

COMMUNICATION

FREEDOM of INFORMATION [FOI] & PUBLIC COMMENTS BY STAFF

5.04

Policy Rationale

- Ensure that CCAE communicates information to clients in accord with established protocols to preserve the professionalism of the College, protect the rights of individuals, uphold the duty of care to students, and comply with the law.
- Ensure that CCAE employees can make public comment on issues relating to education, but without public criticism of CCAE, Board of Management, fellow staff or community members unless it is a litigious issue.

Policy Aims

- Ensure communication complies with legal requirements and that CCAE staff are aware of their legal, professional and ethical obligations in regard to communications since legal action may be taken against improper staff communications.
- Ensure **The Information Privacy Act and Health Records Act 2001** is appropriately implemented to protect the individual's right to control how their personal information is used, and for what purpose.
- Ensure CCAE only collects consensual information, and only discloses such information for the purposes it was collected.
- Ensure internal CCAE communication is communicated to the right personnel in a logical and sequential manner.
- Ensure internal CCAE communication is communicated in a manner that can be easily tracked and recovered

Procedure – Freedom of Information

- Reception is the first contact with enquiries either by over-the-counter clients, phone, email, fax, mail.
- Reception will process mail, fax, email as per Admin: Communication Policy [Internet, Email, Mail Inwards/Outwards]
- Reception will direct incoming phone and counter enquiries that cannot be addressed by Reception to the relevant personnel or record the enquiry and direct the contact details to the relevant personnel for their response.
- The Information Privacy Act and Health Records Act 2001 require that CCAE protect the interests of individuals with regard to their personal information and respect the individual's right to control how their personal information is used, and for what purpose. The CCAE will only collect consensual information that it requires about individuals, and will only communicate and disclose information for the purposes for which it was collected.

Procedure - Requests for Information

- Persons seeking information from CCAE that falls outside CCAE's practices will be directed to the Manager who may require a Freedom of Information request. The Manager will inform CCAE Board of any such requests.
- All Freedom of Information requests will be referred to ACFE Regional Council.
- Information sought by police, including interviews of students, must be directed to the Manager.
- Requests from DHS personnel regarding students or families will be complied with at all times.
- All staff will comply with court subpoenas to provide information.

Procedure - Public Comments by Staff

- CCAE employees may make public comment on issues relating to education, but must avoid making comments that can be construed as negative criticism of the CCAE, Board of Management, fellow staff or community members without first having raised those criticisms with the respective parties concerned in private.
- If staff have concerns with CCAE and its operations, they are obligated to raise those matters internally and directly with the Manager via the **Complaints Procedure**. Staff taking internal issues to the public without exhausting the CCAE Complaints process will receive a formal written warning and depending on the harm caused to the organisation or individuals concerned could be sued for damages.
- As a matter of professional courtesy, staff will inform the Manager before making public comment on:
 - ✚ educational issues
 - ✚ matters that bears on CCAE's organisational arrangements, staff expectations, communications.

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed bi-annually.

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