



Education

POLICY MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES

Document history

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29 March 2018	Section 8 of the Policy Management Procedures has been updated to align with a new Functional Retention and Disposal Authority: FA387. Amendments have also been made to reflect an update to the NSW Department of Education homepage.	Executive Director, Policy Coordination and Governance

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Section 1: Introduction

Overview

The Department of Education's Policy Management Procedures guide staff through the process of developing and improving operational policy documents in line with current 'better practice standards'.

These procedures support the Policy Management Policy that sets out the required structure and content for all operational policies on the department's policy website, referred to as the 'policy library'.

The policy library is a 'single source of truth' for operational policy, which can be easily navigated so staff can quickly identify their compliance responsibilities.

Policies in the library support staff to perform their roles independently, within set boundaries and constraints, and to discharge their responsibilities and delegations confidently.

These policies also identify staff in the department who can make decisions about specific policy issues and aspects of the policy management and approval process.

1. What is policy?

The Department develops policies to manage operational issues or risks, to support staff to discharge their responsibilities and delegations confidently and to articulate overarching statements of intent or principles for public education.

From a practical perspective, policy is a governance tool that can be used to manage an issue or risk.

A core purpose of policy is to require an organisation or individual to comply with certain requirements that assist in managing the issue or risk.

While the term 'policy' can be used very broadly, policies in the department's [policy library](#) are predominantly operational. Some policies include strategic policy statements that articulate overarching intent or principles for public education.

Operational policies state an organisation's position on an operational issue or risk, and include policies that relate to day-to-day service delivery such as curriculum planning, literacy, school attendance, work health and safety, and corruption prevention. Operational policies focus on efficiency, consistency of decision making, and service delivery. In general, individuals need to comply with operational policy.

Policy is different to strategy.

Strategy sets out the department's goals, objectives or desired outcomes. It states what the department is seeking to achieve in relation to a particular issue, and includes the major initiatives that will be delivered to achieve it.

Strategy often contains key performance indicators or outcome measures which can be evaluated to determine progress or measure success.

2. Policy Library

The [policy library](#) contains a range of different documents and information including:

- policies, which:
 - . are clear and concise statements of the organisation’s position on an issue or risk
 - . contain policy statements, along with information on applicability, context, responsibilities of staff, the monitoring and review process, and who to contact
- policy implementation documents, which assist staff to comply with a policy, for example:
 - procedures
 - forms
 - flowcharts
 - guidelines
 - checklists
 - diagrams
- the [Policy Toolkit](#), containing:
 - . forms that should be completed
 - . templates that can assist the policy owner to develop the policy or implementation documents
- ‘related information’, for example:
 - . links to legislation and government policy
 - . links to better practice guides

In addition, schools can develop local practices, which translate policies in the library to the environment of an individual school. Local practices must be consistent with the policy or supporting documents from which they are derived.

Policies in the [policy library](#) also refer to:

- policy owners, who
 - . are Executive Directors or Directors in the Department of Education
 - . are accountable for making decisions about a policy
 - . oversee the policy development and review process (these processes can be delegated)
- policy contacts, who
 - . are delegated by the policy owner to respond to inquiries about the policy.

All policy owners and policy contacts (or their delegates) have been given access to amend documents and information published in the [policy library](#) – see section 5.2 for further information.

The School Policy Governance Group consists of executive officers from across the department. It provides a forum in which to discuss departmental-wide issues relating to new policies and policies in the library.

3. Audience

These procedures have been written for the policy owner, although the task of developing, amending or reviewing a policy can be delegated to a staff member who reports to them.

Section 2: Managing the Policy Cycle

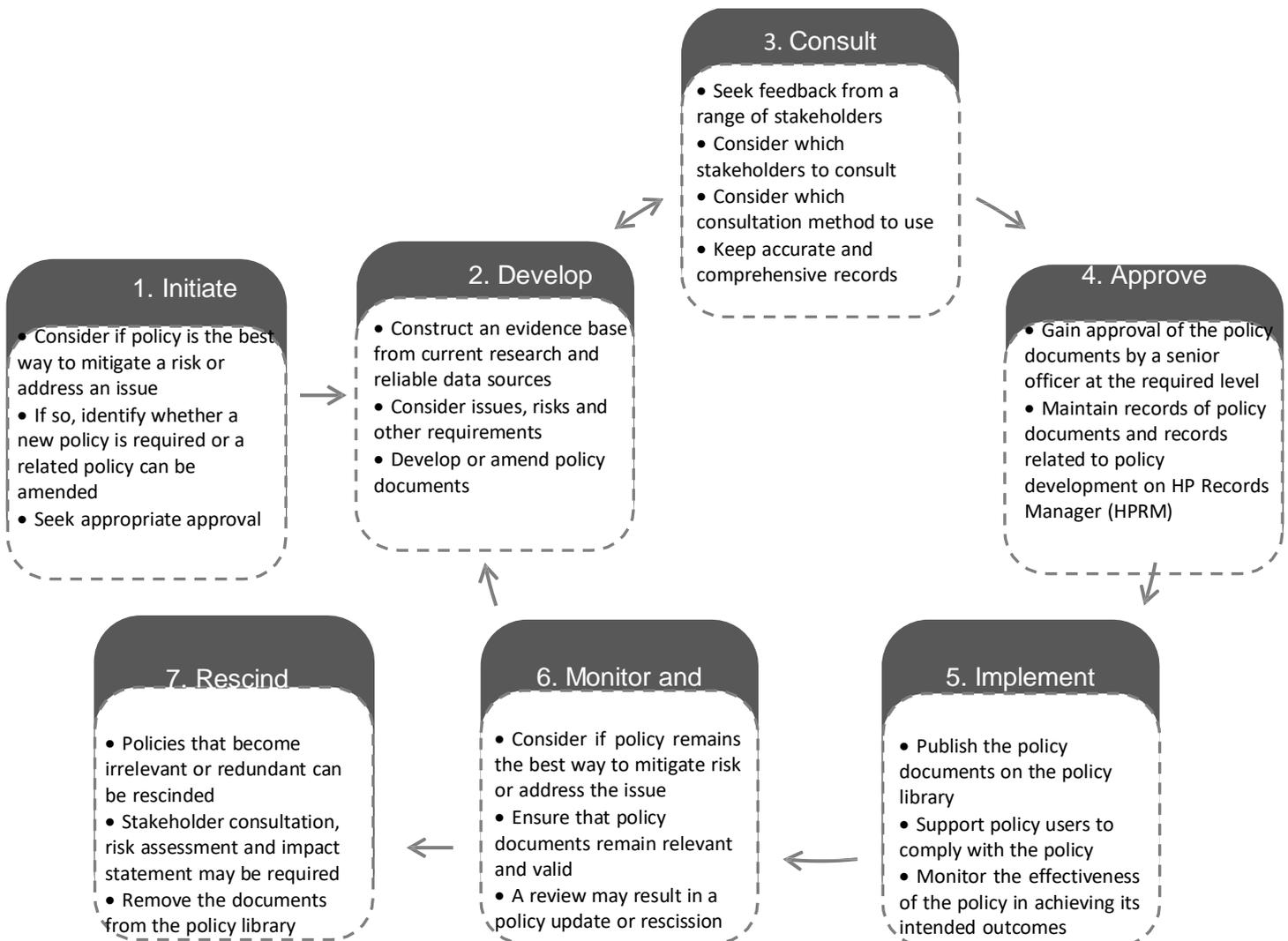
Overview

A key purpose of the [Policy Management Policy](#) is to encourage staff to think about the broad range of solutions available to manage an issue or risk (see section 2.1.1 below). This means that policy may not always be the best solution.

However if policy is identified as the best solution, these Policy Management Procedures will guide you through the process of developing and improving operational policy documents in line with current 'better practice standards.'

Managing the policy development and review cycle involves the seven (7) steps illustrated in the diagram below. Each step is described in more detail on the following pages.

Figure 1: Policy development and review cycle



1. Initiate

1.1 Determine if policy is the best solution

You should explore all available solutions to effectively mitigate the issue or risk you have identified, before you decide to develop a new policy.

These solutions might include:

- developing an app, requiring the use of a certain device, or procuring software that may mitigate or eliminate a risk
- re-designing a workspace to eliminate a hazard
- developing or conducting education and training courses to help staff comply with an existing or new policy
- consulting or liaising with stakeholders who may need to be reassured about an issue
- providing information to stakeholders in a variety of forms to confirm the organisation's position on an issue.

You should then implement the best solution.

If you determine that a policy is the best solution to address the issue or risk you have identified, you should follow the steps below.

1.2 Examine existing policies

Look through the entire list of policies and implementation documents in the [policy library](#) to identify if you can amend an existing policy.

You may need to work with another policy owner to do this.

1.3 Get approval to initiate work

The relevant Executive Director (who may also be the policy owner) is required to approve work to undertake major review of an existing policy or to develop a new policy (see section 4). Fill out the policy initiation form in the [Toolkit](#).

Once approved, table the form at the School Policy Governance Group for information.

The policy owner can approve minor amendments (see section 4) without completing a form.

1.4 Prepare a project plan

It may be helpful to prepare a project plan to develop a new policy or undertake a major review of an existing policy. A project plan template is in the [Toolkit](#).

2. Develop

When you develop a policy or implementation document, you should work through the following process.

2.1 Research the policy issue

All policies need to be based on evidence. When you develop a policy, you should consider:

- current national or international practice
- available trends or data
- research that can inform the policy position
- existing government policy that relates to your policy issue that may have been developed by other government agencies
- current or proposed legislation
- financial or budgetary issues
- memorandums of understanding or other agreements in place or being developed
- the community view, at a state level or local level
- whether you should undertake a more formal risk assessment.

You may want to keep a list of the issues you identify in an 'issues register'. A template is in the [Toolkit](#).

If you need advice or assistance, contact:

- Policy Coordination and Governance on (02) 9561 8161
- School Policy and Information Management on (02) 9244 5057.

2.2 Draft the policy

2.2.1 What is the purpose of your policy?

Before starting an initial draft, consider the following.

- What are the policy issues that need to be resolved?
- What risks will the policy mitigate?
- What mandatory actions must certain staff take in order to effectively manage the issue or mitigate the risk?
- What guidance may staff need to comply with the policy?

2.2.2 Who is your audience?

Before starting an initial draft, you should also consider the following.

- Who is the policy for?
- What are the different needs of the audience?
- How might differing needs be met by the policy and implementation documents?

All policy should be written in plain English. You should:

- use simple and concise language to convey a clear message
- use short sentences that are well constructed
- remove words that add little value
- use everyday words, and only use technical terms where required for clarification
- use the active voice instead of the passive voice
- use positive rather than negative terms.

2.2.3 Prepare a draft

There are generally three types of drafts you will need to prepare.

- An initial draft can be prepared for consultation, and should be approved by the policy owner prior to consultation
- A redraft is prepared based on stakeholder feedback (there may be a number of redrafts required)
- A final draft must be approved by the policy owner before being submitted for approval to the relevant Executive Director and Deputy Secretary.

All policies are to be structured in line with the policy template at Attachment A.

Implementation documents include guidelines, procedures, forms, checklist and flowcharts, and do not need to follow any set format. Sample templates can be found in the [Toolkit](#).

You can also look at the department's [Global Experience Framework – Guidelines and Standards](#) for guidance which includes information on accessibility, web writing, quality content, metadata, hypertext linking and social media.

2.2.4 Consider information classification

Most policy documents do not contain sensitive information and may be published on the internet.

However you should refer to the New South Wales government's [Information Classification and Labelling](#) information to check if your document contains sensitive information, and to identify any action you may subsequently need to take.

If you need assistance contact:

- Information Security Unit on (02) 9302 7116.

2.2.5 Consider copyright

Policy documents must not contain copyright material without permission of the copyright owner. Any permission granted must allow the department to publish the material.

If you need advice or further information:

- contact the Copyright Unit within Legal Services on (02) 9561 8179.
- refer to www.smartcopying.edu.au (official guide to copyright issues for Australian schools).

3. Consult

You should consult with a range of stakeholder groups when you're developing a new policy or undertaking a major policy review.

Consultation is a legislative requirement for some policies such as the Work Health and Safety policy.

If you need advice on consultation you can contact:

- Policy Coordination and Governance on (02) 9561 8161
- School Policy and Information Management on (02) 9244 5057.

3.1 Identify Stakeholders

The number and type of stakeholder groups consulted depends on the subject matter of the policy.

You should consult with a range of stakeholders, which may include:

- key users of the policy
- groups affected by the policy position taken
- subject matter experts on various issues referred to in the policy
- owners of related policies, procedures, guidelines or other documents
- external stakeholders such as:
 - other government agencies
 - relevant associations and unions
 - parents, and education or community groups.

An Executive Director should review and endorse a draft of the policy before consulting with external stakeholders. In some cases, it may be necessary to obtain the endorsement of Legal Services before consulting externally. If a policy is likely to be controversial or sensitive, the Executive Director may need to consult with the relevant Deputy Secretary prior to consulting externally.

You should seek advice from Legal Services on final draft documents for all new policies and all major policy reviews, before submitting the documents to the relevant Deputy Secretary for approval.

3.2 Choose how you consult

You may need to consult with different groups of people, or with the same group on a number of occasions. You can consult:

- face to face or via teleconference
- by survey to sample a broad audience such as teachers, parents, or community groups (survey may be undertaken via email or through online survey applications)
- using Sharepoint
- informally over the telephone or via email
- by placing your issue on the agenda of an existing forum or meeting.

3.3 Negotiate policy issues

Developing and reviewing policy often involves stakeholders with diverse needs and views.

You should thoroughly prepare before negotiating policy issues, which may include:

- identifying the specific policy issues that require negotiation
- identifying relevant stakeholders and their policy positions on the issue
- identifying the right level of departmental officer required to negotiate an issue. Some issues may need to be resolved by a Deputy Secretary or Executive Director, especially if the issues are contentious or involve an external agency
- formulating a variety of options for resolution, identifying positive and negative aspects of all options and ranking them.

You should only lead consultations with external agencies or the community if you are an experienced policy developer.

3.4 Manage stakeholder feedback

All stakeholder feedback is welcome. It is preferable to get written feedback, but time constraints may mean this is not always possible.

You can give stakeholders a feedback form (see template in [Toolkit](#)). This allows for specific issues to be identified and common themes to emerge. This also allows the policy owner to consolidate stakeholder feedback, and to accurately maintain a record of actions after considering the feedback (see template in [Toolkit](#)).

Give stakeholders plenty of time to submit their feedback after a consultation. Wherever possible, you should let stakeholders know the outcomes of consultations involving them.

4. Approve

The level of approval required for new and existing policy is described in the table below.

Activity	Example	Approver
1. Initiate minor policy review	Amalgamating existing documents. Updating formatting, contact information and hyperlinks, and fixing typos.	Policy owner
2. Initiate major policy review	Changing the purpose or intent, or undertaking a significant review process involving substantial research and stakeholder consultation.	Executive Director
3. Initiate a new policy	Stating the organisation's position on an issue or risk which cannot be done using an existing policy instrument or other means (for example memos, emails, fact sheets).	Executive Director
4. Finalise a new policy or a major review	Approve the policy. Once approved, policy can be published.	Deputy Secretary, Head Aboriginal Affairs, or Executive Group
5. Rescind a policy	Rescinding an existing policy instrument where there is sufficient justification (see section 7).	Deputy Secretary, Head Aboriginal Affairs, or Executive Group

Final approval for a new policy or major review, or to rescind an existing policy (points 4 and 5 above) must be sought from your Deputy Secretary or the Head of Aboriginal Affairs using a standard briefing template. The Deputy Secretary or Head of Aboriginal Affairs may choose to take the policy to the Executive Group for approval.

If you're seeking approval to rescind a policy make sure you provide the reasons why, and explain how remaining risks will be managed.

Approvals for activities 2, 3, 4 and 5 above must be kept in the relevant program folder for your policy in HPRM Policy Box 031625 – see section 5.2 and section 8 for further information.

5. Implement

5.1 Prepare an implementation or communications plan

Every policy should include an implementation or communications plan that contains actions to ensure the policy is embedded as current practice.

Your implementation or communications plan should consider:

- who needs to be informed of the policy and how they will be informed
- if there are implications for specific schools or areas in the department
- how the policy might link to significant departmental reform agendas, government priorities or commitments.

Implementation and communications actions may include:

- training sessions and information for staff
- developing online resources including fact sheets and frequently asked questions
- amending information in the [policy library](#) or an associated webpage
- making changes to IT systems
- formal change management plans for policies that result in significant changes
- placing an issue on the agenda of existing forums to advise staff about your policy, such as quarterly principals' network conferences
- placing an article in SchoolBiz
- an email to staff from the Secretary or a Deputy Secretary.

An implementation and communications plan template is in the [Toolkit](#).

If you need advice on implementation you can contact:

- Policy Coordination and Governance on (02) 9561 8161
- School Policy and Information Management on (02) 9244 5057.

5.2 Publish or archive your policy

All operational policies and related implementation documents must be published in the policy library and available to staff. These documents must also be made available to the public, unless there are circumstances which override the presumption of public release.

Policy Box 031625 has been set up in HPRM, the department's formal records management system. Every policy owner and policy contact (or delegate) has been given access to the program folders in the Policy Box that relate to policies they own or administer – see example in the picture below.

Four project sub-folders have also been created for every program folder:

- Policy
- Implementation Documents
- Approvals
- Versions.

Record Number	Title (Free Text Part)
BOX/031625	Department of Education Policies
PRGM17/202	Policy Administration
PRGM17/70	PURCHASING CARD POLICY
PRGM16/3325	POLICY DOCUMENTS - DOE REQUIREMENTS
PRGM16/2322	ACCREDITATION AT PROFICIENT TEACHER IN NSW GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS POLICY
PROJ17/1448	Policy
PROJ17/1447	Implementation Documents
PROJ17/1446	Approvals
PROJ17/1445	Versions
PRGM16/2323	ALLEGATIONS AGAINST EMPLOYEES IN THE AREA OF CHILD PROTECTION

There are five (5) steps you need to take to publish a policy:

1. Save the final approved word version of your policy into your policy sub-folder (PROJ17/1448 in the above picture) and any implementation documents into the Implementation Documents sub-folder (PROJ1447 in the above picture).
2. Complete the required metadata fields. To find the fields:
 - i. right click on the final word version of your policy saved in line with step 1
 - ii. select 'Details'
 - iii. click on 'Additional Fields' (only complete the fields listed at Attachment B).
3. Save approvals into the 'Approvals' folder, for example PROJ17/1446 in the above picture.
4. If there is an existing version of your policy that needs to be rescinded:
 - i. archive the existing version by moving it from the program folder into the 'Versions' sub-folder, for example PROJ17/1445 in the above picture
 - ii. save any approvals associated with rescinding the existing version in the 'Approvals' folder.
5. Advise the Communications Directorate at policies@detcprcomms.zendesk.com that a new version of your policy or implementation documents needs to be published and, if applicable, that the existing version of your policy has been rescinded and needs to be removed.

Step 5 is an interim process as documents will ultimately be automatically published from HPRM to the policy library.

If you are not replacing an existing policy and need only to rescind a policy, follow steps 3, 4 and 5 above.

If you need assistance contact Policy Coordination and Governance on (02) 9561 8161.

6. Monitor and Review

6.1 Monitor

You should routinely monitor your policy by:

- responding to questions, issues, and other feedback provided by users and stakeholders which may result in the policy needing to be amended in some way. You may like to keep this feedback in a log.
- reviewing the points in section 2.1 of these procedures every 12 months to determine if there has been any change in the business environment which may require your policy to be amended or rescinded.
- regularly liaising with users to determine:
 - . if your policy is being complied with, and if it needs to be amended or rescinded
 - . if training and other resources need to be developed.

You can also contact the Schools Policy and Information Management unit on (02) 9244 5057 to obtain data relating to your policy which can be broken down by schools (or by network of schools).

6.2 Major review

Policies are to be reviewed at least every three (3) years from the implementation date stated on the policy, or when major changes have occurred.

A major review should consider:

- a risk assessment to determine if your policy is effectively mitigating the relevant issues or risks it was set up to address
- current national or international practice
- trends or data
- research that can inform the policy position
- broader government policy
- whether there is new or proposed legislation
- if there are there financial or budgetary issues
- memorandums of understanding or other agreements in place or being developed
- if the community, at a state level or local level, has a view on the issue
- consulting with relevant stakeholders, including those with content expertise.

A major review may also need to be undertaken before the three year review period if there are:

- legislative changes
- substantial changes to the operating environment within or outside of the department
- government reforms, inside and outside of education that impacts on your policy
- departmental directives, strategies or plans that impact on your policy.

A major review could result in:

- no amendment being made
- minor amendments being made
- substantial amendments being made
- the policy being rescinded

If you think a major review is required, you need to obtain the approval of the relevant Executive Director using the policy initiation form in the [Toolkit](#).

If you need assistance, contact:

- Policy Coordination and Governance on (02) 9561 8161
- School Policy and Information Management on (02) 9244 5057.

6.3 Minor review

You (as a policy owner) can undertake a minor review to make changes of an insubstantial, administrative or minor editorial nature.

These changes should not alter the purpose or intent of the policy, or impact on related policy documents or stakeholders to whom the policy document applies.

Minor amendments include, but are not limited to:

- format and typographical improvements
- updating the titles of roles and organisational units, and changes to the policy owner and review date
- fixing broken links within your policy.

7. Rescind

A major policy review may result in a decision to rescind the policy because:

- the issues or risks that the policy was mitigating no longer exist
- the policy no longer effectively manages the issues or risks it was set up to address
- another policy or risk solution has been implemented
- changes to government legislation and policy, or other departmental policy, means your policy is no longer required.

7.1 Approval to rescind a policy

A Deputy Secretary or the Head of Aboriginal Affairs approves a policy being rescinded.

You should use a standard briefing template that:

- states the reasons that the policy (or a supporting document) is no longer required
- explains why the policy is no longer needed to mitigate an issue or risk
- makes a clear recommendation to rescind the policy.

The approval must be stored in the relevant program folder in the HPRM Policy Box 031625 – see section 5.2. The rescinded version of the policy must be moved into the 'versions' sub-folder. You must also insert a rescinded date into the policy metadata – see section 5.2

You should advise colleagues at the School Policy Governance Group that your policy has been rescinded, and communicate this change to schools, staff and other stakeholders.

8. Manage records

Section 5.2 of these procedures requires you to save your final approved policy and implementation documents, previous versions, and final approvals into the HPRM Policy Box 031625. No other documents should be saved in the Policy Box.

However, you must also save your working documents in a manner that is consistent with the department's [Records Management Program Policy](#), which requires you to save the following documents:

- completed templates contained in the [Policy Toolkit](#)
- records of consultations or meetings
- draft versions of policy documents
- reviews and reports.

Policy records must be kept for various timeframes depending on the policy subject matter. These retention periods are described in the retention schedule in [Functional Retention and Disposal Authority: FA387](#) and in [Retention and Disposal Authority: GA28](#), issued by State Records.

If you need assistance, contact:

- Records Management on (02) 8633 1045

Attachments

Attachment A Policy Template

Attachment B Required Metadata fields

POLICY Name of policy (topic then sub-topic, eg Sport and Physical Activity – Safe Conduct)

✓ Description. This is populated when you complete the required metadata field - see Attachment B

1 Policy statement

1.1 <State the purpose of this policy>

1.2 <State the organisations position>

- You may need to make a few statements
- Use the Policy Management Policy as a guide

1.3 <State what needs to be done to manage the key issues or risks you have identified>

- You may need to make a few statements
- You can include the title of the positions that need to undertake the activities that will manage the issues or risks you have identified.
- Use the Policy Management Policy as a guide

Wherever possible, the policy statement (section 1 of this template) should be no longer than an A4 page in length

2. Audience and applicability

2.1 This policy applies to <insert the categories of staff, eg all departmental staff or particular groups of staff>

3. Context

3.1 <Include a few points to give the policy context>

- You may want to list a few key points

4. Responsibilities and Delegations

4.1 Group of positions (eg Deputy Secretary)

- <list what this group of staff needs to do>

4.2 Group of positions (eg Executive Directors)

- <list what this group of staff needs to do>

4.3 Specific title of position or groups of positions (eg Principals)

- <list what this group of staff needs to do>

4.4 Specific title of position

- <list what this group of staff needs to do>

5. Monitoring and review

5.1 The <title of policy owner> is responsible for monitoring the implementation of this policy and reviewing its effectiveness, every three years.

6. Policy contact officer

6.1 <Title of policy contact officer>

T: <Phone number of policy contact officer>

7. Implementation Date

7.1 <Date the policy is published on the policy website>

Required Metadata Fields - Policy Management Procedures Section 5.2

The fields below must be completed by the policy owner before a policy can be published

Field	Type	Description
Approving Officer	Look up	The title of the officer who approved the new or revised version of the policy.
Changes since previous version (if applicable)	Free text	Describe the main changes made since the previous version.
Date Approved	Date	The date on which the approving officer approved the policy.
Description	Free text	One sentence describing the purpose of the policy.
Document Type	Look up	Policy or implementation document.
Implementation Date	Date	The date the policy is published in the policy library.
Implementation Document (if applicable)	Free text	The title of each implementation document.
Last Major Review (if applicable)	Date	The date that a major review has been completed.
Leadership Policy Group 01 (if applicable)	Look up	The leading and managing the school category the policy belongs to.
Other reference number (if applicable)	Free text	Any reference number used by your area of the department.
Policy document history (if applicable)	Free text	Describe the main changes made since the initial version (include dates).
Policy Group 01	Look up	The group the policy belongs to on the policy landing page.
Publicly Available	Look up	If the information is available for public release – yes or no.
Rescinded date (if applicable)	Date	Date the approving officer approved the policy being rescinded.
Review Date	Date	The date your policy will be reviewed (future).
SCIS number (if applicable)	Free text	The Schools Catalogue Information Service number.
Status	Look up	Whether your policy is active or has been rescinded.
Superseded Documents (if applicable)	Free text	List the documents that have superseded your policy.
Web Related documents (if applicable)	Free text	List any related documents and include the relevant links.
Web Search Keywords	Free text	Insert any key words that users will search for in looking for your policy.