

Policy/Procedure Name: Privacy and Confidentiality	
Type: Governance	Approved by: Executive Director
Date of Original: February 2016	Effective Date: April 11, 2025
Dates Revised: September 2019; November 2020; April 2025	

POLICY:

Hospice Renfrew employees and volunteers must adhere to the criteria outlined below to ensure the protection of personal information and must sign the Statement of Confidentiality and Privacy as a condition of employment/volunteering.

All providers, suppliers and contractors doing business or partnering with Hospice Renfrew who may have access to confidential information must sign the Hospice Renfrew Confidentiality Agreement prior to commencing work or partnering with Hospice Renfrew.

Violation of confidentiality or data security may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, volunteer placement or contract for services in accordance with applicable privacy legislation and Hospice Renfrew policies and procedures.

CRITERIA:

Personal health information can be shared among health care team members to facilitate seamless and effective care (Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA), 2004).

- The health care team consists of all those who are involved in the care of the person regardless of if they work for the same organization or not.
- Personal health information must be kept confidential and secure.
- Personal health information consists of:
 - Physical or mental health, including family health history;
 - Care previously provided (including the identification of people providing care);
 - Payments or eligibility for health care;
 - Donation of organs and tissue;
 - A person's health number;
 - The name of the person's substitute decision maker (SDM).
- According to PHIPA, Community Hospices are considered Health Information Custodians (HICs) i.e. an organization that provides care within the health care continuum. Staff and volunteers who receive health care information are agents of HICs and must comply with all legislation.

- All staff and volunteers must receive education on privacy and confidentiality and agree to sign a confidentiality agreement with the Hospice.
- Personal health information should only be collected as needed to address care needs of that person and used accordingly.
- All Residents, staff and volunteers are entitled to receive a copy of their personal health information and must expressly consent to the collection, use and disclosure of their health information.
- The Hospice strives to have access to assistive services when there is a barrier to communication (as identified by either the resident or the professional staff) in order to provide information which is understood by the Resident and their significant others.

GUIDELINES:

The following guidelines are intended to assist employees and volunteers of Hospice Renfrew in adhering to and complying with the protection of personal information.

EMPLOYEE, VOLUNTEER AND DONOR INFORMATION

1. Hospice Renfrew regards all employee/ volunteer information as confidential and will respect the employee's/volunteers right to privacy. Employee/volunteer information is held in secured files.
2. Upon advance request to the Executive Director, employees, volunteers and donors may access their file for review should there be a need.

RESIDENT INFORMATION

It is the duty of all Hospice employees & volunteers to maintain the confidentiality of information belonging to or relating to Hospice Renfrew or its residents.

Confidentiality and the right to privacy of information is upheld in all forms of communication (verbal, written, electronic) at Hospice Renfrew. Staff and volunteers are to ensure confidentiality at all times by:

1. Avoiding the use of the names of resident/family/program participants except where relevant when discussing cases.
2. Avoiding the discussion of cases or other confidential communications in communal spaces;
3. Aiding each other in avoiding potential and actual breaches of confidentiality;
4. Never discussing residents, families or program participants outside of the organization including the fact that someone is a resident, family member or program participant. Avoiding any description of a Resident condition, age, diagnosis, family composition, even while withholding the name, which may link the Resident to Hospice Renfrew services; and

5. All employees & volunteers are required to sign a confidentiality agreement upon hiring (see Appendix C).

- Use of Social Media

The privacy and confidentiality policy applies to all social media platforms that include but are not limited to: Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Google+, LinkedIn and Instagram and funeral sites; whether posts are made to web pages that are broadly accessible to the public (e.g. through a blog or on Twitter) or to web pages that are only accessible to a limited number of invitees (e.g. through a “friends only” Facebook page). It includes all forms of posting including but not limited to: articles, artwork, photographs, videos, graphic design, condolences pages, blogs and other such interactive media forms.

- The use of social media by Hospice Renfrew staff and volunteers must be consistent with all Hospice Renfrew policies and procedures, directives of professional colleges, and applicable legislation, including those concerning privacy, code of conduct, conflict of interest, harassment and discrimination in the workplace.
- Compliance to all copyright and/or intellectual property right laws must be upheld when publishing to a social media site.
- Slanderous, libelous or otherwise illegal content are not to be published on social media sites.
- Hospice Renfrew does not endorse any product, business, cause or political affiliation.
- Any concerns or issues that arise from the use of social media that is not addressed in the Social Media Policy are the responsibility of Hospice Renfrew’s Executive Director and/or the Board of Directors.

ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES

- Use your judgment. Take great care to avoid publishing anything that may harm your professional reputation or Hospice Renfrew’s reputation and business. The use of social media technologies should do no harm to Hospice Renfrew. Post should be respectful of the intended target audience. Review and understand our Privacy Policy and take it into consideration when making decisions to publish information. Where your professional or accrediting organization includes standards related to privacy, confidentiality and social media communication review and understand those requirements. If you have any questions about the limits imposed, seek clarification BEFORE publishing.
- For staff, volunteers and Members of the Board, if you choose to identify yourself as a member of the Hospice Renfrew team when publishing information to the internet, you must also represent yourself and Hospice Renfrew in a responsible and professional manner and with due consideration for all policies which govern the provision of information.

- Do not disclose Hospice Renfrew information that is not generally available to the public. If you are in doubt about whether information is confidential, do not publish it.
- Do be respectful to service providers, governmental agencies, donors, suppliers and any other organizations that have a relationship with Hospice Renfrew. Strong opinions are more likely to conflict with Hospice Renfrew's interests than more reserved opinions. Negative or critical opinions can be very risky when published by someone who identifies with the Hospice Renfrew, or who can easily be identified as associated with Hospice Renfrew.
- If in doubt about the appropriateness of publishing anything, ask the Executive Director.
- Ensure that the amount of time you spend blogging and online networking does not interfere with your work responsibilities. Staff members that participate in social media sites must adhere to the code of conduct that is set forth in Hospice Renfrew's Employee Handbook.
- If you are maintaining a blog or other website that includes substantive content that relates to the services provided by Hospice Renfrew, for example hospice care, use a disclaimer that indicates that the views expressed are those of the author alone and should not be attributed to any organization with which the author may otherwise be associated.

LEGISLATION:

Hospice Renfrew complies with the Health Information Protection Act (November 2004), comprised of both the Personal Health Information Protection Act (2004) and the Quality of Care Information Protection Act (2004).

REFERENCES:

Code of Conduct Policy

[Personal Health Information Protection Act 2004](#)

[Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act](#)

[Quality of Care Information Protection Act 2004](#)

[College of Nurses of Ontario](#)

[Hospice Palliative Care Ontario Community Residential Standards](#)