

Student Union Advocacy Service Confidentiality Policy

The Advocacy Service (the Service) manages personal and health information in accordance with the *Information Privacy Act 2000* (Vic), the *Health Records Act 2001* (Vic), and the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth).

All students using the Service the right to expect that the information they present to anyone within the Service will remain confidential unless the material relates to a potentially life threatening situation, or due to any overriding legal requirements. Staff have a responsibility to inform students of the limits of this confidentiality at the outset of their first contact.

Implementation

Specifically, information obtained from students will remain confidential at all times unless the information concerns any of the following:

1. Life threatening situation (such as an expressed intention to self-harm or to commit harm to another individual);
2. Information concerning serious criminal behaviour;
3. A matter regarded as sufficiently serious to warrant the information being communicated to another person or service; and/or
4. An overriding legal requirement such as a court subpoena or order.

Where staff are in doubt as to whether to divulge information of a serious nature they should discuss this with the Manager, Advocacy & Legal prior to making any decision.

Notwithstanding the exceptions noted above, staff will ensure that they have the student's authority to pass on information to a third party, and will ensure that any information received from a third party about a student is with the prior approval of the student.

Staff cannot discuss student matters with parents or other family members without the express consent of the student. Where a legal representative of the student wishes to consult with staff on the student's behalf, they are required to produce a written authority to act.

Records Management – file retention and disposal

Records held by the Advocacy Service are classified as temporary and are to be destroyed six years after the last action was completed. These records are held securely in the Advocacy Service until they are due for destruction.

Hard copy records will be destroyed by being placed in a secure record destruction bin for shredding. Electronic records will be permanently deleted.

A previous service user may - at any time prior to its destruction - obtain a copy of their own file by contacting the Manager, Advocacy & Legal and requesting it.