Document Management Policy: Metadata

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Childlight Global Child Safety Institute

Childlight Document Management Policy

Document Management Policy

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Document Management Policy

1   Purpose

This policy outlines Childlight's approach to managing documents throughout their lifecycle, ensuring consistency, accuracy, accessibility, and compliance with governance, ethics, and operational requirements.

Effective document management is essential to maintaining the integrity of Childlight's work. This policy serves to:

- Ensure staff and researchers are always working from the correct and most up-to-date version of a document, thereby reducing the risk of error, inconsistency, or non-compliance.
- Prevent the creation of unnecessary duplicates, which can lead to confusion, outdated information, and wasted time.
- Establish clear naming, versioning, and storage conventions that make documents easy to identify, retrieve, and track across their lifecycle.
- Support accountability by documenting ownership, review history, and approval status through standardised metadata and version control practices.
- Facilitate cross-project and cross-team collaboration while maintaining robust control over document edits and distribution.
- Provide a structured system for archiving and referencing historical versions, ensuring transparency and traceability of key decisions and changes.
- Meet internal and external compliance requirements, including those linked to ethics approvals, data integrity, and audit-readiness.

2   Scope

This policy applies to all individuals affiliated with Childlight – including staff, students, researchers, Global Data Fellows, and external affiliates – who create, review, store, manage, or otherwise interact with documents within Childlight's systems.

It covers both formal and informal documents across all project types and applies to any documentation stored on SharePoint, CPMS, or other approved systems used for research, governance, and operations.

3   Roles and Responsibilities

Quality and Compliance Manager   Oversees the implementation of this policy, maintains and updates the policy content, provides guidance on folder and version control structures, and ensures alignment with governance requirements.

Document Owners   Accountable for the accuracy and integrity of controlled documents. Responsible for adding metadata tables, maintaining version history, approving final versions, and managing re-approvals.

Researchers   Responsible for correctly naming and storing documents in line with this policy. Must liaise with the Quality and Compliance Manager during project initiation and apply version control practices throughout the research lifecycle.

All Users   Must comply with this policy when drafting, editing, or storing documents. Responsible for avoiding duplicate content, ensuring the most current version is used, and archiving superseded versions appropriately.

4   Folder Management

4.1   Project Folder Set-up

Prior to the commencement of research activity, all researchers must meet with the Quality and Compliance Manager to establish CPMS registration and SharePoint folder structures, following a standardised template. There will be flexibility to omit folders that hold no relevance to the specific project.

4.2   Folder Structure

Each folder should include a subfolder titled "Working Files", used to store live/in-progress documents. An "Archived" folder will also house documents which have been replaced by a more recent version. Final or static versions should remain in the main folder in PDF format to ensure clear separation between drafts, approved, and expired materials.

Note: Moving documents after they have been shared can disrupt user access. See Section 8.2 for guidance on maintaining link integrity in SharePoint.

Each project folder must include:
- Main Folder: Contains final/static documents only in non-editable copy.
- Working Files: For live/in-progress content.
- Archived: For superseded or obsolete versions.

Folders irrelevant to a specific project may be omitted with approval.

4.3 Cross-Folder Linking

Documents that are applicable to more than one folder or project can be effectively shared across folder areas using shortcuts (links). A document placed in Folder One can be linked to Folder Two using the "New > Link" feature. Similarly, shortcuts can be created to entire folders; this is particularly relevant in cases where a Research Project is referenced in both the Searchlight and Global Index areas – ensuring visibility across Childlight projects.

The rights to create and edit shortcuts are restricted. Deleting a shortcut does affect the original file or folder, this maintains document integrity.

5 Document Naming Conventions

To ensure clarity, consistency, and ease of access, all documents created or maintained within Childlight's systems must adhere to standardised naming conventions. These conventions are designed to enable users to quickly identify the nature, content, and version of a document, while also reducing the risk of duplication or error.

Note: Renaming documents after they have been shared can disrupt user access. See Section 8.2 for guidance on maintaining link integrity in SharePoint.

5.1 Formal Documents

Formal documents include, but are not limited to, policies, guidance notes, protocols, forms, internal project documents, datasets, and technical notes that are reviewed, version-controlled, or used for official or compliance purposes.

All formal documents must be named using the following format:

[Type/ProjectCode/ShortTitle]_[DescriptiveTitle]_V[VersionNumber]

Where:

- **Type** refers to the category of the document (e.g., Policy, Protocol, SOP).
- **ProjectCode/ShortTitle** may be used where relevant, typically for project-specific documents.
- **DescriptiveTitle** provides a succinct but meaningful indication of the document's content.
- **VersionNumber** follows the convention outlined in Section 6 of this policy.

Examples:
- Policy_DataRetention_V1.0
- FiveEyes_ParticipantInfoSheet_V1.1

In general, decimal version numbers (e.g., V1.1, V1.2) indicate working drafts or documents under revision. Whole numbers (e.g., V1, V2) are only used once a document is formally approved and finalised (Please see section 6 for further details).

The maximum file name length is limited to 255 characters due to SharePoint constraints. Where a descriptive title risks exceeding this limit, users must contact the Quality and Compliance Manager for advice on abbreviation or restructuring.

If there is any uncertainty regarding how to classify or name a document, users are expected to seek guidance from the Document Owner prior to document upload or distribution.

5.2   Informal Documents

Informal documents include meeting minutes, planning notes, team logs, and other non-controlled internal documents (such as an <u>unshared</u> draft protocol) that do not require version control or formal approval processes.

Informal documents must use the following naming format:

<p style="text-align:center">[YYYYMMDD]_[MeetingName]_Minutes</p>

This structure allows for consistent chronological sorting and easy identification of meeting records.

Example:
- 20250615_EthicsReview_Minutes
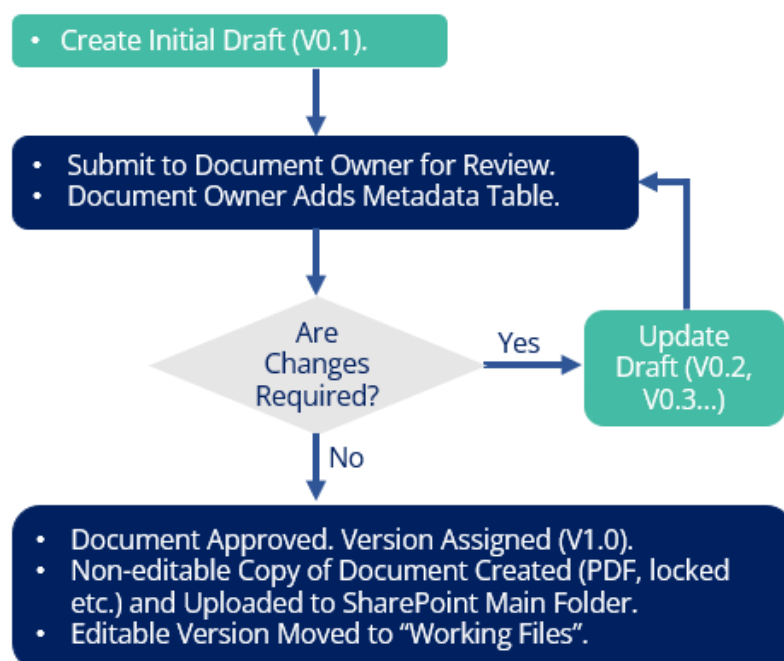
6   Version Control

6.1   Controlled Documents
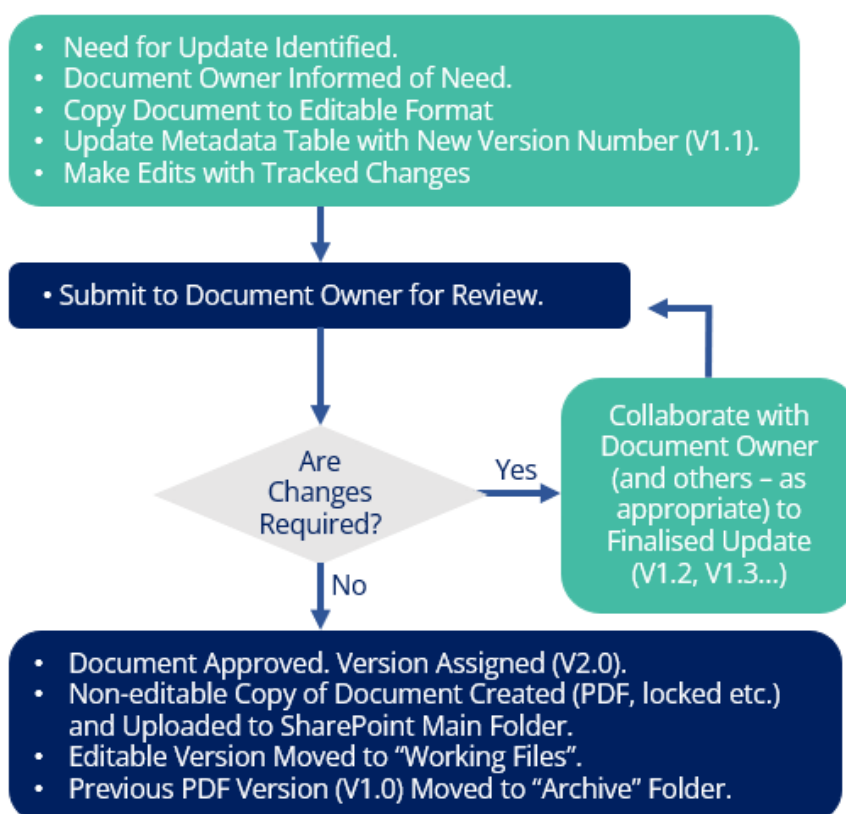
Includes: Policies, Protocols, Technical Notes, Datasets.

- The metadata table cover sheet is added to documents once it has been submitted for review. Ref: Metadata and Version History Template_V1.0.docx
- Once approved by the Document Owner, controlled documents must not be altered. A non-editable final version must be created and uploaded to SharePoint – this can be a PDF, locked spreadsheet, or read-only Word document.
- Once further updates are required, all edits must be made to a new editable copy of the document, beginning at the next decimal (indicating a draft version - e.g., V1.1, V1.2). Tracked changes should be used to highlight updates.
- The version number must be updated in the Metadata Table on the cover page, and editing must be authorised by the document owner named in the metadata.
- A new whole number version (e.g., V2.0) is assigned only after re-approval.
- The process for obtaining document approval may differ by document type.

NB: On Occasion, the Document Owner will be the same person making the edits. In these circumstances, the document should be shared with at least one second reviewer prior to finalisation.

Initial Drafting and Review, First Approval and Release:

Future Updates:

The flowchart contains the following:

- Need for Update Identified.
- Document Owner Informed of Need.
- Copy Document to Editable Format
- Update Metadata Table with New Version Number (V1.1).
- Make Edits with Tracked Changes

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- Submit to Document Owner for Review.

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Are Changes Required? — Yes → Collaborate with Document Owner (and others – as appropriate) to Finalised Update (V1.2, V1.3...)

No ↓

- Document Approved. Version Assigned (V2.0).
- Non-editable Copy of Document Created (PDF, locked etc.) and Uploaded to SharePoint Main Folder.
- Editable Version Moved to "Working Files".
- Previous PDF Version (V1.0) Moved to "Archive" Folder.

6.2   Internal Working Documents

Includes: Drafts, Project Proposals, Index writing

Versioning should follow the same convention as for Controlled Documents. The key distinction from Controlled Documents, is that Internal Working Documents do not require approval, as the Document Owner is usually the individual orchestrating the changes.

Edits should be made using best judgement as to when to increment the version number in the Metadata Table. This should be done periodically to ensure that older versions are preserved where relevant – particularly if significant edits or shared revisions are made. Where changes could affect ethics approval, a new version must be created.

NB: Some documents, such as Study Technical Notes, begin as internal working documents. These become "controlled" once submitted for formal review (e.g., to the Document Owner). At this point, the reviewer will add a Metadata Table, formally placing the document under version control.

7   Document Retention and Archiving

Superseded versions are moved to the Archived subfolder; only the most current approved version should remain in the main folder. Retention timelines are subject to regulatory and ethical requirements.

This applies to superseded versions only. Entire Projects are archived according to the Childlight Research Project Closure Guidelines.

8   Access and Permissions

8.1   Access and Role-Based Permissions

Access to folders and documents will be managed according to project roles and responsibilities. These are agreed by the Global Director of Data and Principal Investigator and assigned by the Quality and Compliance Manager.

Shortcut creation and editing is limited to authorised staff. Please contact the Quality and Compliance Manager for help with access and permission queries.

8.2   Link Integrity in SharePoint

When documents are shared via SharePoint links – whether by direct sharing, email, meeting agendas, or embedded in templates – it is critical to understand that renaming a file or moving it to a different folder will break any previously generated links.

This can result in colleagues or stakeholders losing access, receiving error messages, or unknowingly referencing outdated or missing documents. Such disruptions pose a risk to operational continuity, compliance, and research integrity.

To maintain link integrity:
- Avoid renaming or relocating documents once they have been shared, unless absolutely necessary.
- Use SharePoint shortcuts (New > Link) to provide access across multiple locations without moving the source file.
- If renaming or moving a document is essential:
    - Ensure a new link is promptly distributed to all relevant users.
    - Retain core elements of the filename (e.g., version number and title) to preserve clarity and traceability.

- o Notify users of the update and explain the change where possible.
- Movement of approved or archived files should only be carried out by the Quality and Compliance Manager or designated team members.

If unsure whether a proposed change may affect existing links or access, users should seek advice before taking action.

9   Policy Review

The Document Management Policy is subject to regular review. Amendments are made to reflect changes in local practices, national and international policies, and professional guidelines. This policy will also be reviewed and updated as necessary by the Quality and Compliance Manager, based on findings from internal audits and feedback from stakeholders. Any such amendments require the approval of the Childlight Senior Leadership Team.

This policy must be reviewed every two years. The review may result in one of three outcomes:

Approved	The policy has undergone changes which have been accepted by the Childlight SLT. Results in a change of version number.
Renewed	The policy was reviewed with no necessary changes identified. Does not result in a change of version number.
Discontinued	The policy was found to no longer hold relevance for the organisation, either as a result of content integration with other policy documents, or a change in operational need.

This policy was approved on 25th July 2025
This policy is due for review on 24th July 2027

10   Contact Information

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Appendix 1: Version History

Version	Change Date	Description of Changes	Reason for Changes	Reviewer(s)	Approver(s)	Approval Date
1.0	24 June 2025	Initial release of the policy	Baseline document creation	Polly Needs Debi Fry Zoe Lambourne	Zoe Lambourne	25 July 2025