

# Capricorn Citizen Advocacy

## CONFIDENTIALITY SAFEGUARDS POLICY

|                            |                    |  |                            |
|----------------------------|--------------------|--|----------------------------|
| <b>Policy number:</b>      | <b>4.1.0</b>       | <b>Approved by Management Committee:</b> | 4 <sup>th</sup> April 2017 |
| <b>Version:</b>            | <b>3.0</b>         | <b>Signed off by Executive:</b>          | 4 <sup>th</sup> April 2017 |
| <b>Responsible person:</b> | <b>Coordinator</b> | <b>Scheduled Review Date:</b>            | 4 <sup>th</sup> April 2020 |

### Purpose

Capricorn Citizen Advocacy affirms the right of all people to dignity and confidentiality in all activities undertaken by this association. This policy should be implemented in conjunction with;

|         |  |
|---------|--|
| 1.3.4.2 | <i>Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy</i>                        |
| 1.3.4.3 | <i>Handling Disclosures or Suspicions of Harm, including Reporting</i> |
| 4.1.0.1 | <i>Confidentiality Agreement Form</i>                                  |
| 4.2.0   | <i>Privacy Policy</i>  |

### Policy

#### **1. Confidentiality as a Guiding Principle**

Capricorn Citizen Advocacy undertakes to ensure the confidentiality of all written and verbal information obtained about any individual. Staff will be circumspect, sensitive and positive in the presentation of any individual's personal information to the Management Committee. Confidentiality applies to verbal information, written information and information on computers.

Program staff and Management Committee members will also at all times respect people's privacy in terms of their personal environment (eg. home), personal possessions and personal space.

#### **2. Dignity as a Guiding Principle**

All people will be treated with dignity and respect. All will be shown courtesy, consideration and acknowledgement of their unique circumstances, and understanding of their individual attributes.

Management Committee members and staff will ensure that relationships with colleagues, association members, and others are dignified and respectful.

Capricorn Citizen Advocacy will endeavour to ensure that people feel valued and respected through the actions, language, photos and graphic images used by this program.

### **3. Confidentiality Agreement**

In view of the association's commitment to privacy and dignity, both staff and Management Committee members sign a Confidentiality Agreement which clearly outlines the consequences of any breaches. *See 4.1.0.1 Confidentiality Agreement Form.*

Staff must abide by the *6.0.0 Code of Conduct – Staff and Volunteers* which includes upholding confidentiality during the performance of their duties.

Management Committee members must abide by the *1.1.5 Code of Conduct - Committee of Management* which includes upholding confidentiality during the performance of their duties.

All mailing lists and telephone numbers are confidential and shall not be supplied to other organisations or individuals.

Consent must be received from the individual protégé prior to the commencement of any involvement in the Citizen Advocacy program, except where the person lacks the decision making capacity or they refuse to act in their best interest. *See 3.1.2 Consent of Protégés Policy.*

If it is in the interests of a person's safety, or in life threatening situations, it is permissible for Capricorn Citizen Advocacy to disclose relevant, sensitive information.

People who consider that their confidentiality has been broken are encouraged to resolve the matter in the first instance with the advocate or other person themselves.

Alternatively, people may use either the *5.0.0 Complaints Policy* or *6.5.0 Staff Grievance Policy* to lodge a formal complaint. Another person may do this on an individual's behalf.

### **4. Collection of Information**

- a) Each protégé and advocate is advised of what information is kept about him/her, why it is kept and who has access to it. Protégés are to be informed that basic information relevant to advocate needs will be taken and retained to assist in recruiting the best possible advocate and also to support the match. People may request that information not be shared with other people. Information obtained will be kept in a locked filing cabinet at Citizen Advocacy office and access restricted to staff and designated Management Committee members. The Coordinator will inform the person of the kind of information which he/she must pass on to the Management Committee.
- b) Generally, the only confidential information gathered and recorded by the Coordinator will be that which is relevant and necessary to each protégé and advocate's successful involvement in Citizen Advocacy. This information is never to be shared with other agencies except with the consent of the protégé concerned and their advocate.



## **5. How Working Files are kept Confidential**

- a) The working files of protégés and citizen advocates will only accessible to Capricorn Citizen Advocacy staff, and in exceptional circumstances, to the Management Committee. All private information about protégés and citizen advocates, which is not kept in their file, is shredded. If the Protégé's, their Citizen Advocate or any other person wishes to view the working file, this will occur at the Co-ordinator's discretion, in line with the confidentiality policy.
- b) Files should be returned to a lockable filing cabinet after use. All files should be stored under lock and key at the end of the day. Information from files, including names, addresses and telephone numbers should not be divulged without permission of the Co-ordinator.
- c) Information shall remain confidential except where it involves:
  - serious illegal actions on the part of any person;
  - any issue which could endanger the safety of other people;
  - or where the staff member is legally obliged to notify authorities.

The Coordinator will determine the most appropriate course of action in these cases.

- d) When working files are in use, staff will always ensure that visitors to the office do not see the contents of the files by closing the files during any close contact with the visitor/s. Any files which are left on a staff member's desk will be turned face down so as to minimise the possibility of a breach of confidentiality. When not in use, working files will be kept locked in the office filing cabinet. When files are in use all caution will be taken to maintain confidentiality.
- e) Staff are mindful of the possibility that visitors to the office may overhear telephone conversations, and will therefore make every effort to avoid mentioning any identifying information during such conversations.
- f) The Coordinator will ensure that note taking practices do not breach confidentiality. Workers are responsible for ensuring that their own diary notes do not use identifying information and thus breach confidentiality. Messages and working notes will be destroyed once transferred into appropriate files or matters are finalised.
- g) Staff will offer people the choice of venue for any interview that takes place. Should the association's office be chosen for an interview, then such interview will take place in the privacy of the Co-ordinator's office or in the Boardroom.

## **6. Access to Working Files and Other Information**

- a) Staff diaries remain the property of Capricorn Citizen Advocacy and will be stored in a locked filing cabinet when they are surrendered at the end of each calendar year.
- b) All written material provided to the Management Committee in the course of their role, shall be kept private and only discussed with staff or Management Committee members. At the end of each financial year, members of the Management Committee will bring written materials which are no longer necessary to the effective performance of their role, into the office for shredding.

- c) When people are no longer involved with Capricorn Citizen Advocacy, all personal files kept on computer will be deleted, with the exception of information required for data collection. Data will never enable any person to be identified.
- d) As part of the orientation to their respective roles, all staff and Management Committee members will be familiarised with this Confidentiality Safeguards policy.
- e) Advocates are informed at their initial orientation and reminded throughout their association with Capricorn Citizen Advocacy, of the issues relating to confidentiality and privacy. They are also informed that they are not to discuss personal details about their protégé without the protégé's consent. In the event of a gross breach of confidentiality or privacy by an advocate, the program would withdraw support from the advocate and continue to provide support for the protégé by recruiting another advocate.
- f) Permission by both the protégé and advocate must be freely given in the presence of a third person before the personal details regarding their relationship may be used for any external or internal publicity or promotion. Anonymity must otherwise be maintained at all times.
- g) Information collected and recorded about people can be aggregated into broad categories and used for non-identifying data collection for statistical and program evaluation purposes.

#### **7. Requests for Information**

- a) Requests for information about any person (staff, protégés, advocates, etc.) should not be responded to over the phone or in writing without the express permission of the appropriate authority as listed below.
- b) Requests for information regarding volunteers should be passed to the Co-ordinator.
- c) Requests for information regarding staff should be passed onto the President or Management Committee Executive member.
- d) Requests for information regarding other matters should be passed on to the Co-ordinator.

#### **8. CAPE External Evaluation Reviews**

- a) An external evaluation of Capricorn Citizen Advocacy against CAPE standards will be conducted regularly (approximately every 3-5 years). This will necessitate opening all records to the evaluation team and requesting protégés, advocates and others to give any necessary information to the team.
- b) The CAPE team will be chosen bearing in mind the requirement for confidentiality. The team will be required to make a pledge of confidentiality on personal information received. All protégés and advocates will be notified of the forthcoming evaluation with an explanation of reasons for and process of the evaluation.
- c) Protégés and advocates will be requested to meet with the evaluation team, and permission will be requested for records to be made available to the team.

### Related Documents

|         |   |
|---------|---|
| 1.1.5   | Code of Conduct - Committee of Management                       |
| 1.3.4.2 | Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy                        |
| 1.3.4.3 | Handling Disclosures or Suspicions of Harm, including Reporting |
| 3.1.2   | Consent of Protégés Policy                                      |
| 4.1.0.1 | Confidentiality Agreement Form                                  |
| 4.2.0   | Privacy Policy  |
| 5.0.0   | Complaints Policy   |
| 6.0.0   | Code of Conduct - Staff and Volunteers                          |
| 6.5.0   | Staff Grievance Policy  |

### References

1. *Citizen Advocacy Program Evaluation (CAPE) Reviews*

### Ratification

This policy was adopted by Capricorn Citizen Advocacy's Management Committee at its meeting held on: 04 / 04 / 2017.

SIGNED:

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President

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41 4 / 17  
(Date)

SIGNED:

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Secretary

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6 / 4 / 17  
(Date)

