



Southwark Archdiocesan Archive Access Policy

Introduction

The Diocese seeks to encourage the use of its archives both within the Diocese and by outside researchers. Access is open to anyone who can demonstrate a reasonable need to consult the material we hold. The following guidelines on access are in place to ensure the security, preservation and continued availability of the Diocese's unique and irreplaceable archives.

Enquiries

The Archivist is happy to respond to simple email, postal or phone enquiries, free of charge. In the case where an enquiry takes some time to respond to, the enquirer will be invited to make a donation to the Diocese in recognition of time spent on the enquiry. Please note that it is not possible for the Archivist to undertake detailed research on behalf of enquirers. Where more detailed research is required, enquirers are invited to visit the archive or to make their own arrangements to carry out the research. Please allow five working days for a response to enquiries.

Visits

Researchers are most welcome to use the archive although please be aware that there is no automatic right of access to the Diocesan Archive and the Diocesan Archivist reserves the right to refuse admission.

The Archive is open to readers, by prior appointment, on Mondays and Tuesdays 8.30am-1pm and 2pm-5.00pm. All readers must complete an Archive User Agreement form before being granted access to the archive material. By signing this form readers are agreeing to its terms.

Record closure

While the Diocese aims to provide as wide access as possible to the material held in its Archive, some restrictions are inevitable due to the nature, content or physical condition of the material. Records become available as soon as possible after a 30 year closure period. However, some records may be closed for a longer period in consideration of personal, confidential or sensitive information contained within the records. During the closure period records will be unavailable for research or other purposes.

Archive reading room rules

Archival material is made available to readers in accordance with the following regulations:

Identification

- On their first visit to the archive, a researcher must register as a reader. In order to do this, one form of photographic identification is required:
Or
A letter of introduction from someone known to the researcher in a formal capacity related to their research such as an academic supervisor, archivist, employer or parish priest.
- Readers should sign the visitors' book on every visit.

Security

- Bags must be placed in the locker provided and not taken to the reading desk.
- No archive material should be removed from the reading desk and all material must be returned before leaving Archbishop's House.
- Readers are not permitted in the archive office and store.
- Damage or theft of archive material is an offence and those responsible will be prosecuted.

Handling

The materials held in the Archive are irreplaceable. The following handling guidelines help to ensure their preservation:

- Readers are responsible for the care of the archives that they are consulting.
- Readers should have clean hands before using the archives.
- Documents should be kept in order and no clips or fasteners removed.
- The archives should not be marked, annotated or altered in any way.
- Book supports and weights are available if required. No other weight should be placed on archive material - do not lean on it, use improvised devices to prop volumes open or put notes or laptops on documents.

Conduct

- Pencils, not pens, should be used at the reading desk.
- No food or drink (including water) is permitted at the reading desk.
- Smoking is not permitted anywhere in Archbishop's House.
- Mobile phones must be kept in 'silent' mode. Please go outside to make or receive calls.

Infringement of these conditions may result in the withdrawal of the privilege of access.

Copying archives

All items held by the Archive are subject to copyright law. Researchers must complete a copyright declaration form and agree to our terms and conditions before making or obtaining copies.

- Researchers are usually welcome, having obtained the Archivist's permission, to take photographs (without a flash) of the records for their own research purposes. There is no charge for this service, however, researchers are welcome to make a donation to the Diocese if they wish.
- For preservation reasons, it may not be possible to photocopy documents from the Archive. The Archivist will make the decision as to whether a document can be photocopied. There is a charge for this service: please see Archive Charges for details.
- The Archive can supply digital images, either scans (if a document can be scanned without damage) or digital photographs. Please note that these images are intended for study and are not of publication quality. There is a charge for this service: please see Archive Charges for details.
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Publishing

Images of items in the Archive may be published with the approval of the Archivist. To apply for permission to publish an image, a Request to Publish form should be completed and returned to the Archivist. A publication charge will be levied depending on what sort of work the image will be reproduced in. Please see the Archive Charges for details. Where the Diocese does not hold the copyright, it is the responsibility of the researcher to seek appropriate copyright permissions.

Where an image or content from the Archive is used, an appropriate citation must be included.

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This policy and any related guidelines will be reviewed regularly by the Archivist and the Archives Advisory Council.