

Policy Number: 3040

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Effective Date: January 1, 2016

Replaces: July 1, 2013

SECTION: ADMINISTRATION

TOPIC: CONFIDENTIALITY AND RELEASE OF INFORMATION

Intent: To ensure that all electronic, physical and verbal information acquired through professional/Client relationship or Employee/Employer relationship remains confidential.

The Agency will comply with provincial legislation The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and federal Canada's Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act. All employees, volunteers, and practicum students must complete a Statutory Declaration of Confidentiality prior to commencement. A breach of confidentiality may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment or agreement.

Confidential information obtained by the Agency and Agency Employees will not be released to external sources unless the appropriate authorizations have been obtained. Information received from Persons with Developmental Disabilities (PDD) requires the Board's authorization to release.

The agency has security firewalls to protect electronic information, and updates security measures ongoing. The agency has an access structure to the computer network that limits access to electronic information to those employees who need to know and have access.

Confidential information may not be released to the media without prior authorization from the Executive Director.

Employees are prohibited from discussing agency business (e.g., client, work or employee information, etc.) on any social networking site/blogs, personal; web-sites etc. This includes any commentary even if it does not disclose the company name or names of people. This is required for confidentiality, and professional code of conduct.

It is expected that client, staff and agency files are updated and reviewed to ensure they are accurate, consistent and complete.

Client Information:

1. Specific requests from external sources for Client information can be considered by Agency Employees with a written Release of Information, which has been signed by the Client (if an independent adult) or their Guardian. This requirement also applies to requests from external sources to review Agency written Client information.

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A Release of Information must include: a specific start date and end date, what specific information should be given, to whom it is to be given, and for what purpose, and a statement that the consent may be revoked. Consents are to be signed by the individual/guardian and placed in the individual's file.

When written information releases are obtained, the releases must be reviewed by the Area Service Coordinator, and in some instances, by the Service Area Director. Area Service Coordinators/Service Area Director will determine how and what information will be shared, consistent with our commitment to full disclosure of relevant information (e.g., with transition to a new service) and subject to the limitations noted in Policy 1290.

2. When Agency Employees require specific information on Clients (e.g., assessment reports) from external sources, they will complete the Agency's Release of Information Form and obtain the Guardian or Client's signature for authorization.

It is expected that Agency Employees develop communication and liaison(s) with other services and individuals involved with the Client.

Authorization to facilitate Team communication that will assist the Client (i.e., day to day information, planning, medical, etc.) will be obtained through Service Agreements or Release of Information, which must be signed, by the Guardian or Client.

3. Employees will be orientated to understanding what their *Confidentiality Statutory Declaration* means. Supervisors will frequently review the importance of confidentiality.

It is important that Employees understand that information about Clients may only be disclosed to individuals who are part of that Client's Team.

Employee Information:

1. Supervisors will ensure that supervisory interactions with Employees including disciplinary action are released only to the next level(s) of supervision.

Verbal and written references given will comply with the Requests for References on Former or Current Employees, Policy 2250.

2. In the event that an Employee wishes the Agency to release information on their employment status (including salary confirmation), they may authorize such a release through a written request to the Accountant. This request should include: details as to when the information is to be released, what specific information is needed, to whom it is to be given, and for what purpose.

**Responsive
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3. No Employees will release the home/work phone numbers, addresses, or any other information about other Employees.

Should a request for this type of information be made by external sources, Employees will obtain the name and phone number of the requester and forward this to the involved Employee.

It is the decision of the Employee to release this type of information to others.

Agency Information:

1. External requests for general information regarding Agency Services must be routed through the Service Coordinator or Service Director.
2. External requests for specific information regarding Agency Services or copies of Agency Policies and Procedures shall be routed to the Executive Director for consideration.
3. External requests for presentations regarding Agency Services or Training/ Educational Sessions will be reviewed and authorized by the Service Area Director.
4. Employees privy to information regarding Agency business (e.g., Agency changes, responses to Tenders) must not disclose information.

Reference Requests for References on Former or Current Employees Policy 2250
Legal Guardianship/Trusteeship Policy 1040
Media Contact Policy 3070
Public Communications Policy 3060
Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
Canada's Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act