

HECIS: Access to Confidential Information Policy

11.6	ACCESS TO CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION
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Applies to: Staff, Management Committee,
Specific responsibility: HECIS Co-Ordinator, Office Manager

Version: 1
Date approved: 5.8.14
Next review date: Aug 21

Policy context: This policy relates to	
Standards or other external requirements	
Legislation or other requirements	Mandatory Reporters (Family & Community Services)
Contractual obligations	

POLICY STATEMENT

HECIS is committed to transparency in its operations and to ensuring it is open to public scrutiny. It must also balance this with upholding the rights of individuals to privacy and of the organisation to confidentiality on sensitive corporate matters.

HECIS will prevent unauthorised persons gaining access to an individual's confidential records and permit individuals access to their own records when this is reasonable and appropriate.

Accordingly, access to some HECIS documents and records will be limited to specified individuals and not be available to others for viewing.

This policy applies to the internal records, client records and unpublished materials of HECIS.

PROCEDURES

Client records

Client records will be confidential to clients.

Information about clients may only be made available to other parties with the consent of the client, or as required by law e.g. Mandatory reporters – Family & Community Services NSW.

All client records will be kept securely stored in a locked filing cabinet in the HECIS offices and updated, archived and destroyed according to the organisation's client records policy.

Management Committee

Management Committee minutes will be open to members of the organisation once accepted by the Management Committee, except where the Management Committee passes a motion to make any specific content confidential.

All papers and materials considered by the Management Committee will be open to members of the organisation following the meeting at which they are considered, except where the Management Committee passes a motion to make any specific paper or material confidential.

The minutes, papers and materials from any Sub-Committee meeting will be open to Management Committee members and staff, but not to, with the exception of information relating to any matter the Sub-Committee deems confidential.

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HECIS membership records

A list of current HECIS Members will be available on request to HECIS members, Management Committee members and staff.

Personnel files

A personnel file is held for each staff member and contains:

- contact details and contact details in case of an emergency
- a copy of the employee's contract
- all correspondence relating to job description changes, salary changes, leave entitlements such as long service leave, continuous service leave, unpaid and parental leave.

Access to personnel information is restricted to:

- the individual staff member accessing their own file
- the HECIS Co-Ordinator and Office Manager.

Corporate records

Corporate records are those that contain confidential or commercially sensitive information about the organisation's business. They include:

- The financial accounts and records
- Taxation records
- The corporate key and other access or user name information
- Records of staff or other internal meetings
- Project management files
- Contracts between the organisation and other parties

Access to these records is limited to HECIS Co-Ordinator, Office Manager and Management Committee members.

Requests for access – general records

All records and materials not falling into the categories above may be released to the public at the discretion of the HECIS Co-Ordinator.

Any request for access to information should be directed to the HECIS Co-Ordinator, who will:

- make available to staff or Management Committee members information that they are entitled to access
- access any request from HECIS members or the public for access to the organisation's records or materials.

In considering a request, the HECIS Co-Ordinator will take into consideration:

- a general presumption in favour of transparency
- the relevant provisions of the HECIS constitution regarding information to be made available to HECIS members
- the business, legal, and administrative interests of HECIS, including commercial confidentiality and privacy obligations.

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Where an external party requests access to information that requires staff to devote time to collating, copying or otherwise making material accessible, the HECIS Co-Ordinator may determine a fee to be charged.

Requests for access - client records

All clients have the right to access their records and advise the organisation about inaccuracies.

Clients/families:

- have a right to access records containing personal information about themselves and may request this from the HECIS Co-Ordinator who will record this on the file.
The HECIS Co-Ordinator will make fair and appropriate decisions about permitting or refusing access to personal information.
- may access their own confidential information.
- may appeal (if appropriate) the decision if refused access to personal information
- may request to change records they believe to be inaccurate or misrepresenting, (when appropriate).

Requests for information about clients from outside agencies or individuals will be referred to the HECIS Co-Ordinator. Before any information is released, the HECIS Co-Ordinator will contact the client concerned to obtain consent if we do not already hold consent to do so.

In the case of a legal requirement to release information this request will be complied with, e.g. Family & Community Services NSW – Mandatory reporters without the clients consent.

Appeals

Individuals who are refused access to their own records or information files may appeal by contacting the President who will review the decision in the context of this policy.

DOCUMENTATION

Documents related to this policy	
Related policies	
Forms, record keeping or other organisational documents	

Reviewing and approving this policy		
Frequency	Person responsible	Approval
Annually	HECIS Co-Ordinator	HECIS Management Committee

Policy review and version tracking			
Review	Date Approved	Approved by	Next Review Due
1	26.8.15	HECIS Co-Ordinator	Aug 2016
2	8.8.16	HECIS CoOrdinator	Aug 2017
3	16.8.17	HECIS CoOrdinator	Aug 2018
4	10.9.18	HECIS CoOrdinator	Aug 2019
5	17.9.19	HECIS CoOrdinator	Aug 2020
6	15.9.20	HECIS CoOrdinator	Aug 2021