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Records Management Policy

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I. *Definitions*

Archives repository: The building in which records with archival value are permanently preserved.

Authentic records: Are records that can be proven that they were never tempered with and are official records.

Correspondence system: A set of paper- based and electronic communications and associated documents, sent, received, generated and stored during the conduct of business.

Custody: The control of records based upon their physical possession.

Disposal: The action of either destroying/deleting a record or transferring it into archival custody.

Disposal Authority: A written authority issued by the Provincial Archivist specifying which records should be transferred into archival custody or specifying which records should be destroyed/deleted or otherwise disposed of.

Electronic records: Information which is generated electronically and stored by means of computer technology. This is a collective noun for all components of an electronic information system, namely: electronic media as well as all connected items such as output information, software applications, programmes and meta data. All these components are defined as records by the Act. They must be dealt with in accordance with the Act's provision.

File plan: A pre-determined logical and systematic structure into which records are arranged and intellectually stored according to subject groups and to facilitate efficient retrieval and disposal of records. The file plan is used for both current paper –based and current electronic correspondence systems. It contains reference number, title, description and disposal authority of files.

Filing system: The collective noun for the storage system (like files, boxes, shelves or electronic applications and storage systems) in which records are stored in a systematic manner according to the file plan.

File reference: A unique identifier/ number for the file. This can be numerical, alphabetical or alphanumerical. It is used to link a record to its specific subject file and subject grouping.

Integrated Document Management: A set of method and technologies consisting of messaging & calendaring, imaging and scanning, file/ document tracking, electronic document management, workflow, search and retrieval functionalities. Also used to manage classification, location, movement, security auditing, retention and disposal of organization's records regardless of format.

Non Archival Records: Records with a short lived interest or usefulness.

Public Records: A record created or received by a government body in pursuance of its activities, regardless of form or medium.

Records other than correspondence system: Records that do not form part of a correspondence file or a case file e.g. registers, maps, plans, electronic records and audio visual records.

Records keeping: Making and maintaining complete accurate and reliable evidence of official business in the form of recorded information.

Records Management: Records management is a process of ensuring the proper creation, maintenance, use and disposal of records throughout their life cycle to achieve efficient, transparent and accountable governance.

Retention period: The length of time that records should be retained in the office before they are either transferred into archival custody or destroyed/ deleted.

1. Preamble

Polokwane Municipality keeps and manages official records to support its business operations, as well as to fulfil legal, administrative obligations. The necessary policies and procedures are in place to ensure that the municipal records management practices comply with the requirement of the Act (National Archives and Records Services of South Africa Act 43 of 1996, as amended).

Appropriate records management is a vital aspect of maintaining and enhancing the value of created records to provide easy access to information, support business conduct on records activities, and contribute positively to centralizing all records in order to realize collective memory within the Municipality.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to define controls that will enforce regular records management and support activities to ensure an effective and efficient records management system in the Polokwane Local Municipality.

Records management through the proper control of the content, storage and volume of records, reduces vulnerability to legal challenges or financial loss and promotes best value in terms of human and space resources through greater co-ordination of information and storage system.

3. Objectives

The objectives of this policy are:

- To encourage the creation of records as evidence of business transaction.
- To promote accurate records classification and proper storage of records.

- To regulate access to records by ensuring security and protection of records.
- To eliminate unnecessary duplication of records.
- To promote a systematic approach to records management within the Polokwane Municipality.
- Having a well-organized filing system that enables easy retrieval of records.
- To regulate the disposal of records following the correct procedures.

4. Scope of Application

- This policy is applicable to all employees of the Polokwane Local Municipality, including learners and interns as well as all other stakeholders who make use of the records management system.
- The policy applies to all records created or received, regardless of form or medium.
- All records created within the Municipality, including staff personal files, administrative files, accounting files etc., should be managed in accordance with this policy and the National Archives Act.
- The Municipal Manager should emphasize policies and procedures to ensure that electronic records and their related documentations are retained as long as are needed for official use.
- Policies and procedures should make provision for:
  a) Approval of filing system used for paper based and electronic correspondence records.
  b) Obtaining disposal authority on paper-based records and electronic records system.

5. Regulatory framework

The following publications govern the execution of the Records Management Policy and were taken into consideration during the compilation of the policy:

a) The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996;
b) National Archives and Records Services of South Africa Act (Act no.43 of 1996 as amended)
c) Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act, 2003 (Act 56 of 2003);
d) Electronic and Communications Act, 2005 (Act 36 of 2005);
e) Electronic Communications Security Act, 2002 (Act 68 of 2002);
f) Minimum Information Security Standard (MISS);
g) Promotion of Administrative Justice Act (Act no.3 of 2000);
h) Protection of Personal Information Act (POPI Act 4 of 2013).
i) Promotion of Access to Information Act (Act no.2 of 2000);

6. Administration of the policy

The Information Communication Technology Manager is responsible for enforcing this policy and continuously ensuring monitoring and compliance.

7. Policy Statement

All records created and received by Polokwane Local Municipality shall be managed in accordance with the records management principles contained in Section 13 of the National Archives and Records Services Act (Act no.43 of 1996 as amended)

- The following broad principles apply to the record keeping and records management practices of Polokwane Local Municipality:
- The Municipality follows sound procedures for the creation, maintenance, retention and disposal of all records, including electronic records.

- The records management procedures of Polokwane Local Municipality comply with legal requirements, including those for the provision of evidence.
- The Polokwane Local Municipality follows sound procedures for the security, privacy and confidentiality of its records.
- Electronic records in Polokwane Local Municipality are managed according to the principles promoted by the National Archives and Records Service.

8. Records classification and storage areas

Schedule for Records other than correspondence systems.

The Assistant Manager Records maintains the schedule of all records other than correspondence systems. The schedule contains a description of each set of records which indicates the storage location and retention periods of these records regardless of format. Should records be created/ received that are not listed in the schedule, the Assistant Manager Records should be contacted to add the record to the file plan schedule.

8.1 Paper- based

The Polokwane Local Municipality has current paper –based records other than the correspondence systems that are in the custody of the various SBUs that use them on the daily basis such as building plans, registers, tender documents and human resources files. All such records should be filed following the same filing system (file plan).

8.2 Electronic records management systems

The day-to-day maintenance of the corporate document and electronic records management system (MUN-ADMIN) is the responsibility of the Director Corporate and Shared Services, but the management of the individual documents and records contained within these systems remain the responsibility of the respective Directorates. Assistant Manager Records is mandated to ensure that they are properly managed.

9. Storage and custody

All records shall be kept in storage areas that are appropriate for the type of medium.

9.1 File Plan

Only the file plan approved by Provincial Archivist shall be used for the classification of correspondence records. It shall be used to classify paper -based and electronic (including email) records.

9.2 Paper- based storage

- All paper-based correspondence system records that are not HR related should be housed at central Records Section.
- All these records should be under the management of ICT Manager who is mandated to ensure that they are managed properly.
- Records stored in Records section should be protected from various perils i.e. water damage, dust, rodents, pests and fire.
- Records should be protected against unauthorised access to avoid theft, loss and breach of security.
- Records should be stored under fire-proof conditions i.e. on metal shelves / cabinets.

9.3 Electronic Records storage

- Electronic Records are stored in a well-maintained server that allows access to authorized ICT personnel.
- Polokwane Local Municipality utilises the (MUN-ADMIN) system.
- Access to storage areas where electronic records are stored is limited to authorized ICT personnel who have specific duties regarding the maintenance of the hardware, software and media.
- Preventing unauthorized alterations to electronic records, as soon as the document is scanned, indexed and filed, no changes can be made to the scanned image of the document. The only changes can be made as new version of the document not to the original document.

- Any alterations as well as deletions and transfers of electronic records must be captured for the purpose of audit and transaction history and must be kept as record.

10. Disposal of records

- No official records (including email) shall be destroyed, erased or otherwise disposed of without prior request by ICT/Records Manager to the Provincial Archivist and written authorisation to dispose.
- The Provincial Archivist issued Standing Disposal Authorities for the disposal of the records classified against the file plan. This process shall be managed by ICT Manager.
- Non-Archival records that are needed for litigations, Promotion of Access to Information request, may not be destroyed until such time that the Director Corporate and Services has indicated that the destruction hold can be lifted.
- Paper based archival records shall be kept safely until they are due to be transferred to Provincial Archives Repository. Transfer process shall be followed and authorized by Provincial Archivist.

11. Access control and security

- Records shall always be protected against unauthorized access movement and tempering to protect their authenticity and reliability as evidence of the business of Polokwane Local Municipality.
- Security classified records shall be managed in terms of the Minimum
- Information Security Standards (MISS).
- No staff member shall remove records that are not available in the public domain from the premises of Polokwane Local Municipality without the permission from Municipal Manager.

- No staff member shall provide information to public without guideline regarding request for information which are contained in Promotion of Access to Information Act. (Act no.2 of 2000).
- All access of records by members of public shall be in accordance with Promotion of Access to Information Act.
- Personal information shall be managed in terms of Protection of Personal Information Act (Act no.4 of 2013).
- No staff member shall disclose personal information of any staff member or client of Polokwane Local Municipality without authorisation from Municipal Manager.
- Records storage areas shall always be protected against unauthorized access. The following shall apply:
  a) Records storage shall all times be locked when not in use.
  b) Records shall be stored in facilities where they can be identified, located and easily retrieved.
  c) Access to server rooms and storage areas for electronic records media shall be managed through appropriate access control and authorisation by ICT Manager.

12. Roles and Responsibilities

12.1 MUNICIPAL MANAGER

The **Municipal Manager** is ultimately responsible for the record keeping and records management practice of Polokwane Municipality. The Municipal Manager is also responsible for the following:

- Committed to enhance accountability, transparency and improvement of service delivery by ensuring that records management practice are implemented and maintained.
- Support the implementation of this policy and requires each staff member to support the values underlying in this policy.

12.2 EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT

The executive management are responsible for the following:

- The implementation of this policy in their respective Directorates.
- Maintain good records keeping and records management practice in their Directorates.
- They shall ensure that all staff are made aware of the records keeping and records management responsibilities and obligations.
- They shall ensure that the management of records including emails is key responsibility in the performance agreement of all the staff in their units.

12.3 ICT MANAGER

The ICT/ Records Manager is responsible for the following:

- The implementation of the policy
- Staff awareness of the policy
- The management of all records according to the records management principles.
- The determination of retention periods in consultation with the users and taking into account the functional, legal and historical need of the body to maintain records of transactions.

The ICT/ Records Manager is mandated to make such training and other interventions, as are necessary to ensure that Polokwane Local Municipality records management practices comply with records management policy.

The ICT/Records Manager may time to time issue circulars and instructions regarding Records management and records keeping in Polokwane Local Municipality.

The ICT Manager shall ensure that all created and received records by Records section within Polokwane Local Municipality are classified according to the approved file plan, and disposal authority is obtained from the Limpopo Provincial Archives and Records services.

12.4 ASSISTANT MANAGER RECORDS

The Assistant Manager Records is responsible for the following:

- Assisting the ICT/Records Manager in the implementation of the policy within the respective Directorates.
- Creating staff awareness regarding the policy.
- Assisting with the management of all records according to the records management policy.
- Assisting in the determination of retention periods in consultation with the users and taking into account the functional, legal and historical need of the body to maintain records of transactions.
- Ensure that all records created and received from Directorates are classified according to the approved file plan.
- Ensuring that physical security of all records received are properly maintained.

12.5 SENIOR RECORDS CLERK

- Managing procedures and functions within the Records section.
- Managing junior staff within the section
- Ensure compliance with the Records file plan and policy.
- Training of Records junior staff on the use of file plan and other processes such as electronic management systems.

12.6 STAFF IN GENERAL

- Every staff member shall create records of transactions while conducting official business.
- No staff member is allowed to remove, shred or destroy any official record without authorisation from the Municipal Manager.

- Every staff member shall manage those records efficiently and effectively by:
    - Ensuring that reference numbers are allocated to paper based and electronic records according to file plan.
    - Ensuring that they send paper-based records to Records section for proper file keeping.

13. Training

- The ICT Manager and Assistant Manager Records shall successfully complete the National Archives and Records Service's Records Management Course, as well as any other records management training that will equip their duties.
- The ICT Manager shall ensure that all staff members are aware of the records management policies and arrange such training as is necessary for Records staff to be equipped for their records management duties.

14. Inception Date

This policy comes into effect from the date of approval.

15. Policy Review

This policy shall be reviewed every three (3) years.

16. Enquiries

Enquiries about the policy should be directed to the ICT Manager.

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