

SES Policy (Confidentiality)

Approval Date	Effective Date	Reviewed Date
1999	2015	2022
Policy Number		6.03

Approved By:	The Board of Directors
Responsibility	Executive Director/Board of Directors
Applies to:	All Employees of SES including affiliates (SES Board, Employees, Committee Persons, Business Affiliates, Clients, and Authorized Designates)

Policy:

It is the policy of SES to expect all employees, volunteers, ‘the’ Board of Directors, Members, placement students and any other persons who, in the course of association and/or affiliation with SES, its employees or its clients, by design or accident become privy to any such private and/or confidential information through any means, to maintain strict confidentiality with respect to such information. It is the policy of SES that client files are only to be viewed or accessed by authorized SES employees or such other persons as authorized at the discretion of the Executive Director .

Procedure:

Each new employee shall receive training and supervisory guidance regarding SES expectations, policies, principles and the practices of maintaining confidentiality.

Each new employee, volunteer, Board of Directors member or placement student shall be required to sign all applicable SES Declarations of Confidentiality prior to placement with the agency.

Not necessarily limited to the following, SES confidentiality guidelines apply to:

- information written, verbal or otherwise, however related to a client, their family, their individual circumstances;
- material contained in each clients file;
- employee performance reviews and all other performance-related information;
- employee personal information (address, telephone number, etc.);
- all other material contained in an employees file at the main office;
- any other written/verbal information/material however related to the agency which is considered confidential by SES.

It is the responsibility of each new employee, volunteer, Board member and placement student to seek clarification from the Executive Director when the purpose, method or practice of maintaining confidentiality is unclear to them.

Release of any of the above information requires the explicit written consent of the client and/or SES or their authorized designate(s).

Release of any of the above information requires completion of a 'Consent to Share Information' form by the relevant client (or their advocate) and/or authorized SES personnel. Agency personnel who are authorized to release certain information are:

- the Executive Director;
- SES employees;
- the Chair of the Board of Directors; and,
- the Board of Directors as a whole.

Information Access:

Employees may access confidential material only under the following conditions:

- individual client files may only be accessed by employees who are directly involved in supporting that client;
- individual employee files may only be accessed per policy (ref. Policy 6.02)
- administrative information may only be accessed on a need-to-know basis
- the Executive Director will be responsible for making all determinations regarding access.

The Board of Directors / Board Committees, and certain other members may access confidential material only under the following conditions:

- individual client files may only be accessed by the Board of Directors, committees/members with approval of the Board of Directors as a whole.
- individual employee files may be accessed per policy (Ref. Policy 6.02)
- administrative information may be accessed by the Board of Directors committees/members per policy.

The Executive Director shall be responsible for sharing client/staff information with the Board and its committees in a manner that maximizes accountability.

SES safeguards confidential information collected by the agency

by:

- disclosing names of clients and information related to clients strictly on a need-to-know basis;
- disclosing names of employees and information related to employees strictly on a need-to-know basis.

During general reporting to the Board by the Executive Director during the monthly Executive Directors Report (which is submitted to the Board at each meeting), the Executive Director shall exclude the names of individual clients. Issues/decisions requiring the identification of clients or the disclosure of information deemed sensitive by the Executive Director will be disclosed to the relevant Board committee or the Board Executive only.

The committee or Board Executive, after consultation with the Executive Director, will decide whether disclosure of personal information to the Board is appropriate.

Information Storage:

Information processed/stored by computer or any other means shall be stored on a disc or other storage device, which has been deemed appropriate and has been authorized for use by the Executive Director. Confidential information shall not be stored on the hard drive of any agency computer or to a device that is capable of such storage. All discs or other storages containing confidential information shall be labeled 'Confidential' and locked in a secure disc storage unit or other storage device, which has been deemed appropriate and has been authorized for use by the Executive Director at the end of each workday. Securing confidential information is the responsibility of the last employee leaving the office who is authorized to access to file cabinet keys. All other information stored on the computer hard drive must be protected by passwords that are divulged to SES staff and the Board members only. It is incumbent upon all Board members and Employees to keep confidential all passwords.

It is the responsibility of the Executive Director to ensure that all confidential information related to clients or staff for which the Executive Director has management responsibility be stored in the appropriate location as soon as reasonably possible following submission of such information to the office.

All written/printed material must be stored in the appropriate filing cabinet. All filing cabinets containing confidential material shall be locked at the end of each business day. It is the responsibility of the Executive Director or their designate to ensure that all filing cabinets are locked at the end of each day.

Information Disposal:

All confidential information stored on a computer or other electronic device shall be erased by an authorized person when storage of that information is no longer necessary. Further to this, prior to disposal or sale of any computer, that unit 'hard-drive' and/or its/any other storage program such as an internal or external memory card or 'chip' shall be professionally rid of information related to materials previously stored therein.

Conducting of Business:

All business conducted within SES office, especially that conducted with clients, will be conducted with the highest respect and confidentiality of the client. Any confidential business will be conducted behind closed doors and under no circumstances will any information be shared with non-SES employees.

Penalty:

Any employee found to have intentionally breached SES confidentiality policy may have his/her employment terminated, and may be subject to legal action.

Nothing in this policy saves any person from being charged under Federal and/or Provincial or Civil Laws, Standards or Statutes or the Criminal Code or from third-party litigation.

Authority to enforce this policy lies solely with the Board of Directors or Authorized Designate.

It shall be the duty of Employees, Board Members, Committee Members, Affiliates and Contractors to report to SES, the Board or authorized designate, all known or suspected infractions of this policy, whether accidental or intentional.

RIGHT TO MANAGE

Nothing in this policy restricts the right of the Authorized Designate to manage. Infractions of this policy may lead to discipline, up to and including in the case of an employee, dismissal. In the case of non-employee, volunteers, members and officers of the Board of Directors, committee members or any person or group of persons may, at the Authorized Designates discretion be reprimanded, including being ejected from any and all committees, and in the case of a Board Member, be removed from their position on the Board.

SIGN-OFF (Confidentiality)

Employee / Affiliate
(Please Print)

Employee / Affiliate Signature

(Witness)

(Date)