

Ashburton Support Services

Privacy Policy and Grievance Procedure - Staff and Volunteers

Ashburton Support Services strives to act with the highest integrity in maintaining the privacy of our staff members, volunteers and clients. We are bound by the national privacy principles contained in the *Privacy Act 1988*; the Victorian Health Privacy Principles contained in the *Health Records Act 2001* and the *Information Privacy Act 2000* (Vic).

Collection of Information

Collecting information is essential to delivering a high quality service to staff, volunteers and clients. Information collected will take into consideration the duty of care we have to clients, staff and volunteers and to ensure appropriate placement of staff. For this reason, information collected will include contact details, qualifications/skill/abilities and experience, health information and some social/lifestyle details. We give sensitive information the extra protection provided under the law. Personal information will only be collected if it is of relevance to the organisation in assisting the effective delivery of service. Information collection processes will be fair and lawful. The service uses volunteers to record information about clients, financial accounts and the management of staff and volunteers.

Use and Disclosure of Information Collected by the Service by Other Staff Members or Volunteers

The service may use information supplied by volunteers to create rosters and to support and manage staff. To this end, other authorised staff members and volunteers will have access to your general record. Information will be used for supervisory and statistical data analysis purposes with the aim of providing 'best practice' in the recruitment and management of volunteers (volunteers only).

We may give any registration information that you have given to us to the relevant employing organisation, in relation to a particular volunteer opportunity if you have indicated an interest in applying for a position in that organisation (volunteers only).

Staff members' records may only be accessed by the Ashburton Support Services Chief Executive Officer or Board of Management.

Staff and volunteers registering with Ashburton Support Services or Volunteer Alliance who intend to work in positions which deal face-to-face with clients, or which involve handling client or volunteer information, will be asked to give permission for a Police Check to be carried out. Staff and volunteers cannot be allocated to face-to-face positions without a police clearance. An exception to this requirement is made for children under 17 years of age. In the case of under 17-year-olds, a responsible adult must agree to be responsible for the child and the responsible adult must have a police clearance. As part of the Police Check, we may be required to disclose personal information about volunteers to the placement organisation.

Staff and volunteers working in direct contact with clients, or with confidential client/volunteer information, are required to undertake training to develop their understanding of privacy and

confidentiality issues, and to sign an agreement undertaking to adhere to privacy and confidentiality policies and practices.

Staff and volunteers may not use or disclose any information that identifies other staff members, volunteers or clients of the service to unauthorised personnel.

Information will not be used for secondary purposes without permission of the individual unless there is a reasonable expectation that such use or disclosure would be a valid use of the information or where the public interest permits.

We may also disclose your personal information to third parties where the law requires it (such as for law enforcement purposes or where there is a threat to a person's safety).

There may be times where the personal information is not required to be given by law, but Volunteer Alliance deems it important for clients/supervisors to be informed. In these instances, written permission will be sought from the volunteer before disclosing the information (volunteers only).

Storage and Security of Personal Information

Only authorised personnel may access records of personal information of staff, volunteers or clients. Records are retained throughout an individual's engagement period with the organisation and may possibly be retained for a further seven years in case of medical or legal implications. When the records are no longer required, they are shredded. Information is held in both computer-based and paper-based storage methods and are protected from unauthorised access. Ashburton Support Services encourages a clean desk policy to ensure that files are stored and protected appropriately. Staff, volunteer or client records or files may only be removed from their secure location with the permission of the executive officer of the organisation.

Correcting or Altering Information

The service takes reasonable steps to ensure that the personal information it collects, uses or discloses is accurate, complete and current.

When personal information changes, becomes out of date, or is incorrect, we ask that the information be corrected.

Staff, volunteers or clients may at any time access (and modify if necessary) the personal information which they initially provided or other information that is held about them by the service.

We aim to respond to requests for access to personal information within 14 days.

Grievance Procedure

Volunteers, staff and clients have a right to complain about a breach of privacy. Volunteer Alliance's Privacy Officer is the Chief Executive Officer of Ashburton Support Services and each service has grievance procedures in place. Any breach of privacy rights should be dealt with through the Privacy Officer and in accordance with the grievance procedures of the service where you are placed. The grievance procedures for the service will be given to volunteers at the time of

registration. If there is no satisfactory outcome, the volunteers can contact the Privacy Commissioner by phoning 1300 363 992, or by writing to:

Director of Complaints
Office of the Commissioner
GPO Box 5218
Sydney NSW 1042

All of the rights that staff and volunteers have to privacy and the protection of it apply equally to other volunteers, staff members and clients of the service and it is each individual's responsibility to ensure these rights are protected.

We constantly review our policy and procedures to ensure that they comply with any changes to Privacy law.

January 2003