



ST. HUGH'S COLLEGE, OXFORD

ARCHIVE ACCESS POLICY

Date Policy Ratified by Governing Body: 18 June 2025

Author/Responsible Officer: Matthew Chipping, Archivist

Date to be reviewed by: 18 June 2027

Archive Access Policy

Introduction

The St Hugh's College Archive exists to preserve the College's historical record and to ensure that information is available to support both external research and the College's own activities and decision-making processes. Much of the collection is generally available, by appointment with the College Archivist; but some categories of material are closed or restricted due to issues of legislation, confidentiality, owner rights, copyright or conservation.

There is no charge for access to the collection.

This policy applies to the use of archival records for external research purposes. Access to any part of the collection will be provided to current members of the College's Governing Body, College employees or other persons authorised by the Governing Body who have a legitimate operational requirement for access to the data. Those given access to records for administrative purposes must comply with relevant legislation, as specified below, as well as any College requirements relating to confidentiality.

Personal Data

Access to information in the archive is provided in accordance with the guidance laid out in the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018, as set out in the College's Privacy Notice.

All requests for access to material covered by Data Protection Legislation will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Archivist in conjunction with the College's Data Protection Officer and other relevant parties where appropriate.

The following conditions relate to the access of archive material under Data Protection Legislation:

- Material containing personal data may be closed to third party access for the lifetime of the individual (assumed to be a maximum of 100 years). In this event, efforts will be made, where possible, to make available the unrestricted part of the record or the unrestricted information contained therein.
- Access to personal data may be granted on condition that the researcher signs a form of undertaking prior to the consultation of records that they will abide by the terms of the UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act and any other relevant legislation. In particular they must agree to comply with the relevant conditions of access: that any information they obtain from the archive will not be used to support measures or decisions with respect to living individuals, and that it will not cause or be likely to cause substantial damage or substantial distress to any individual who is the subject of the data who is still alive, or likely to be alive. Researchers should undertake to anonymise any personal data used.
- Personal data is defined as information relating to a living, identifiable individual. It can include information such as their name, contact details, education history and other information about them that the College has processed.

Owner Rights

In some cases, material that has been deposited in the archive may be subject to access restrictions as a condition of the agreement made between the depositor and the College. In this case, access will only be permitted by written agreement from the depositor or the depositor's successor in title.

Conservation

The Archivist reserves the right to restrict access to any material that is deemed too fragile or damaged to be made available. Where surrogates exist, these may be made available instead.

Access to Specific Record Types

- **College Administrative Records**

Administrative records more than 20 years old are generally available unless they contain sensitive personal information that requires restriction under UK General Data Protection Regulation (see section 'Personal Data' above). In this event, efforts will be made, where possible, to make available the unrestricted part of the record or the unrestricted information contained therein.

Administrative records less than 20 years old will not automatically be made available to external researchers but application may be made to the Archivist for access, detailing the background to the request. This will then be passed to the Bursar or the Library and Archive Fellow, representing Governing Body, for a decision. If the request relates to very recent data that is still retained by the originating department, then the request will be passed on to them.

In all cases, permission must be sought before directly quoting from College records. Application should be made to the Archivist who will then seek permission from the Bursar or the Library and Archive Fellow, representing Governing Body.

- **Head Hospital Archive**

The majority of material in this collection consists of patient records and other sensitive data, subject not only to the strictures of UK General Data Protection Regulation but also to considerations of ethics and patient confidentiality. For these reasons, access to the material must be carefully considered.

All case files for patients and research subjects, research datasets and supplementary materials are considered closed for general research.

The above material is primarily found in file series HHA/1 and HHA/2, but further examples appear throughout the collection. The remaining material is available for research under the general access conditions, as defined above.

Access to closed material may still be considered under specific circumstances. Requests for access fall broadly into two categories:

- *Academic Interest*

Requests for direct access to the records can be made by academic researchers and other qualified professionals (e.g., physicians, writers or museum professionals) and will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Archivist.

Interested parties should write to the Archivist outlining their professional qualifications, describing their research interests or project, and explaining why access to this specific collection is important. Graduate research students should also include a suitable letter of support from their institution.

For projects that require extended use of closed material, we may require confirmation that the research proposal has been approved by the Research Ethics Committee of their institution.

Those given direct access to the records will be expected to sign the form used to access closed, sensitive and confidential personal data in compliance with UK Data Protection Legislation (see 'Personal Data' section above).

They will also be expected to respect the confidentiality of medical information, which persists even after the death of the subject. For this reason, researchers will sign a form with an additional clause confirming they will undertake to anonymise any personal data used, even if the subject is confirmed to be deceased. The only exception to this is where permission can be obtained from a close relative or personal representative of the subject.

- *Personal Interest (E.g., family members)*

Enquiries received from those who have a personal interest in the records of the archive, most notably family members of the patients, will be answered by the Archivist.

As files may contain sensitive information that is more likely to be directly relevant to the enquirer, there is scope for disclosing their contents to specific individuals. Individuals must be able to demonstrate that the subject of the file is deceased and that they are a close relative of the subject, where 'close' is defined as spouse/significant other or within two degrees of relationship, and either they are a personal representative of the deceased, there is no known personal representative, or the personal representative has agreed to the disclosure.

Information from the file will be provided, but the file may not necessarily be made directly available, depending on the level of sensitivity of the data.

- **Digital Records**

This policy applies to any digital material in the archive as well as to paper records. However, the archive does not currently have any facility for researchers to access this type of material within the archive itself and as, by their nature, most digital records are very recent, any enquiries will generally be directed to the originating department rather than to the archive. The development of the digital archive is a long-term process and the access policy will be amended as and when necessary to take account of this.

- **JCR/MCR Collections**

The archive also holds records of the Junior and Middle common rooms. Access to unpublished material less than 30 years old from these collections will only be made available to either internal or external researchers with permission from the relevant President/Vice-President (MCR) or President/Secretary (JCR).

Reproduction and Copyright

The College may supply digital copies of archive material to researchers who are unable to visit in person. The College generally makes no charge for the reproduction of a small amount of material – larger volumes may incur a fee.

Reproduction is usually made via digital scanner or photograph and provided electronically.

Researchers who visit the Archive in person are allowed to take photographs of material on the understanding the images are only to be used for private study and research.

In all cases, no material should be further reproduced or published without permission of the College. If permission is granted the reproduction should be acknowledged using the phrase “by kind permission of the Principal and Fellows of St Hugh’s College, Oxford”.

In addition, material in the collection may also be subject to external copyright restrictions and should not be reproduced without the permission of the copyright holder. Application for reproduction should be made, in the first instance, to the Archivist who can advise on whether permission is required from another party. If this is the case, then the researcher must obtain that permission in writing (which may attract a fee) and be able to provide evidence of this to the College if required.

Searchroom Regulations

Archive researchers are seated in the Archive Room or Silent Reading Room to consult material, where they are able to use a laptop. The following regulations should be followed.

- No food or drink is permitted in the archive.
- Readers should **only** use pencil and no material should be marked in any way.
- Readers must ask permission before using any photographic equipment.
- Supplied book rests and weights must be used where provided and no other items should be placed on the archive material, neither should it be leant on.
- Gloves should be worn where provided, particularly when handling photographic material.
- Items provided in transparent envelopes should not be removed from them.
- All archive items are individually numbered and care should be taken to return files with their contents in the correct order.

<p>Researcher Application</p> <p>for access to closed sensitive and confidential personal data, in compliance with Data Protection Legislation and the Common Law Duty of Confidentiality</p>
<p>I (name)</p>
<p>of (address)</p>
<p>request permission to consult (details of records)</p>
<p>for the following research purposes</p>
<p><i>Please read the conditions listed overleaf and sign the Research Agreement</i></p>

Researcher Agreement

for access to closed sensitive and confidential personal data,
in compliance with Data Protection Legislation

1. I understand that St Hugh's College is the data controller of the personal data and I am the data processor of it, and that I will use the personal data only for the purpose and duration set out in the research purposes listed above and in accordance with any law, statute, declaration, decree, directive, legislative enactment, order, ordinance, regulation, rule or other binding restriction (as amended, consolidated or re-enacted from time to time) which relates to the protection of individuals with regards to the processing of personal data to which a party is subject, including the Data Protection Act 2018 and retained EU law version of the General Data Protection Regulation (EU) (2016/679)) ("GDPR") and any successor legislation to the Data Protection Act 2018 and the GDPR.
2. My research will not be used to support measures or decisions with respect to particular individuals.
3. My research will not cause or be likely to cause substantial damage or substantial distress to any person who is the subject of those data while he or she is alive or likely to be alive (assuming a life span of 100 years).
4. I shall not make the results of my research available in a form which identifies any data subject without the consent in writing of the data subject and the data controller.

for access to closed sensitive and confidential personal data,
in compliance with the Common Law Duty of Confidentiality

1. I understand that where I have been given access to confidential information I am under a duty of confidence and would be liable under common law for any inappropriate breach of confidence in terms of disclosure to third parties and also for invasion of privacy if I were to access more information than that for which I have been given approval or for which consent is in place.

Signed _____ (Researcher)

Date _____

Signed _____ (for St Hugh's College)

Date _____