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To: Deputy Directors-General, Chief Directors, Directors, Deputy Directors, Chief Education Specialists, Deputy Chief Education Specialists, Chief Registry Clerks (Head Office and district offices), Circuit Managers, District Officials, Principals and Assistant Record Managers

Short summary: *The purpose of this circular is to inform and describe the approved Records Management Policy applicable to all employees appointed by the Western Cape Education Department (permanent, probation, fixed term contracts, consultants, and interns).*

Subject: Revised Records Management Policy: Western Cape Education Department

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The role played by information as an important factor in the process of government administration and management has been recognised by governments world-wide, including the Western Cape. This recognition is because information feeds many kinds of activities that contribute to service delivery, such as decision-making, planning, problem-solving, innovation, good governance, and accountability. This information is kept in records.
- 1.2 The focus of records management is on the creation, evaluation, storage, access, retrieval, dissemination, use and disposition of records in any form or medium. Records management is therefore not medium specific or limited by time and space.
- 1.3 Records management is the responsibility of every public official involved in one or more aspects of records management. This policy, therefore, seeks to provide a high-level direction for managing records to all employees of Western Cape Education Department (WCED) in terms of the Provincial Archives and Records Service of the Western Cape Act, 2005 (Act 3 of 2005).
- 1.4 As indicated in the Code of Conduct, chapter 2, it is the responsibility of all officials to ensure that documents received or created by them whilst doing their work **MUST** be filed on the official approved file plan of the WCED. This provision is also indicated in the approved Records Management Policy.

- 1.5 It is thus of the utmost importance that information created or received by directorates be available not only for retrieval but also in cases when Promotion of Access to Information, 2000 (Act 2 of 2000) or Promotion of Administrative Justice, 2000 (Act 3 of 2000), must be administered to enable the WCED to provide relevant requested information as indicated and guided by these Acts.

2. Purpose

- 2.1 The purpose of the policy is to provide direction to the WCED on the management of records for good governance, accountability as well as corporate and social memory. The purpose of this policy is to:
- 2.1.1 Regulate the management of the Ministry of Education and the WCED records in a well-structured recordkeeping system and set the necessary policies and procedures in place to ensure that recordkeeping and records management practices comply with the requirements of the Provincial Archives and Records Service of the Western Cape Act and the approved Records Management Policy of Western Cape Governmental Bodies, dated 31 March 2017.
- 2.1.2 Maintain and enhance the value of information resources of the Ministry of Education and the WCED. Information is a resource of the same importance to good management as other standard resources. The information resources of the Ministry of Education and the WCED must, consequently, be managed as an asset. Appropriate records management is a vital aspect of maintaining and enhancing the value of this asset. The Ministry of the Education and the WCED consider its records to be a valuable asset to:
- a) Enable the Ministry and the WCED to find the right information easily and comprehensively;
 - b) Enable the Ministry and the WCED to perform its functions successfully, efficiently and in an accountable manner;
 - c) Support the business, legal and accountability requirements of the Ministry and the WCED;
 - d) Ensure the conduct of business in an orderly, efficient and accountable manner;
 - e) Ensure the consistent delivery of services;
 - f) Support and document policy formation and administrative decision making;
 - g) Provide continuity in the event of a disaster;
 - h) Protect the interests of the Ministry and the WCED and the rights of employees, clients and present and future stakeholders;
 - i) Support and document the Ministry and the WCED's activities, development and achievements; and
 - j) Provide evidence of business in the context of cultural activity and contribute to the cultural identity and collective memory.

3. Records management and the guiding model

- 3.1 This policy upholds the Records Continuum Model (RCM) which is a conceptual model that helps to understand and explore recordkeeping activities in relation to multiple contexts over space and time. Recordkeeping activities take place from before the records are created by identifying recordkeeping requirements in policies, systems, organisations, processes, laws, and social mandates that impact on what is created and how it is managed over space and time.

- 3.2 The RCM challenges the traditional view that separates archives and records as distinct entities. Therefore, a continuum approach highlights that records are both current and archival-ready at the point of creation as it has been realised that records can be used continuously if they are considered to be of value at the time that they are created.
- 3.3 With proper control of the content, storage, and volume of a record, we can aim to reduce vulnerability to legal challenges or financial losses and promote best value in terms of human and space resources through greater coordination of information and storage systems.
- 3.4 All correspondence for the WCED **MUST** bear all of the following:
- a) The logo and address of the WCG,
 - b) Record creation date,
 - c) File reference number (from a file plan approved by the Western Cape Archive and Record Services),
 - d) Author/s of the record,
 - e) Addressee,
 - f) Signature of the author or delegate. In the case of electronic records, sections 13(4) and 28(2) of the Electronic Communications and Transactions Act, 2002 (Act 25 of 2002) apply, and
 - g) Indication of attachments and/or links to other records, and subject matter.

4. Disciplinary processes and procedures

- 4.1 Deliberate tampering with records, wilful damage and illegal disposal/destruction of public records is a criminal offence and may lead to criminal proceedings.
- 4.2 Transgression of this policy constitutes misconduct and, where necessary, disciplinary procedures will be taken.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation

- 5.1 The impact of this policy on recordkeeping and records management practices of the Ministry of the Education and the WCED will be monitored by the Records Manager, Assistant Record Managers and designated Records Management staff who will report on its effectiveness to the Head of Department with recommendations on how to improve on efficiency if any deficiencies/shortcomings are identified.

6. Adoption and implementation

- 6.1 The alignment of the WCED Records Management Policy was approved and endorsed by the Western Cape Archives and Records Services on 18 February 2021. The implementation date of this policy in the Ministry of Education and in the WCED is with effect from **01 February 2022**.

7. Your assistance to ensure you familiarise yourself with this circular would be beneficial, as records creation and receipt is the responsibility of all staff and all records created and received by the WCED shall be managed in accordance with the records management principles contained in section 9 of the Provincial Archives and Records Service of the Western Cape Act, 2005 (Act 3 of 2005).
8. Supervisors are requested to ensure that all personnel in their department are notified of this circular.

SIGNED: B WALTERS

HEAD: EDUCATION

DATE: 2022-01-12