

Confidentiality Policy

Purpose and Scope

Summary policy statement (service users)

Ambitious about Autism provides a confidential service. We will normally not disclose information about you to anyone else without your permission. We may, however, disclose information where we are required to by law, or where we believe it is necessary to prevent serious harm to you or to someone else. In most cases we will tell you before we disclose information without your permission, and we will always give you a reason for our disclosure.

We take care over the security of the information we hold, and we train our staff and volunteers in how to look after your information in a confidential manner.

Summary policy statement (supporters)

Ambitious about Autism respects the confidentiality of its supporters and donors. We take care over the security of the information we hold, and we train our staff and volunteers in how to look after your information. We do not share your details with other organisations.

Other policies to be referred to:

- Data Protection Policy
- Data Security Policy
- Compliments and Complaints Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Giving and the use of references Policy
- AaA Adult at Risk Safeguarding and Protection Policy
- AaA Adult at Risk Safeguarding and Protection Procedure
- AaA Child Safeguarding and Protection Policy
- AaA Child Safeguarding and Protection Procedure

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Guidelines for managers / individuals

Introduction and general principles

This policy applies to all trustees, governors, employees and volunteers. The duty of confidentiality is written into the contracts of employment for all employees. Breach of confidentiality, whether directly or indirectly is a disciplinary offence, which could result in dismissal and/or prosecution.

Ambitious about Autism places a high value and importance on confidentiality.

Ambitious about Autism also respects the confidentiality of its supporters and donors, its employees and volunteers and, where relevant, the partner organisations it works alongside.

Confidentiality means that Ambitious about Autism restricts access to information about individuals. It defines who needs access, to which information, for which purposes, and takes steps to ensure that those boundaries are respected.

Confidential information is shared only with consent or where we have a legal duty to make a disclosure or where we believe it is necessary in order to prevent serious harm to any person.

Service users

Electronically-held information concerning our service-users and supporting paperwork is accessible only by staff and volunteers who are involved in service delivery and others who have been specifically authorised by the Headteacher or the College Principal.

Staff and volunteers directly involved in the delivery of services to service users can access only the information appropriate to their role.

Personal information about service users may be disclosed with the consent of the individual concerned, and Ambitious about Autism works with service users, or their legal guardian, to gain their consent whenever possible when a disclosure appears appropriate.

Disclosure without consent may only take place after authorisation by the Headteacher or the College Principal in the following cases:

- safeguarding risk or incident
- suspected criminal offence

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In all cases the recipient(s) of the information and the reasons for the disclosure are documented. Where possible the individual is informed that the disclosure is to be made, unless there is a good reason for not doing so.

Where a disclosure is to be made (with or without consent) the identity of the person to whom the disclosure is made will be verified.

All employees and volunteers who have access to confidential service user information are given training at appropriate intervals on confidentiality.

Any employee or volunteer who inadvertently breaches confidentiality or who becomes aware of a confidentiality breach must report it as soon as possible to the Headteacher or the College Principal.

All service users, or their legal guardian, are told that Ambitious about Autism's services are confidential at an early stage in their contact with the charity, with an indication of the circumstances in which confidentiality may not be respected.

A summary of Ambitious about Autism's confidentiality policy is made available on the website and by request.

Donors and supporters

The database where donor and supporter information is recorded (Raiser's Edge) has restricted access.

All employees and volunteers are informed which information they may access, for which purpose(s), and are individually responsible for respecting this. As far as reasonably possible, information in Raiser's Edge will be presented in such a way as to minimise the likelihood of people seeing more information than they need to.

Donors or supporters who are also service users are identified as such on Raiser's Edge, and any marketing contact with those service users takes place only after the Director of Fundraising has confirmed that it is appropriate on that occasion.

Supporters who subscribe to our electronic newsletter have their information recorded on our website database and on Mailchimp.

Users who register to our Talk about Autism online community have their information recorded on our website database only.

Mailchimp is an email marketing platform. Full information about their privacy policies can be found [here](#).

Our website is protected by an SSL certificate which enables secure connections from a web server to a browser and allows for secure data transfer.

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Access to Mailchimp and our website are limited and individuals with access have restrictions according to their permissions settings.

Employees, volunteers and trustees

Employee, volunteer and trustee records are confidential and shared only on a need to know basis. This includes reasons for absence and other sensitive data.

The primary record is held by HR for staff and volunteers and by the Executive Office for trustees. Where others need to hold information on staff, this is kept to a minimum, held securely, and a copy of every document is placed with the primary record.

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Policy No.	AaA 062	Version No.	1.0



Ambitious about Autism describes in the Use and Giving of References Policy the circumstances under which references can be provided and information disclosed.

Unauthorised access

Ambitious about Autism takes appropriate security measures to prevent unauthorised people from gaining access to its computer systems and other information.

Deliberate unauthorised access by any member of staff or volunteer will be treated as a disciplinary matter and potentially as gross misconduct.

Contractual obligations of staff and others

A contractual obligation to maintain confidentiality is included in the contracts of all staff employed by Ambitious about Autism.

Where a contract is not appropriate (for example with volunteers and sometimes with agency staff and external contractors or when a commercial contract is relevantly and practically deficient), before being given access to any confidential information they are required to sign a confidentiality pledge, reminding them of their common law duty of confidentiality and indicating the information Ambitious about Autism regards as confidential.

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Appendix A

Volunteers at Ambitious about Autism are required to sign the following statement before they can be authorised to have access to personal data.

Ambitious about Autism holds highly confidential information about service users and other individuals and about its work in general.

I confirm that I have read and understood Ambitious about Autism's confidentiality policy and that I will comply with it for as long as any information I have obtained remains confidential.

In particular, I acknowledge that I have a duty to respect the confidentiality of information I obtain whilst working for Ambitious about Autism and confirm that I will not disclose it even after I cease working for Ambitious about Autism

Signed: _____

Print name: _____

Date: _____

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