SAMPLE RECORDS CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM FOR PAPER AND ELECTRONIC RECORDS OF PARISH OFFICES

OF THE

ROMAN CATHOLIC EPISCOPAL CORPORATION FOR THE DIOCESE OF TORONTO, IN CANADA

Archives of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Toronto (ARCAT)
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Introduction

The records classification system used by the Archdiocese of Toronto is an alpha classified subject system. There are three divisions within the subject record keeping system:

1. Major Subjects = Function
2. Primary Subjects = Activities/Record Series
3. Secondary Subjects = Specific file requirements/file titles

Major Subjects

This first level of subject classification relates to the major functional areas of communication and recordkeeping for the parish offices. They do not necessarily relate to the operating departments of the Archdiocese of Toronto.

The eight Major subject headings for the parishes of the Archdiocese include the following categories:

- ADMINISTRATION
- BUILDING MAINTENANCE/OPERATIONS
- CEMETERY RECORDS
- FINANCE AND ACCOUNTING
- LEGAL
- PERSONNEL
- PUBLIC RELATIONS/COMMUNICATIONS
- WRITINGS/SPEECHES

Primary Subjects

The second level of subject classification relates to the primary record series found under each of the major subject headings. Examples:

ADMINISTRATION: Administrative Committees and Councils
ADMINISTRATION: Groups and Programs

Secondary Subjects

This level of subject classification relates to a second descriptive breakdown of a primary record series. Refer to the Sample Records Classification System for clarification. Examples:

ADMINISTRATION: Administrative Committees and Councils: Building Committee
ADMINISTRATION: Groups and Programs: Rosary Group

Tertiary Subjects

This level of subject classification relates specifically to the file folder title at its most detailed level. It is the third descriptive breakdown of the primary record series. Examples:

ADMINISTRATION: Administrative Committees and Councils: Building Committee: Minutes of Meetings
ADMINISTRATION: Groups and Programs: Rosary Group: Schedule

Electronic Records

Electronic record keeping parallels the classified subject system designed for the parishes of the Archdiocese. For example:

1. Major Subjects   =   Directories
2. Primary Subjects   =   Subdirectories
3. Secondary Subjects   =   Files

File Classifications

The following Sample Records Classification System identifies the Major Subject Headings to be used in the classification of records. Primary Subject Headings, Secondary Subject Headings and in some cases, Tertiary Subject Headings, are listed as a means to standardize file headings in the workplace.

Every parish office will have Secondary Subject Headings under ADMINISTRATION that reflect the unique workings of that particular parish. These administrative files provide a record and source of information concerning the administration and responsibilities of that particular parish and require a filing system specific to the needs of the parish.

Please note that bound volumes of either sacramental registers or historical information should not be physically stored with the parish files. They should be stored separately in a secure place, lying flat either on a shelf of the parish safe or locked in a filing cabinet drawer. This will reduce unnecessary wear and tear and extend the life of these most valuable records. Within the following Sample Records Classification System you will find some suggestions of how to indicate that these are located elsewhere, while keeping them in your File List.

Sample Records Classification System

Note: The following Records Classification System is an example only and does not include every type of file your parish has in its office. The intention is for you to use the Major Subject Headings and Primary Subject Headings in your parish files and to use the guidance offered here to create Secondary or Tertiary Subject Headings that relate to the needs of your particular parish office.

ADMINISTRATION

Administrative Committees and Councils
(Includes all ongoing committees and councils that serve an administrative purpose within your parish.)
- Building Committee
- Collection Counters
- Finance Council
- Parish Council
- Volunteer Screening Program Committee

Agencies/Committees/Offices
(Includes all departments, offices, ongoing commissions and committees, institutions, or any subdivision thereof owned and/or operated by the Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation for the Diocese of Toronto, in Canada (RCEC) but excludes educational institutions such as St. Augustine's Seminary see Secondary Heading: Education. Please note that when agencies, offices or committees are closed, merged or restructured you many simply rename the folder. If the change involves several offices, start a new file and place a note in the old files of where to look for and/or place documents relating to that function/office after a certain date.)
- Accounting and Finance
- Archdiocesan Building Committee
- Archives of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Toronto (ARCAT)
- Catechesis of the Good Shepherd
- Catholic Cemeteries
- Catholic Charities
- Catholic Family Services
- Catholic Register
- Diaconate Office
- Ecumenism and Interfaith Affairs Office
- Human Resources
- Information Systems
- Liaison for Catholic Education
- Marriage Preparation and Family Life
- Office of Catholic Youth (OCY)
- Office of Formation for Discipleship
- Office of Public Relations and Communications

- Office for Refugees
- Pastoral Mission Fund
- Planning, Properties and Housing Office
- Priests' Personnel Office
- Priests' Seminar Committee
- Research
- ShareLife
- Sacred Architecture Committee
- Serra House
- Development Office
- Supply and Services
- Vocations Office
- Volunteer Screening

Associations/Organizations

(Includes organizations, associations, societies and federations which exist in your parish or to which staff belong or with which they communicate in the course of their duties. Files may include agendas, minutes, and correspondence, notices and reports.)
- Covenant House
- Catholic Woman's League
    - Parish CWL
    - Toronto Archdiocesan Council
    - Ontario Provincial Council
- Knights of Columbus
    - Local Council (give the name and number of the local council)
    - Ontario State Council
- Legion of Mary
- St. Vincent de Paul Society

Chancery

(Please note that when bishops leave the diocese you close the file on that bishop and move it to the semi-active files. Do not dispose of the file, as you may still need to refer to it. When a new bishop is appointed to the diocese open a new file based on the guide below.)
- Archbishop's Office: Most. Rev. Thomas Collins
- Archbishop Emeritus of Toronto: Aloysius Cardinal Ambrozic
- Archdiocesan Liaison with the Catholic Faculties of Theology
- Bishop Emeritus: Most Rev. M. Pearse Lacey
- Chancellor of Spiritual Affairs
    - Annual Spiritual Statistics Reports
    - Sacraments
        - Baptism
        - Confirmation
        - Eucharist
        - Reconciliation

- ▪ Orders
- Chancellor of Temporal Affairs
- Council of Priests
  - Pastoral Zone
    - ▪ Zone Meetings
- Diocesan Special Collections
- Episcopal Board
- Judicial Vicar
- Regional Bishop's Office, Central Pastoral Region: Most Rev. William McGrattan
- Regional Bishop's Office, Eastern Pastoral Region: Most Rev. Vincent Nguyen
- Regional Bishop's Office, Northern Pastoral Region: Most Rev. Peter J. Hundt
- Regional Bishop's Office, Western Pastoral Region: Most Rev. John A. Boissonneau
- Toronto Regional Marriage Tribunal
- Vicar for Christian Education
- Vicar for Deacons
- Vicar for Liturgy
- Vicar for Religious
- Vicar for the Ethnic Apostolate
- Vicar for the Italian Faithful

Education
- All Saints Catholic Elementary School (list all affiliated individual schools under the name of the school.)
- Associations
- Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board
- General
- High School Chaplaincies
- School Trustees
- Seminaries
- Toronto Catholic District School Board
- Universities/Colleges

Events
　　(Includes files and records relating to the administration of events sponsored by the parish or affecting the church. Files may include correspondence, reports, data, etc. gathered to document aspects of the event/project.)
- World Youth Day

General
- Announcement book
- Census Records/Registration cards
- Correspondence (use for correspondence generally about the parish and that does not fit into any other primary or secondary heading.)

- Mass Attendance Record
- Parish History File
- Pew Rents Record Book (Located on Shelf 3 in Parish Office Storage Cupboard)

Government
　　　(Includes records relating to different levels of government. Files may include correspondence regarding government legislation; include the Bill Number in file titles. Please note that information about School Trustees falls under Education.)
- Federal Government
    - Statistics Canada
        - 2011 Census
- Provincial Government
    - Harmonized Sales Tax
- Municipal Government
    - Mayor's Office

Groups and Programs
　　　(Includes all ongoing parish groups and programs that serve an informative, outreach or social purpose within your parish, but that are not categorized as Ministries.)
- Bazaar Committee
- Bereavement Support Groups
- Bible Study
- Courses/Programs
- Foodbank
- Language/Ethnic Groups
- Prayer Groups
- Refugee Committee
- Rosary Group
- Seniors Group

Hospitals/Health Care
　　(Includes records concerning hospitals.)
- Hospital Chaplains

Ministries
- Altar Guild
- Altar Servers
- Children's Ministry
- Choirs
- Decorating Committee
- Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist
- Ministry of Hospitality
- Ministry of the Sick
- Ministry of the Word
- Music Ministry

- Youth Ministry

Other Parishes
- St. Finbar's Parish, Toronto
  - General Correspondence
  - Proposed Boundary Changes

Religious Institutes
(Filed alphabetically under the subdivisions of Male or Female.)

Sacramental Preparation Programs
- Marriage Preparation Course
- RCIA
- RCIC

Sacramental Records
(Please note that the actual Sacramental Registers should not be physically kept with the parish files. They should be stored in a secure place, lying flat either on a shelf of the parish safe or in a drawer of a locked filing cabinet.)
- Annulment Case Files
- Baptism Register (Located in Parish Safe, upper shelf)
  - Supporting Documents File (includes adoption papers, copies of Ontario Birth Certificates, etc. – make sure to indicate which register the file is for – i.e. Baptism Register Vol. 3 May 13, 1992 to February 27, 2001: Supporting Documents)
- Dispensations
- First Communion Register (Located in locked Parish filing cabinet, middle drawer)
- Confirmation Register (Located in Filing Cabinet #3, Drawer 2)
- Death Register (Located in Office Closet, Shelf #4)
- Marriage Case Files
- Marriage Register (Located in File Room, West Wall, Shelf #3)
- Professions of Faith
- Sick Calls Register

Vatican
- Apostolic Nunciature
- Apostolic Penitentiary
- Benedict XVI
- Congregation for the Causes of Saints
- Congregation for the Clergy
- Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith
- John Paul II
- Papal Charities

- Pontifical Commission for the Conservation of the Church's Patrimony of Art and History
- Pontifical Council for the Laity

BUILDING MAINTENANCE/OPERATIONS
- Architectural drawings
- Architectural specifications
- Equipment Maintenance
    - (Includes contracts and agreements not under corporate seal, such as equipment rental and service contracts.)
- Computer Programs/Systems
- Inspections
- Joint Health and Safety Committee
    - (Includes correspondence, reports, certification of members.)
- Maintenance/Renovations
- Smoking Bylaws
- Supplies and Services
    - (Includes supply requisitions and monthly reports.)
- Tenders/Quotations
    - (Includes records regarding quotations and tenders obtained from suppliers of goods and services, such as office supplies, construction and pest control. Includes requests for proposal or quotations, specifications, architect's renderings, invitations to tender, tender submissions, bid and performance bonds, and all documentation regarding the selection process.)

CEMETERY RECORDS

(This Major Subject Heading is only to be used by parishes that operate a cemetery on their property.)
- Burial Cards
- Burial Log
- Burial Records
- Cemetery Account Cards
- Cemetery Annual Reports
- Cemetery Board of Trustees Minutes
- Cemetery Contracts/Agreements
- Cemetery General Ledger
- Cemetery Lot cards
- Cemetery Lot Maps
- Cemetery Rules and Regulations

FINANCE AND ACCOUNTING
- Accounts Payable/Operating Disbursements

- o (Includes records documenting funds payable by the parish, such as legal fees, vendor transaction listings, revenue cheque vouchers, cheque requisitions, gas, hydro, phone bills.)
- Accounts Payable/Subscriptions
- Accounts Receivable
  - o (Includes records documenting accounts owed to the parish.)
- Annual Financial Reports
- Audits
  - o (Includes records regarding internal and external financial audits of accounts.)
- Banking
  - o (Includes records regarding banking transactions and relationships with banks. Includes bank statements, bank reconciliations, deposit records, cancelled cheques, cheque stubs, and money order rates.)
- Bequests and Estates
  - o (Bequests and estates arranged in alphabetical order with appropriate designations O=Open, C=Closed, A=Active.)
- Bingo, Lottery, Raffle Records
- Budgets
  - o (Includes both capital and operating administrative budgets and all working notes.)
- Building Fund Account Book
- Capital Projects Financing/Progress Reports
  - o (Includes records relating to the financing of capital projects. Includes quarterly reports, working papers, building monthly costs, capital payment vouchers, approvals, costing, capital expenditure forecasts, correspondence with architects and contractors.)
- Charities
  - o (Includes parish returns, information returns, legislation, correspondence, Archbishop's Fund, registration applications.)
- Donations
- Employee Expenses
  - o (Includes expenses submitted by employees for reimbursement.)
- Financial Statements
  - o (Includes the balance sheet, income statement, statement of source, application of funds and other audited financial statements.)
- Financial Working Papers
  - o (Includes all drafts, calculations, and other working papers associated with the development of financial statements.)
- General Ledger
  - o (Includes all records in the books of original entry, whether maintained in book format or as a computer report.)
- Investments
- Journal Vouchers

- o (Includes completed journal voucher forms, input forms, and all background documentation used to substantiate journal entries.)
- Leasing
  - o (Includes leasing of automobiles but excludes property leasing.)
- Loan Funds/Trust Funds/Foundations
- Pension Fund Information
- Petty Cash
  - o (Includes records relating to the office petty cash accounts; includes disbursements and memos.)
- Purchase Orders
  - o (Includes purchase orders and blanket orders authorizing the procurement of goods and services.)
- Purchase Requisitions
  - o (Includes purchase requisitions received, copies retained for follow-up, and related correspondence.)
- Record of contributions/tithes
- Subsidiary Ledgers, Registers and Journals
  - o (Includes all subsidiary ledgers, registers and journals such as Payment and Receipt Journals, Payroll Registers, and Purchase Order Registers. Also includes year end adjustments.)
- Taxation
  - o (Includes any and all records documenting taxation and taxes.)

LEGAL
- Accident/Incident Reports
  - o (Includes reports of accidents that occurred on parish premises to or by employees or members of the general public.)
- Articles of Incorporation
- Contracts and Agreements: Simple
  - o (Includes contracts and agreements not under corporate seal, such as vehicle lease and purchase agreements; also includes records which substantiate the fulfilment of the agreement.)
- Contracts and Agreements: Under Seal
  - o (Includes contracts and agreements under Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation for the Diocese of Toronto, in Canada (RCEC) seal or parish seal.)
- General
  - o (Includes records regarding legal affairs which cannot be classified elsewhere. Use only if no other heading is available.)
- Insurance
  - o (Includes records regarding parish insurance liabilities such as agents' and adjusters' premiums, policies, certificates and appraisals, insurance inspection reports and general correspondence.)
- Insurance Claims/Litigation

- o (Includes all liability claims made by employees and other parties against the parish; also includes documentation regarding all litigation cases against or by the parish.)
- Legislation
  - o (Includes single copies of Acts, Regulations, Bills, Judgements relevant to parish activities; includes correspondence, discussion papers, legal documents concerning Acts, Regulations, Bills, Judgements and amendments to them.)
- Loan Files
- Mortgages
  - o (Includes documentation on Mortgages Receivable and Payable.)
- Property/Deeds
  - o (Includes deeds for all parish owned property; also includes land purchase agreements, and development agreements.)
- Property Leasing (Rental)
- Property Transactions
  - o (Includes legal documents, plans, correspondence, reports, and backup documentation relating to the acquisition, lease or sale of land by RCEC or the parish and property leases; includes property appraisals, evaluations and quotes concerning land owned by the parish or under consideration for purchase.)

PERSONNEL
- Benefits
  - o (Includes brochures, rates, quotes, correspondence and explanatory documents regarding benefits offered or under consideration.)
- Deacon Personnel
  - o (Includes records regarding the ordained Permanent Deacons of the Archdiocese of Toronto.)
- Employee Records
  - o Lay Employees
    - ▪ (Includes records regarding employment history of lay employees, active, inactive/retired, terminated.)
- Employment Benefits
- Employment Standards
- General
  - o (Includes records regarding personnel matters which cannot be classified elsewhere. Use only if no other heading is available.)
- Government Legislation
- Job Descriptions
  - o (Includes job descriptions and specifications as well as background information used in their preparation or amendment. Also includes positions of responsibility.)
- Mutual Benefit Fund
- Pay Equity

- o (Includes records regarding the establishment and implementation of RCEC Pay Equity plan. Records include background information, consultant information, questionnaires, committee proceedings, pay equity management files, interview documentation and job evaluation plans. Includes all correspondence and reports.)
- Payroll
  - o (Includes all records of payments of salary, wages, and deductions to employees.)
- Payroll Administration
- Pension Contributions
- Priests' Personnel
  - o (Includes records of the active and inactive priests who have served at the parish.)
- Professional Development Process (PDP)
  - o Employee Handbook
- Recruitment
  - o (Includes records regarding the recruitment of staff. Includes job postings, copies of advertisements, competitions, applications, resumes and applicant evaluations.)
- Shepherd's Trust
- Staff Development
  - o (Includes records regarding courses and conferences for staff development.)
- Vacation Entitlement
  - o (Includes records regarding employee vacations. Records include requests, schedules, and correspondence.)

PUBLIC RELATIONS/COMMUNICATIONS
- Advertising
  - o (Includes correspondence with marketing, advertising, and other agencies.)
- Complaints and Commendations
  - o (Includes complaints and commendations received from and responses to the general public.)
- Film/Video Production
  - o (Includes correspondence regarding filming in churches; documentation and promotional information regarding video production.)
- General
  - o (Includes records regarding communications/public relations which cannot be classified elsewhere. Use this heading only if no other subject heading is available.)
- Media Relations/News Releases
  - o (Includes records regarding the parish's relations with the various media or the Office of PR & Communications; includes press releases and information releases not associated with a larger record group.)
- News Clippings

- o (Includes clippings, notices of news items from newspapers, magazines and other external publications regarding the parish and/or the Archdiocese of Toronto)
- Photographs
  - o (Includes photographs of priests and officials, slides, videos and audiotapes.)
- Publications
  - o (Includes publications produced or collected by the parish.)
  - o Parish Anniversary books or booklets
  - o Parish Bulletins/Newsletters
- Website

WRITINGS/SPEECHES
- Homilies and Talks

SUBJECT/REFERENCE
Drop files used for administrative purposes, alphabetically arranged by subject. May contain brochures, newspaper clippings, etc. usually for reference only.

Official and Transitory Records Defined

Official Records

Many records document important functions of the Church. Some provide important evidence of parish decisions and actions, other records are necessary to meet legal, financial and other needs. Decisions about their retention, transfer or destruction are made through the Records Retention Scheduling process, which is the subject of another document.

Here are a few things to keep in mind when deciding if something is an official record:

- **Annotated Copies:** If an information copy of a document has been annotated to reflect significant input or for other business purposes, it should be saved and scheduled with other records related to the same activity or function.
- **Official Copies:** If a distributed document originated from your parish or committee, then yours will be considered the official copy of the record. Retain and schedule the original with other related records, discard other information copies when no longer needed.
- **Committee Records:** Committees and commissions should appoint a secretary to keep and maintain official copies of minutes and other records. Information copies distributed to committee members and other parties may be safely discarded. Ongoing access to the records can be provided directly by the secretary.
- **Publications:** Publications and directories produced by or originating from your parish or committee will be considered the official copy. For any other publications, please contact the Archives Department to ensure that a master set is being retained.

Transitory or Non-Records

Transitory records are documents and files you can discard as soon as you've finished with them. Here are some common types of transitory records:

- Miscellaneous notices and memoranda, such as "To All Staff", notices of holidays or special events, or minor information items concerning routine administrative matters or other minor issues not pertaining directly to your office;
- Information copies of widely distributed materials, such as committee minutes, agendas, newsletters;
- Preliminary drafts of letters, memoranda, or reports, and other informal notes which do not represent significant steps in the preparation of a final document, and which do not record decisions;
- Duplicate copies of documents which are retained only for convenience or future distribution (i.e. extra photocopies, duplicate copies of databases, etc.);
- Publications, such as published reports, administration manuals, telephone directories, catalogues, pamphlets, or periodicals;
- Routine items such as telephone messages, transmittal notes, action slips and similar short-lived material that does not contain procedural or policy matters applicable to the receiving office.

Preparing Records for Filing

Sorting
Sort records into three groups:
  a) records to be retained;
  b) records requiring classification;
  c) records requiring refiling.

Retention
  As a rule the *originating office* is responsible for retaining the record. See the section above on Official Records for clarification. Distributed copies should be destroyed once they have served their usefulness.
  For all correspondence, reports, minutes, etc., produced in the parish office, an official file copy must be produced. If it is a photocopy of the original, the document should be stamped "file copy".

Classifying Records
  Mark in pencil at top right hand corner of the page what file the document should be placed in.
  Classify these documents by assigning major, primary and secondary subject headings following procedure outlined in the Sample Records Classification System.

Refiling Records
  Ensure that records being refiled are complete with relevant pages, attachments and enclosures.

Filing Rules
  1. Arrange records in chronological order with the latest date on top.
  2. Use paper clips, fasteners and elastics only if absolutely necessary.
  3. Remove self-sticking or "Post-it" notes from documents before filing.
  4. Follow the "Rule of Five": five pieces of paper on the same primary subject justify a subdivision and their own file folder.
  5. Set up files with chronological breaks. Each file should be broken up by year.
  6. File active records on centre shelves where they are easier to reach.
  7. File less active materials on the less accessible bottom shelf.

Alphabetical Filing Rules

The following alphabetical filing rules will assist in providing consistency in filing.

1. **Surname First**
   A person's name should be written in the following order on a file: Surname, First Name and Middle Name. The same rule applies to initials. Examples:
   - de Barra, Seamus Paul
   - Hearns, Gillian H.

2. **Abbreviations**
   Arrange abbreviations as if spelled in full. Examples:
   - St. Agnes
   - Saint Ambrose
   - St. Bernadette

3. **Nicknames**
   Do not use nicknames for filing unless they are the person's legal names.

4. **Surnames with Prefixes**
   A surname with a prefix is filed as if it were all one word. This includes articles and prepositions which are written as part of the surname. Examples:
   - Da Sousa
   - Delaney
   - De Souza
   - D'Souza
   Surnames which have the prefix "Mc" and Mac" are filed as if it were all one word. Examples:
   - MacDonald
   - MacLean
   - Maxwell
   - McDonald

5. **Punctuation**
   Ignore all punctuation when alphabetizing. This includes periods, commas, dashes, hyphens, apostrophes, etc. Hyphenated words are considered one unit.

6. **Numbers**
   Arabic numbers and roman numerals are filed sequentially before alphabetic characters. All Arabic numbers precede all roman numerals.

7. **Acronyms**
   Acronyms and radio and television stations' call letters are filed as one unit.

8. **Individual Name/Company Name**
   Company names which consist of an individual's name should be indexed and filed surname first unless the name is so well known that this would cause confusion, i.e. Laura Secord.

9. **Initials**
   Company names beginning with initials are filed before all other names which fall under the same letter.

File Maintenance

File Listings
Each parish office is responsible for maintaining a current listing of active files. These lists should be updated annually and/or every time a new file is created. The following procedures should be adhered to:

1. List all active files in the order that they appear in each filing cabinet.
2. Include Sacramental Registers and any other bound volumes in the File List, but make a note of the separate storage location on the File List.
3. Place a copy of the file listing in the cabinet. This will ensure easy access by all staff.
4. As each new file is created, add it to the list.
5. As each file is permanently removed from the system, through approved transfer or destruction, delete it from the list.
6. Date each revised version of the file listing. Destroy old listings and revise all active copies.

Electronic Records
1. Reorganize electronic records to correspond with the filing system used for paper records.
2. Review records stored on local individual drives, networked drives and any external storage media (USB sticks, DVDs, CDs, etc.). Records stored on external storage media will require migration due to software obsolescence. If these records must be kept, recopy to new media and properly label them with a description and a creation date/review date/disposal date.