

## **PROVIDING ACCESS TO SCHOOL ADMISSION REGISTERS AND LOG BOOKS**

### **1 ADMISSION REGISTERS**

#### **1.1 Closure period**

Following a ruling in 2011 by the Information Commissioner under the Data Protection Act 2011, it is the recommendation of the Archivists in Scottish Local Authorities Working Group (ASLAWG) that School Admission Registers be closed for **100 years** from the date the last pupil discharged from the school is recorded within an individual volume.

School Admission Registers can contain sensitive personal data about individual e.g. dates of birth, their reasons for leaving the school, family information and illness. Closing this information for 100 years allows a reasonable period of time in which to assume that the individuals will have passed away and therefore the records fall out with the scope of the Data Protection Act.

#### **2.2 Providing access**

Although admission registers are closed to general public access for 100 years, information can be extracted to answer enquiries and satisfy researchers, subject to certain conditions.

In order to appropriately managed Data Protection restrictions, it is recommended that one or two members of each Comann Eachdraidh committee are appointed to deal with enquiries relating to admission registers and that access by others is restricted. The Tasglann team are willing to provide training and guidance as appropriate.

The following lists some of the common types of requests with practical advice on how to deal with them without breaching Data Protection legislation.

##### **i. An individual wanting to see their own record in an admission register**

Ensure that you are satisfied that the person asking for access is who they claim to be. You are within your rights to request that they prove their identity through production of their passport or some other form of identification. It is recommended that you make and keep a copy of the identification provided.



There is no automatic right to see the original volume, only to access the information within it. The applicant is only able to see their own information. As the register contains personal data about others, you can either transcribe the information from the register directly and pass it onto them or, photocopy/scan the record and black out (“redact” like this                     ) all information about third parties using a pen or computer programme so that all they can see is their own record information.

Note regarding redactions: If you scan a document and use digital software to redact text, do not send the digital copy to the researcher as software to uncover / unblock even encrypted redaction is not difficult to come by and use. Instead, provide a print out of the redacted document. If redacting using thick black pen, mark a photocopy of the original with the pen and then photocopy this again. Check that the text is not still legible on the photocopy – you may need to photocopy the photocopy before it becomes illegible. Using Post-it notes to cover text to be redacted and then photocopying the document is another effective way of redacting information.

If in doubt, contact the Archivist at Tasglann nan Eilean Siar for assistance and advice (01851 822750)

**ii. Family history enquiries**

If you are certain that the person being enquired about is dead then the information on that individual can be released. If you believe they may still be alive, then the request should be refused unless the enquirer can prove to your satisfaction that they have express written permission from the individual concerned for the release of that information and can provide proof of that person’s identity (e.g. passport). Copies of proofs should be retained.

As the register contains personal data about others, you can either transcribe the information from the register directly and pass it on to the enquirer or photocopy/scan the record and black out (redact) all information about third parties so that all they can see is the recorded information about the person in whom they are interested.

If in doubt, contact the Archivist at Tasglann nan Eilean Siar for assistance and advice (01851 822750)

**iii. School reunions / class lists**

Name lists only can be released, i.e. the column listing the actual names of individuals admitted, but no other information. Anyone who was in the school will know who else was on the roll at the time so the list is nothing more than a memory jogger. However, to protect the personal information of the individuals listed, the list of names would need to be extracted by the nominated person within the Comann Eachdraidh rather than the enquirer..

**vi. Academic / non-person specific research**

Non-person specific researchers, such as visiting academics or students undertaking research, may want to view these records from a statistical / trend / pattern point of view rather than interest in particular individuals. For example, they may be interested in how many people were leaving the area and for where, statistics on gender or childhood mortality. Full physical access to closed records can be legitimately provided in terms of the Data Protection Act as long as the results of the research do not identify a living person(s) or impact on their lives. Where such access is to be granted, a model form is attached which they should complete before access can be granted.

If in doubt, contact the Archivist at Tasglann nan Eilean Siar for assistance and advice (01851 822750)

### **2.3 Displaying admission registers**

Regardless of their age, admission registers should not be kept in public areas for general reference. They should be stored in a secure area and users should be required to ask for them so that their use can be controlled and monitored and their security maintained.

If you wish to use Admission Registers in a public display then please consider the following:

- Only display pages where the last date listed is over 100 years old
- Display under a glass case or out of public reach. If you want people to be able to flick through the register, consider displaying high quality scanned or photographed images of the pages. Photocopying should be avoided.
- Turn the page on display regularly to prevent excessive exposure to light which will fade and damage the paper over time.

## **2 SCHOOL LOG BOOKS**

### **2.1 Closure period**

The Archivists in Scottish Local Authorities Working Group recommend that School Log Books be closed for a minimum of **30 years** from the date of the last entry within an individual volume.

Log books rarely contain names or identities of individual children. However, on rare occasions children may be named or identifiable. Where this is the case, the log book should be closed to public researchers for **75 years**.

### **2.2 Providing access**

Although log books maybe closed to general public access for 30-75 years, information can be extracted to answer enquiries and satisfy researchers, subject to certain conditions.

In order to appropriately managed Data Protection restrictions, it is recommended that one or two members of each Comann Eachdraidh committee are appointed to deal with enquiries relating to school records and that access by others is restricted. The Tasglann team are willing to provide training and guidance as appropriate.

The following lists some of the common types of requests received with practical advice on how to deal with them without breaching Data Protection legislation.

#### **i. Researching a school's history for public display**

Access may be granted to a closed volume by an individual to extract pertinent points for a school history. However, they should ensure that no information that would identify a living individual should be included. Teachers, and those working in an official capacity such as inspectors, may be mentioned by name. However, any indication of a child or teacher's ethnicity, religious belief, political opinions, trade unionism, physical and mental health, sexual life or commission of/conviction for offences should be excluded from being included in a display unless documented over 75 years ago or that the information relates to a deceased person. Even then, this should be done sensitively so as not to cause offence to living relatives.

Where such access is granted an *Application to access to material still covered by the Data Protection Acts* form should be completed (see end of this document).

### **2.3 Public display of log books**

Regardless of their age, log books should not be kept in public areas for general reference. They should be stored in a secure area and user should be required to ask for them so that their use can be controlled and monitored and their security maintained.

If you wish to use Log Books in a public display then please consider the following:

- Only display pages where the last date listed is over 35/75 years old as appropriate
- Display under a glass case or out of public reach. If you want people to be able to flick through the log book, consider displaying high quality scanned or photographed images of the pages. Photocopying should be avoided.
- Turn the page on display regularly to prevent excessive exposure to light which will fade and damage the paper

## Application to access to material still covered by the Data Protection Act

**1.**

Title and reference of collection you wish to access:

**2.**

Name of Applicant (in Capitals):

Employer / HEI:

Position Held:

Supervisor Name (If applicable):

Date of Application:

Contact Address:

Telephone Number:

E-mail Address:

**3.**

Please explain the precise nature and purpose of your research, and the reference numbers of the material you need to consult. Please also give details of any ethical approval procedures your Higher Education Institute has which this project has undergone. Also explain clearly your need to see this material:

Continue on a separate sheet if necessary.

**NOW PLEASE TURN OVER**

4.

**Please read carefully the following indicating your acceptance of them by signing and dating the form.**

I am familiar with the Data Protection Act 1998 as it relates to processing of personal data for research purposes.

I undertake not to reveal the identity of patients, clients or any other persons mentioned in the above collection named in section 1. I undertake not to reveal any information that might lead to their identification as a result of my researches. By this declaration I assume full responsibility under law for any litigation resulting from any breach of this undertaking.

I understand that I will not necessarily be able to obtain copies from this collection, and that copies made might be redacted.

I agree to submit for prior approval to the Comann Eachdraidh any text intended for publication produced as a consequence of my having consulted the above collection(s). I accept that this includes material for submission to a University or other body, or any other written or recorded work produced during or as a result of my research using the above collection. I will submit all such material to the Comann Eachdraidh in good time.

Signed:

Name in capitals:

Date:

**5. For Comann Eachdraidh administration purposes only**

**Access approved by:**

**Date approved:**

**Any remaining restrictions:**

**Review Date:**

**Copies to (please delete as applicable): Researcher / Comann Eachdraidh**

*The information you give about your research will be used to decide whether we accept that your processing of the data will be acceptable under the Data Protection Act 1998.*

*The data you supply about yourself will be retained by the Comann Eachdraidh as proof of your undertaking to comply with the Data Protection Act.*

