

Confidentiality for Employees

Purpose *Policy on confidentiality is required to ensure that we are addressing the legal and ethical aspects when handling information about clients, employees, volunteers, contracts related to clients/personnel and operational matters.*

Employees, volunteers and Board Members are accountable for handling of information and may subject the organization and themselves to liability for any breaches of confidentiality.

Policy Statement *All ASC employees, Board Members and volunteers will know and abide by the policies and procedures on confidentiality. Client, employee and operational information is confidential and subject to specific procedures for disclosure and awareness. Changes to specified procedures are subject to Board approval.*

Potential employees engaged in working interviews and potential Board Members participating in formal meetings will be required to observe the confidentiality policies and procedures of ASC.

Compliance with Provincial and Federal legal requirements will be adhered to.

Consequences for breach of confidentiality by employees, Board Members and volunteers are outlined in the Human Resource policy, Board policy and Volunteer policy.

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Confidentiality for Employees

1. New employees will be advised verbally of the Confidentiality Policy and Procedure and will be requested to read and understand this policy and sign an Oath of Confidentiality at commencement.
2. The signed Oath of Confidentiality will be retained in the employee's file.
3. The Confidentiality Policy will be further reviewed through the area orientation process.
4. Following commencement of employment, employees have a responsibility to handle information with respect to confidentiality throughout the working day, outside of employment and after employment ceases. Specifics of situations are outlined below.

INFORMATION ABOUT CLIENTS

Informal Conversation:

Employees engaging in informal conversation with (including but not limited to) other employees not in the immediate work area, volunteers, clients, families, guardians, friends and members of the general public will exercise personal judgement and ethics. Conversation, pictures and text that is not respectful to a persons privacy or that infringes on a persons rights, will be discouraged and not engaged in by the employee.

Formal Information Sharing (Verbal and Written Information):

As employees you may be required to engage in formal verbal, written and electronic sharing of information to fulfil your employment responsibilities related to clients.

This may occur with (including but not limited to) other employees not in the immediate work area, volunteers, other support persons/external agencies, other clients, and guardians. The parameters for this information sharing are outlined throughout policies and procedures regarding clients (e.g. handling of incidents).

Written Consent:

An employee may receive a formal request from external agencies/ persons for information.

Written consent from clients/guardians is required before release of information. This must be forwarded to coordinators/supervisors/designate of service area for handling of the request.

The consent form shall designate the purpose of release, the party receiving it, the time limitation and authorization of the individual/guardian.

Media:

All information released to the media regarding clients must have specific written consent by the individual/guardian and the authorization of the Executive Director/Designate and/or Board President.

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Telecommunications and Technology:

This refers to the use of any telecommunication device defined as standard landline, cellular network, Bluetooth, data storage devices or internet access (wired or wireless). All information shared using this technology will be within the scope of ASC's policy and procedure, necessary to carry out employee responsibilities, and follow the above guidelines.

.Legal:

There are federal and provincial laws and requirements that take precedence over ASC's policy, e.g. criminal investigation. In these circumstances, ASC employees are required to abide by these laws. It is the responsibility of the employee to advise if a client has a legal guardian and who the guardian is. Legal guardians and the Executive Director/Designate must be advised immediately when such a situation arises.

Awareness for Clients of Confidentiality:

Where applicable, this is reviewed with clients/guardians at the onset of commencement during their orientation to the service areas. Employees are also responsible to make clients aware of respecting each others privacy/rights and how employees of ASC protect their confidentiality.

HUMAN RESOURCES INFORMATION

Informal Conversation:

Employees engaging in informal conversation with (including but not limited to) other employees, volunteers, clients, families, guardians, friends, and members of the general public about employees, volunteers or board members will exercise personal judgement and ethics. Conversation, pictures and text that is not respectful to a persons privacy or infringes on their rights, will be discouraged and not engaged in by the employee.

Formal Information Sharing (Written and Verbal):

As employees you may be required to engage in formal written, verbal and electronic sharing of information regarding other employees and possibly volunteers (documentation of sick time, time sheets, etc.). The parameters for information sharing are within the scope of policies and procedures necessary to carry out employee responsibilities.

Written consent:

Under certain circumstances it will be required that an employee sign written consent for release of information. This may include but is not limited to employment verification, reference checks (see reference checks policy and procedure).

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Recruitment / Interviewing / Hiring Information:

Employees may be involved in hiring and interviewing. This gives them access to confidential information about prospective and present employees, as well as volunteers' recruitment information. This information will be treated with the utmost confidence as outlined in the Human Resource policies.

Media:

Employees shall not release information to the media without the authorization of the Executive Director/Designate and/or the Board President. This includes information solicited by the media or released to the media.

Telecommunications and Technology:

This refers to the use of any telecommunication device defined as standard landline, cellular network, Bluetooth, data storage devices or internet access (wired or wireless). All information shared using this technology will be within the scope of ASC's policy and procedure, necessary to carry out employee responsibilities, and follow the above guidelines.

Legal:

There are federal and provincial laws and requirements that take precedence over ASC's policy, e.g. criminal investigation. In these circumstances, ASC employees are required to abide by these laws. It is the responsibility of the employee to advise the Executive Director/Designate immediately when such a situation arises.

OPERATIONAL INFORMATION

Informal Conversation:

Employees engaging in informal conversation about operational information will exercise personal judgement, ethics and not engage in conversation, pictures and text that is detrimental or harmful to the integrity of the activities/stakeholders of ASC. For purposes of this policy, stakeholders includes clients, families, contractors, employees, volunteers, Board Members and those agencies/persons engaged in formal business with ASC.

At no time should the employee undertake to represent their own opinion as that of the governing body, the general membership or the stakeholders.

Formal Information Sharing:

Formal verbal, written and electronic sharing of information regarding operations should only occur with stakeholders and should be relevant to employee responsibilities.

When employees are unsure of what information they should be sharing, employees should look to their Coordinator/Designate and/or Executive Director/Services Director for guidance.

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Written Consent:

From time to time an employee may receive a formal request from external agencies/persons, for written/verbal release of operational information. This must be forwarded to the Executive Director/Designate for determination of handling of request.

Media:

Employees shall not release any operational information to the media without the consent and authorization of the Executive Director/Designate and/or the Board President. This includes information solicited by the media or released to the media.

Telecommunications and Technology:

This refers to the use of any telecommunication device defined as standard landline, cellular network, Bluetooth, data storage devices or internet access (wired or wireless). All information shared using this technology will be within the scope of ASC's policy and procedure, necessary to carry out employee responsibilities, and follow the above guidelines.

Legal:

There are federal and provincial laws and requirements that take precedence over ASC's policy. In these circumstances ASC employees are required to abide by these laws. It is the responsibility of the employee to advise the Executive Director/Services Director when such a situation arises.

CONFIDENTIALITY RE. BREACH OF POLICY

In the event of a breach of policy, employees aware of the breach will be required to report all information about the breach. Personnel involved in the handling of the breach of policy may include the involved employees, immediate supervisor, co-ordinator, Executive Director/Designate and Board. Based on contract requirements a breach of confidentiality may be reported externally by the Executive Director/Services Director. Employees will not disclose information to other parties not involved in the investigation.

For the purpose of this policy and procedure clients refers to: customers or anyone who receives services form ASC.

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