

The Northwest School Archive and
The Special Collections of The Northwest School

ACCESS POLICY

The Northwest Archive and The Special Collection of The Northwest School aim to preserve and make accessible records of enduring value to the history of the school. Researchers should contact the archivist for access to The Northwest School Archive or The Special Collections of The Northwest School. Requests for access will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

The archivist is responsible for supervising access to the restricted and closed records, operating in compliance with donor agreements and within the guidelines of The Northwest School records retention policy. Records will be made available in accordance with the following guidelines:

Open Records are those that may be made available to The Northwest School community as well as persons not affiliated with The Northwest School. Included in this category are records originally intended for public circulation and other materials approved for public release, as well as records that have exceeded certain age requirements (per records retention schedule).

Restricted Records are those that, though not open to the public, may be made available to outside researchers on a case-by-case basis. The archivist will determine the suitability of permitting access to outside researchers, after consulting with the Director of Communications. Members of The Northwest School community who are conducting research on their own for a book or other personal project will be considered as outside researchers and must follow the same procedure as outside researchers for gaining access to restricted records.

Closed Records are those that, for a specified period of time, are available only to the office of record and to the archives staff. Individual exceptions may be made only through expressed permission granted by the Board of Trustees.

Unless otherwise noted below, Northwest School institutional records that were not intended for public release are classified as Restricted from the time they are accessioned into the archive until at least 10 years after their creation. Guidelines for other access classifications of archival records include:

- Head of School records – closed for 20 years after the date of creation. Restricted for an additional 20 years.
- Minutes of the Board of Trustees (formerly, Board of Directors) are closed for 50 years.
- Oral history interviews and transcripts – evaluated on a case-by-case basis and in compliance with the oral history transfer agreement between the school and the interviewee. All interviews that have not been finalized and processed are Closed. Most interviews will be available for research from the time of the transfer agreement. If the school determines that an interview contains legally sensitive or personally private information, interviews may be designated as Closed or Restricted for up to 100 years.
- Records of such nature that their disclosure would constitute an invasion of personal privacy or violation of confidentiality will be closed for 100 years.
- Records that are marked confidential or secret – closed for 50 years.

- Records that are deemed to be sensitive: closed for 20 years and Restricted for a minimum of an additional 20 years.
- Unprocessed records and processed records that have not yet been reviewed and classified for access purposes are Closed.

Other records may be classified as Closed or Restricted as deemed necessary by the archivist. The reasons for closing or restricting the records will be recorded in the Administrative Notes section of the database record.

Permission to examine records is not an authorization to publish them. Permission to publish any work using records from The Northwest School Archive or The Special Collections of The Northwest School must be obtained from the Director of Communications in writing prior to publication.

In order to ensure the physical integrity of the collections, onsite access to Archives and the Special Collections holdings will be granted only under the supervision of the Archive staff. The Director of Communications must approve any exceptions to this policy.

CONDITIONS of ACCESS

1. Archives staff will determine which records may be examined by the researcher, after consultation with the Director of Communications.
2. Materials may not be removed from the area designated for review of the archival materials.
3. Researchers may bring only those materials needed for research to the Archives research area. Bags and coats will be stored outside of the research area. Only PENCILS are to be used for taking notes.
4. No record will be marked, defaced or mutilated in any way. Post-its or other adhesive notes will not be used on the archival materials.
5. Records must be kept in the order in which they are received, even when no meaningful order is apparent.
6. All records will be handled gently and with care.
7. Eating, drinking, and smoking are prohibited the area designated for review of the archival records.
8. Photocopying will be considered when the duplication can be done without injury to the material and the request does not violate copyright/deed of gift restrictions. The photocopy must not be further reproduced.
9. Capturing images of materials using a digital camera of any sort will be considered when the request does not violate copyright/deed of gift restrictions. The image must not be further reproduced.