

Parish Archives and File Management

Policy No. 801

Parish records are the documentary memory of the work and activities parishioners have accomplished in their community as good and faithful stewards of the Church. These records have administrative, business, legal, and historical value and must be managed in a manner that ensures their care, long-term preservation and continued access.

Policy Statement: Each parish is to set up and maintain a file management and archival program to organize, classify, preserve, and make accessible documents of enduring value.

Intent of Policy: To satisfy the requirements in the *Code of Canon Law* that “in each parish there is to be an archive” for the records of the parish and that the “parish priest is to take care that they do not fall into unauthorized hands” (c. 535, §4).

Definition: **Record:** any recorded information regardless of format, made or received in the course of individual or institutional activity and kept either for action, as evidence or for reference.

Parish records include, but are not limited to:

- sacramental registers
- minutes of meetings
- correspondence
- financial records
- parish bulletins
- photographs

Procedure:

1. Appoint or designate at least one staff member to be responsible for Parish Archives and File Management.
2. Attend a workshop presented by the archdiocesan Archivist where policies regarding Parish Archives and File Management will be introduced and explained.
3. Maintain all parish records in a secure environment, particularly records of a confidential or privileged nature, in accordance with the Code of Canon Law, the Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA) and the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA).
4. Refer to the Parish Archives and File Management Guide – Appendix 801A and the Retention Schedule for Parish Files - Appendix 801B for detailed information about the organization, classification, storage, retention, disposition, and long-term preservation of parish records.

5. Do not destroy or retain records longer than prescribed by the Retention Schedule (Appendix 801B), except with prior approval of the Chancellor or archdiocesan Archivist.
6. Schedule a time for the archdiocesan Archivist to visit the parish and assist in the establishment of an Archives and File Management program.
7. Consult the archdiocesan Archivist for information and direction in all matters concerning parish records and files.

Exception: Parish Twinned/Clustered or Merged – See Policy No. 1100

Refer to Appendix:

801A Parish Archives and File Management Guide
801B Retention Schedule for Parish Files

