was in force between 1 January 2010 and 31 December 2014 for the categories above, or**
- b) a change log that clearly states what changed and when, for those categories.**

Please see attached PDF 'RecordsRetentionSchedule-ChildrensServices'

3. Disposal process and audit trail

Please provide the council's recorded procedure or policy for secure disposal of education records in scope of section 1, including:

- a) who authorises disposal**
- b) what audit trail is kept (for example, destruction logs, certificates)**
- c) whether third-party shredding or disposal contractors are used, and how compliance is evidenced**

This information is considered exempt from release under S22 of the Freedom of Information Act, as it is information that is due for future publication. Together for Children Sunderland is currently reviewing and updating its Record Management procedures including secure disposals, which we anticipate will be published on the Company's website by July 2026.

4. Maintained schools, oversight and information rights Please provide any recorded information or guidance the council uses that explains:

- a) what education records are held by the council versus held by maintained schools**
- b) the council's role in ensuring maintained schools comply with records retention expectations and information rights requests, including SARs and Educational Record requests**

Together for Children Sunderland does not hold this information. Under Schedule 1 of the FOIA 2000, maintained schools are separate public authorities to the Council/TfCS, and under the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR, maintained schools are similarly separate data controllers for personal data records they process. We do not manage records on behalf of maintained schools or issue guidance to them around records management and requests.

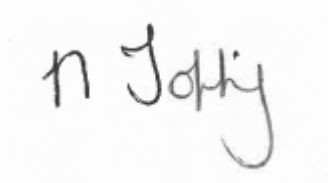
This information has been provided in response to a Freedom of Information request and this must be acknowledged in any subsequent use of the information. In addition, the authority must be notified of any proposed re-use of this information for commercial or other purposes.

I hope this response is satisfactory. If, however, you are dissatisfied with the response to your request for information, you can ask for the decision to be reviewed in reply to this letter, however any request for review must be submitted within 40 days of the date of this freedom of information response.

A request for review should be directed, by email to freedom.information@sunderland.gov.uk or by post or by hand addressed to Customer Enabling Services, Sunderland City Council, City Hall, Plater Way, Sunderland, SR1 3AA, where it will be redirected accordingly. The review will be coordinated by the Council's team of Solicitors.

If this fails to resolve your concerns, then you have the right to apply to the Information Commissioner for a decision.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "n Topping". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped 'n' and 'T'.

Nicola Topping
Assistant Director of Transformation and Customer Enablement
freedom.information@sunderland.gov.uk