

Privacy and Confidentiality Policy

Introduction

Beanies Family Support, located in the Huon Valley, Tasmania, is committed to protecting the privacy and confidentiality of all clients, employees, volunteers, and stakeholders. Our services, which include child and young person advocacy, NDIS application support, NDIS support coordination, youth coaching, early intervention support, early childhood service consulting, counselling, and community event support, require stringent privacy and confidentiality standards to ensure consistency and quality in service delivery. This policy outlines our commitment to maintaining the highest standards of privacy and confidentiality.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Define the standards for privacy and confidentiality across all our services.
- Ensure a consistent and high-quality approach to handling personal and sensitive information.
- Outline the responsibilities and expectations of staff, volunteers, and contractors regarding privacy and confidentiality.
- Establish procedures for collecting, storing, using, and disclosing personal information.

Scope

This policy applies to all Beanies Family Support staff, volunteers, contractors, clients, and visitors involved in the delivery of services.

Privacy and Confidentiality Standards

1. Commitment to Privacy

Beanies Family Support is committed to protecting the privacy of all individuals who engage with our services. We ensure that personal information is collected, used, and disclosed in accordance with the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) and the Australian Privacy Principles (APPs). This commitment involves implementing policies and procedures that safeguard personal information and ensure that it is only used for its intended purpose.

2. Collection of Personal Information

We collect personal information only when it is necessary for the provision of our services. This information is collected in a fair and lawful manner, with the consent of the individual, and is limited to what is necessary to fulfil the purpose for which it is collected. We inform individuals about the purpose of collection, the use of their information, and their rights regarding their personal information.

3. Use and Disclosure of Personal Information

Personal information is used solely for the purpose for which it was collected, or for a related secondary purpose that would be reasonably expected by the individual, or with their consent. Beanies Family Support does not disclose personal information to third parties without the individual's consent, unless required by law. We ensure that any third parties to whom we disclose personal information adhere to similar privacy standards.

4. Data Security

We take all reasonable steps to protect personal information from misuse, interference, loss, unauthorised access, modification, or disclosure. This includes implementing physical, electronic, and managerial procedures to safeguard and secure the information we collect. Staff and volunteers are trained on data security practices and are required to adhere to our confidentiality agreements.

5. Access and Correction

Individuals have the right to access their personal information held by Beanies Family Support and to request corrections if they believe the information is inaccurate, incomplete, or outdated. Requests for access or correction can be made in writing, and we will respond promptly, ensuring that any necessary changes are made.

6. Confidentiality in Service Delivery

Maintaining confidentiality is critical to building trust and providing high-quality services. All staff, volunteers, and contractors are required to sign a confidentiality agreement upon commencing work with Beanies Family Support. They are trained to handle personal information discreetly and are prohibited from discussing or sharing client information without explicit consent.

Specific Guidelines for Service Areas

1. Child and Young Person Advocacy

In child and young person advocacy, maintaining confidentiality is crucial to protecting the rights and safety of children. All information regarding children and young people is handled with the utmost care, and any disclosures are made in accordance with legal and ethical guidelines to ensure the best interests of the child.

2. NDIS Application Support

When assisting clients with NDIS applications, personal and sensitive information is collected to support the application process. This information is handled confidentially, and clients are informed about how their information will be used and who it may be shared with. Consent is obtained before any information is disclosed to third parties.

3. NDIS Support Coordination

NDIS support coordinators collect detailed information about clients' needs and circumstances to develop personalised support plans. This information is kept confidential and is only shared with relevant service providers with the client's consent. Regular reviews are conducted to ensure that information is accurate and up-to-date.

4. Youth Coaching

In youth coaching, confidentiality is essential to creating a safe and trusting environment for young people. Information shared by young people during coaching sessions is kept confidential and is only disclosed with their consent or if required by law to prevent harm. Coaches are trained to handle sensitive information appropriately.

5. Early Intervention Support

Early intervention support involves working closely with families and young children, often requiring the collection of sensitive information. This information is handled confidentially, and families are informed about how their information will be used. Consent is obtained before sharing information with other service providers.

6. Early Childhood Service Consulting

Consulting services may involve accessing and analysing sensitive information from early childhood service providers. Beanies Family Support ensures that all information is handled

confidentially and that findings and recommendations are shared only with authorised personnel. Data security measures are implemented to protect this information.

7. Counselling

Counselling services involve sharing personal and sensitive information in a confidential setting. Counsellors are bound by professional ethics and legal obligations to maintain confidentiality. Information shared during counselling sessions is only disclosed with the client's consent or if required by law to prevent harm.

8. Community Event Support

When supporting community events, Beanies Family Support may collect personal information from participants. This information is used solely for event management purposes and is handled confidentially. Participants are informed about how their information will be used, and consent is obtained for any disclosures.

Procedures for Handling Personal Information

1. Collection

Personal information is collected through various means, including forms, interviews, and digital platforms. We ensure that all collection methods are secure and that individuals are informed about the purpose of collection. Consent is obtained before collecting any personal information.

2. Storage

Personal information is stored securely in both physical and electronic formats. Access to this information is restricted to authorised personnel only. Physical records are stored in locked cabinets, and electronic records are protected by passwords and encryption.

3. Use

Personal information is used only for the purpose for which it was collected. Staff and volunteers are trained to handle information discreetly and to ensure that it is used in accordance with the individual's consent and the organisation's policies.

4. Disclosure

Personal information is disclosed to third parties only with the individual's consent or as required by law. We ensure that any third parties to whom we disclose information adhere to similar privacy standards. Records of disclosures are maintained for accountability.

5. Access and Correction

Individuals can request access to their personal information or request corrections by contacting Beanies Family Support in writing. We will respond to requests promptly and make necessary corrections to ensure information is accurate and up-to-date.

6. Complaints

Individuals who believe that their privacy has been breached can lodge a complaint with Beanies Family Support. Complaints will be investigated promptly and thoroughly, and appropriate measures will be taken to address any issues and prevent future breaches.

Training and Awareness

Beanies Family Support is committed to ensuring that all staff, volunteers, and contractors understand their responsibilities regarding privacy and confidentiality. Regular training sessions will be conducted to keep everyone informed about privacy laws, organisational policies, and best practices. This training will be part of the orientation for new staff and ongoing professional development for all team members.

Monitoring and Evaluation

To ensure the effectiveness of our privacy and confidentiality practices, Beanies Family Support will conduct regular monitoring and evaluation. This includes reviewing our policies and procedures, auditing our data security measures, and gathering feedback from clients and staff. The findings from these evaluations will inform continuous improvements to our privacy and confidentiality practices.

Conclusion

Beanies Family Support is dedicated to maintaining the highest standards of privacy and confidentiality. By adhering to the guidelines outlined in this Privacy and Confidentiality Policy, we aim to protect the personal information of all individuals who engage with our services. Our commitment to privacy and confidentiality ensures that we can continue to provide high-quality, trustworthy services to our community in the Huon Valley.

