


<b>Category:</b>	Employee Accountability	<b>INCA Community Services Personnel Policy</b>  
<b>Sub Category:</b>	Legal & Ethical Conduct	
<b>Effective Date:</b>	6/1970	
<b>Revised Date:</b>	10/2017, 8/2018	
<b>Forms:</b>	INCA Employee Code of Conduct/Ethics and Confidentiality Statement, Head Start Code of Conduct/Ethics, Board of Directors Code of Conduct/Ethics and Confidentiality Statement	

<b>Reference:</b>	HSPS: 1302.90c, 1303.20-1303.24
-------------------	---------------------------------

## Code of Conduct - Ethical and Confidential Behavior

### Introduction

All individuals; whether they be a child, an adult or a family receiving services from INCA Community Services, Inc. have the rights to all aspects of their contact, services, records and information obtained of being confidential within the agency. The information includes the identity of the program service participant, content of overt verbalizations, opinions, and materials from records.

### Policy

INCA Community Services expects its employees, members of the board of directors, policy council members, advisory board members, consultants and parent or community volunteers me to conduct themselves in both an ethical and businesslike manner and to represent this agency both on and off duty in a way that will not bring discredit on themselves or the agency.

### Purpose

The purpose of the Code of Conduct/Ethical and confidential behavior policy is to outline the obligations of employees, members of the Board of Directors, policy council members, advisory board members, consultants, and parent or community volunteers in performing their duties for INCA Community Service in an ethical and professional manner and with respect of confidentiality and disclosure of information about or concerning a program participant.

All persons providing services in the agency programs are to use this code to guide their actions when working with children, parents, other staff members, volunteers, consultants or members of the community and sign a Code of Conduct/Ethics and Confidentiality Statement before beginning in any position.

### Philosophy

We believe that:

- Individuals enrolled in INCA Community Services programs are our greatest asset. Our priority is that service participants are protected and not harmed in any way.
- Every individual has the right to maintain his or her own identity while acquiring the skills that will help them to succeed in a diverse society. We recognize that stereotypes and

misinformation interfere with communication, growth, and respect. The cultural groups represented in the communities and families of each service participant will be acknowledged and appreciated.

- Differences such as disabilities, gender, age, education level, lifestyle, personal values, and ways of thinking also need to be considered, understood and appreciated.
- Program Participants have the right to expect that personal information held by the programs remains secure. We are responsible for maintaining confidentiality, and respect each person's right to privacy. We refrain from disclosure of confidential information and intrusion into family life.

### **Basic Rule**

All communication, all observations, and all records are confidential.

### **Guidelines**

- The lives of individuals and families are private matters that are protected from public scrutiny except when: Information is required in order to provide requested services; or a crime has been committed or in certain cases, when there is a solid basis for suspecting one.
- Information about persons or families may be collected only when needed in the performance of duty and only the specific information required may be gathered. Any information gathered in the exercise of duty must be securely guarded so that such information does not become known by unauthorized persons. If it is received in confidence, it must be maintained in confidence.
- The agency will insure that both public and private organizations providing program services to children and families are responsible for maintaining confidentiality as defined by this policy.
- Program management will provide supervision to staff and volunteers so that confidentiality is maintained.
- The agency will provide and maintain appropriate facilities and procedures in the offices, classroom sites, and other agency sites, so that unauthorized persons will not have access to the information whether stored in files or on computer.
- Staff will collect only that information required in the performance of duty. The only exception is when child abuse or neglect is suspected. Both federal and state law requires that such information be plainly documented and reported to the proper authorities.
- When gathering information from community agencies and individuals, staff will discuss with the service recipient or families the need for the information and have the client/parent/legal guardian sign the Authorization for Release of Information.
- Child, service recipient, and provider files and information will be kept under lock and key except when in direct use.
- Materials will not be left unattended in an unlocked car, desk or file cabinet.
- Confidential information will not be taken home to be worked on.
- All forms and notes will be placed directly into the service recipients files upon receipt to limit lost and misplaced confidential information.
- Employees will not discuss sensitive information with other staff. Conversation about children, service recipients, families or other family members should be avoided in public and your home. If you need advice or assistance, discuss the case with your supervisor.
- Parents, service participants, and legal guardians have the right to inspect their files and may request that the information in the file be released.

### **Applicable To**

The confidentiality statement and Code of Ethics/Conduct is only required to be completed once at the beginning of their employment, service or volunteering.

Applicable to:

- All employees
- Board of Directors Members
- Head Start Policy Council Members
- Advisory Council Members
- Independent Contractors who come in contact with program participants
- Volunteers (parents or community)

### **Training**

INCA will train all employees and volunteers on confidentiality regulations and practices so that privacy is properly maintained during the collection of any information, its protection while in the hands of the personnel, and when it is stored.

### **Confidentiality Statements Maintained**

- Employee statements will be maintained by the Human Resource Department.
- Board of Director Statements will be maintained by Executive Secretary.
- Head Start Policy Council Members statements will be maintained by the Head Start Secretary.
- Advisory Council members will be maintained by the appropriate program director or delegated staff.
- Volunteer statements will be maintained by the appropriate program director or delegated staff.
- Independent Contractors statements will be maintained by appropriate program director or delegated staff.

### **Policy Violations**

- Employees paid by INCA Community Services violating this Code of Conduct and Ethics and/or Confidentiality Statement will be subject to disciplinary procedures as outlined in INCA's personnel policies and procedures up to and including termination.
- Volunteers (including parents), Independent Contractor: Any of these who breach this Code of Conduct will result in corrective action and could include exclusion from program activities and premises. Additionally, breach of this confidentiality statement and Code of Conduct and Ethics without expressed permission from an authorized individual may be subject to civil and criminal penalties.

### **Dissemination of Policy**

The policy will be made available to all employees through the agency's website. The agency will educate and train employees and supervisors regarding the policy and any conduct that could constitute a violation of the policy.