1. Purpose

In today's school district environment, employees and students create and maintain an increasing portion of their records using computers. Electronic records must be managed alongside traditional records to ensure compliance with state and federal regulations and to preserve institutional history.

The purpose of this policy is to inform all school district employees of the requirements and responsibilities for management and disposition of electronic records.

2. Authority

The electronic records retention policy set forth herein applies to all employees of the school district and applies to all electronic records that are made or received in the transaction of the school district or in the operations of the school district.

3. Definitions

The term electronic record means any record that is created, received, maintained or stored on school district workstations or servers, flash drives, CD's, archival or backup drives or media. Examples include, but are not limited to:

1. Electronic mail (e-mail).

2. Word processing documents, spreadsheets, power points, photo story.

3. Databases, videos, pod casts, vod casts, voice mail.

The term Document Custodian shall mean the originator of an email message or the creator of any other electronic document, if that person is a school district employee, School Board member, contractor or agent (collectively “district personnel”); otherwise it is the school district employee to whom the message is addressed or to whom the electronic document is sent. If the record is transferred, then that person becomes the Document Custodian.
Where multiple school district employees are the recipient of an electronic document from a non-district personnel, the individual to whom the document is addressed shall forward or otherwise transfer the document to the individual with primary responsibility over the subject of the document on a day-to-day basis, who will then be the Document Custodian, as above.

For electronic documents relating to district personnel’s official role within the district that originate outside the district and are transmitted to district personnel who are not school district employees, the recipients of such electronic records shall forward a copy of the electronic document to the school district employee with primary responsibility over the topic of the electronic document or, where the nonschool district employee has that primary responsibility, to a designated member of the district administration for retention.

Where district personnel who are not school district employees are the Document Custodians of electronic documents relating to that district personnel’s official role within the district, such district personnel shall maintain such electronic documents in a manner and using such a medium that permits the Technology Director to access and archive those documents. Where these individuals maintain such electronic documents off-site and/or using a medium otherwise inaccessible to the Technology Director, such individuals shall periodically transfer copies of these documents to appropriate district employees for disaster recovery storage.

No school district employee shall maintain electronic documents of the district on machines other than those permitted by the Technology Director.

Official records retention and disposition schedules are the general and departmental program schedules that have been approved by the Superintendent or his/her designee.

4. Guidelines

General Requirements

Maintenance and disposal of electronic records, as determined by the content, is the responsibility of the Document Custodian and must be in accordance with guidelines established by the Board of School Directors and also in compliance with approved records retention and disposition schedules. Failure to properly maintain electronic records may expose the school district and individuals to legal risks.

The Technology Director is responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy and with the public records act. This individual will ensure the necessary actions take place to be in compliance with this policy through coordination with the building principal or other appropriate administrator.
When an employee leaves the school district or is transferred to a different building, the immediate supervisor, in conjunction with the Technology Director, is responsible for designating a new custodian and ensuring that records in the separating employee's possession are properly transferred to the new custodian.

The Technology Director is responsible for the transfer of the electronic records to the new custodian before the accounts are scheduled to be deleted.

Each employee is responsible for periodically reviewing any application files, documents, spreadsheets, databases or other electronic records to ensure the timely deletion of records that are no longer needed to conduct school district business, which will allow adequate storage space on school district servers. Document custodians shall also be responsible for deletion of documents on any records retention or destruction schedule set by the Board.

**Electronic Mail**

Work-related email is a school district record and must be treated as such. Email that does not meet the definition of a public record, e.g., personal email or junk email, should be deleted immediately from the email user’s account. Use of the email system is reserved for school district purposes and does not include use for personal purposes. However, all email will be preserved by the archiving server pending final deletion at the end of the retention period.

**Audio Records**

Voice mail and other electronically recorded audio files will be disposed of in a manner consistent with other electronic files. In accordance with applicable law, including but not limited to Pennsylvania's wiretapping laws, the school district reserves the right to record telephone conversations for safety, security and quality control purposes.

Spring-Ford Area School District email servers are NOT intended for long-term records retention. The school district does utilize an archival server for long-term records retention. Email records for faculty, administration, and staff will be retained for a period of twenty-four (24) months and then deleted from the archive servers except as provided for under Litigation Holds. Email records for students will be retained until graduation or until no longer attending our district for educational purposes except as provided for under Litigation Holds.

As a clerical function with respect to non-email electronic documents, employees are directed to archive as appropriate or delete files that are older than twenty-four (24) months. Employees choosing to archive documents older than twenty-four (24) months shall do so using a medium other than district online storage spaces.
## Instant Messaging

The school district does not maintain any records relating to the use of instant messaging by individuals.

## Backup Files

Information Technology Services performs a backup on a regular schedule of the email and electronic files stored on servers for disaster recovery. These backups are to be used for system restoration purposes only. The Technology Director or the technology staff is not the Document Custodian of messages or records, which may be included in such backups.

## Litigation Holds

When litigation against the school district or its employees is filed or threatened, the law imposes a duty upon the school district to preserve all documents and records that pertain to the issues. As soon as the Superintendent is made aware of pending or threatened litigation, a litigation hold directive will be issued to the Document Custodians. The litigation hold directive overrides any records retention schedule that may have otherwise called for the transfer, disposal or destruction of the relevant documents, until the hold has been cleared by the Superintendent after consultation with the solicitor. Email and computer accounts of separated employees that have been placed on a litigation hold will be maintained by the Technology Director until the hold is released. No employee who has been notified of a litigation hold may alter or delete an electronic record that falls within the scope of that hold. Violation of the hold may subject the individual to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal, as well as personal liability for civil and/or criminal sanctions by the courts or law enforcement agencies.

## Security Of Electronic Records

The school district shall implement and maintain an effective records security program that incorporates the following:

1. Ensure that only authorized personnel have access to electronic records.

2. Provide for backup and recovery of electronic records to protect against information loss. Documented disaster recovery plans and procedures shall be established for all electronic records systems by the Technology Director. Disaster recovery plans and procedures must be reviewed and updated at least annually.
3. Ensure school district personnel are trained to safeguard sensitive or classified electronic information.

4. Minimize the risk of unauthorized alteration or erasure of electronic records.

**Enforcement**

**Pol. 317, 417, 517**

Failure to comply with the *Electronic Records Retention Policy* and associated guidelines and procedures will result in disciplinary action and penalties applicable by law.

5. **Delegation of Responsibility**

**SC 433**

This policy will be reviewed periodically by the Technology Director in cooperation with other administrators to ensure the policy remains current with the evolving technology structure of the school district.

**References:**

School Code – 24 P.S. Sec. 433, 518

Right-to-Know Law – 65 P.S. Sec. 67.101 et seq.

Board Policy – 317, 417, 517, 801