

Match Confidentiality Policy

Board Approval Date: 5 July 2011

Revision Date: _____

In order for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Christchurch to provide a responsible and professional service to young people, it is necessary for mentors, young people and their parents/guardians to be asked to divulge information about themselves and their families. The agency respects the confidentiality of mentor, young people and their families records, and with the exception of situations listed below as the limits of confidentiality, shares information about mentors and young people only among the agency or professional staff. The right to confidentiality applies not only to written records but also to video, film, pictures or use of mentor and young people name in agency publications. All records are considered the property of the agency, not the agency workers nor the mentors and young people.

Known violations of agency confidentiality policy will be reported to the supervisor of the individual involved and appropriate disciplinary action shall be requested.

Access to Confidential Records

- All mentors may have access to their own personal records, including their application forms, supervision records, police checks and references. This can be arranged through a Mentoring Co-ordinator. Confidential information relating to them will be stored securely in the project offices. All computers will have passwords to access the network and files.
- Young people's records and other information relating to them must be stored securely to prevent accidental or intentional viewing by anyone who is not a volunteer or a worker within the agency. Records of closed matches greater than 6 months old can be discarded using a shredder.

Match Confidentiality

- Mentors will keep all one-to-one conversations with their young person confidential except within the limits of confidentiality below. Young people should be encouraged to understand the limits of confidentiality through their child safety training prior to match.
- Mentors must not pass on any information about a young person to any individual or outside agency of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Christchurch without the young person's informed consent and the Mentoring Co-ordinator's agreement. This includes information about the participation of the young person in the programme.

Limits of Confidentiality

Releasing information to other agencies

- Information will be released to other individuals or organization only upon presentation of an authorized consent to release of information form appropriately signed by the mentor and/or young people. Photos and first name identifying information regarding mentors and young people may be used in agency publications or promotional materials if the mentor and/or young person and parent have given consent.
- Information shall be provided to law enforcement officials or the courts pursuant to a valid and enforceable subpoena.
- Information shall be provided to any agency's legal counsel in the event of litigation or potential litigation involving the agency. Such information is considered privileged information, and the law protects its confidentiality.

Match relationship

If a mentor receives information that a young person may be a danger to him/herself, or to others, necessary steps must be taken to protect the appropriate individual.

- In the case of a potential suicide attempt or self-harm by the young person, the Mentoring Co-ordinator and the parents/carer/guardian must be informed immediately.
- In the case of young people violence towards others the Mentoring Co-ordinator must be informed immediately. Remember also that actual or threatened violence to an individual is a criminal act.
- If a young person communicates specific intent of an unlawful act to their mentor, which will be committed, appropriate authorities must be notified by the Mentoring Co-ordinator. When this type of situation presents itself, it most often signifies intent by the young people to 'let someone know' what is going on. Quite often, the young person can be persuaded to 'do the right thing'.
- Where a young person discloses, or you have serious concerns about abuse, sexual, physical or emotional, the Dealing with Suspected or Alleged Child Abuse Policy shall be followed.
- If a young person reports their involvement in a criminal act, the mentor should notify the Mentoring Coordinator who will determine whether or not the police shall be notified.

Supervision

Mentors are encouraged to use both individual and group supervision sessions to bring accountability and safety to their practice. To this end, mentors may share experiences and information from their relationship with a young person. When sharing in group supervision, mentors should talk about their young person using first names only. Group and individual supervision sessions are confidential; therefore what is said in the group should stay in the group.

NOTE:

- The Governance Policy will have a statement regarding board members confidentiality
- The Staffing Policy will have a statement regarding staff members confidentiality