

Privacy Policy for the Management of Personal Information

1. Introduction

This policy explains how Alpine Psychology Pty Ltd (“we”, “our”, “the practice”) manages your personal and sensitive information. We are committed to protecting your privacy and handling your information in accordance with:

- The *Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)* and the **Australian Privacy Principles (APPs)**
- The **Psychology Board of Australia (PsyBA) Code of Conduct (2025)**
- Best-practice professional guidelines relating to privacy, confidentiality, record-keeping and the management of health information

By engaging in psychological services with Alpine Psychology, you consent to the collection, storage, use and disclosure of your information in accordance with this policy and your signed Consent Form.

2. What Information We Collect

We only collect information that is reasonably necessary to provide psychological services or to carry out administrative and statutory functions of the practice.

This may include:

- Personal details: name, date of birth, contact details, emergency contact
- Demographic information: gender, cultural background, languages spoken
- Referral information: GP, psychiatrist, school, NDIS coordinator, insurer
- Health and mental health history; developmental, medical and family information
- Assessment results, treatment plans, progress notes and outcome measures
- Correspondence from other professionals involved in your care
- Billing information, Medicare/insurance data, appointment history
- Information relevant to safety planning and risk assessment

Where practicable, de-identified information is used for case discussion, supervision, quality-assurance and training purposes.

3. How We Collect Personal Information

Personal information may be collected through:

- Intake and consent forms completed by the client, parent or guardian
- Direct conversations during sessions
- Email, phone, SMS, telehealth platforms and online booking forms
- Referrals, reports or letters from your GP, psychiatrist, paediatrician, school, insurer or other practitioner
- Third-party funding bodies (e.g., Medicare, NDIS, insurers)
- Observations made by your psychologist during assessment or therapy

Reduced-identifying information may be recorded for the purposes of supervision or professional consultation.

Resilience – Growth – Balance

4. Two-Part Record-Keeping System

In accordance with best-practice guidance, Alpine Psychology maintains a **two-part client file**:

1. **Confidential Clinical Record**
 - Clinical notes, assessment materials, risk assessments, therapeutic content
 - Sensitive or personal information not intended for third-party review
2. **Client Service Record**
 - Contact details, consent forms, invoices, appointment information, referral documents, third-party correspondence

Access to each part is restricted only to those with a legitimate professional need.

5. Purpose of Holding Personal Information

Your personal information is held for purposes including:

- Providing psychological services (assessment, diagnosis, treatment)
- Monitoring progress and maintaining continuity of care
- Communicating with referrers, where consent has been provided
- Coordinating care with other practitioners involved in your treatment
- Administrative tasks (billing, appointment management, reporting obligations)
- Meeting legal, ethical or professional obligations
- Quality assurance, supervision and training (in de-identified form unless specific consent is provided)

Without sufficient personal information, it may be impracticable for us to provide safe, effective psychological services.

6. Limits of Anonymity and Pseudonymity

In some circumstances clients may request to engage anonymously or use a pseudonym where feasible. This may not be possible:

- If required by law
 - When claiming rebates (e.g., Medicare)
 - When safety, clinical or continuity-of-care requirements make anonymity impractical.
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7. How We Store and Protect Your Information

Your information is stored securely in one or more of the following:

- Encrypted electronic practice management software
- Password-protected computers or devices
- Locked filing cabinets in restricted-access areas
- Secure backup systems stored within Australia or in compliant cloud-based infrastructure

Only authorised staff or contractors (who have confidentiality obligations) can access your information.

We take reasonable steps to:

- Safeguard against loss, unauthorised access or disclosure

- Keep information up to date and accurate
- Ensure secure destruction of information when legally permitted

Alpine Psychology uses secure, encrypted practice management, communication, financial and assessment platforms. These platforms do not access client clinical content unless legally permitted or with client consent. Our bookkeeper and accountant do not have access to clinical files but may see client names if payments identify a client (e.g., direct deposit).

8. Disclosure of Personal Information

Your information remains confidential **except** when one of the following applies:

8.1 Required or authorised by law

Examples include:

- Court subpoena, warrant or other legal directive
- Mandatory reporting obligations
- Public health or safety legislation

8.2 To prevent or lessen a serious threat

Disclosure may occur if, in the reasonable professional judgment of your psychologist, failing to disclose would place you or another person at serious risk of harm to life, health or safety.

8.3 With your informed consent

Examples include:

- Reports to your GP, psychiatrist, school, employer or insurer
- Coordination with other treating professionals
- Communication with parents or guardians
- Sharing information for NDIS, workers compensation, or similar purposes
- Release of information to another psychologist or practice at your request

Consent may be written, verbal or implied, and may be updated or withdrawn at any time.

8.4 Professional supervision and consultation

Your psychologist may discuss de-identified case information with a supervisor or consultant to support clinical quality and safety.

8.5 Overseas disclosure

Your information is not routinely disclosed to overseas recipients. If such disclosure is necessary (e.g., telehealth while travelling), this will occur only with your consent unless mandated by law.

9. Telehealth Services

When services are provided via telehealth, information is handled with the same privacy protections as face-to-face sessions. You agree to use a private space and secure internet connection and understand that no telehealth system can be guaranteed as completely secure.

10. Data Breach Management

If unauthorised access, loss or disclosure of personal information occurs, Alpine Psychology will:

- Take immediate action to contain the breach
 - Assess the risk of harm
 - Notify affected clients where required
 - Fulfil obligations under the **Notifiable Data Breaches scheme** (OAIC)
 - Review and strengthen internal systems to prevent recurrence
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11. Retention and Destruction of Records

Records are retained for the minimum period required by law and professional standards:

- **Adults:** 7 years from the last client contact
- **Minors:** until the client turns 25 years old

After the retention period, records are securely destroyed or permanently deleted.

12. Access and Correction of Personal Information

You may request access to your personal information or request correction of inaccurate or incomplete information.

Requests should be addressed to:

Catherine Bylett – Practice Director

Alpine Psychology Pty Ltd

Email: cath@alpinepsychology.com.au

Phone: 0477138177

We will respond within 14 days and may schedule a meeting if clarification is needed.

Access may be declined where:

- It would pose a serious threat to your or another person's health or safety
- It would unreasonably impact the privacy of others
- It is unlawful to provide access
- The information relates to legal proceedings

Where access is granted, copies can be provided.

13. Complaints or Concerns

If you have concerns about how your information is managed, you may raise them with:

Catherine Bylett – Practice Director

Alpine Psychology Pty Ltd

Email: cath@alpinepsychology.com.au

Phone: 0477138177

If your concern cannot be resolved, you may lodge a complaint with:

Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC)

Phone: 1300 363 992

Web: www.oaic.gov.au/privacy/making-a-privacy-complaint

Mail: GPO Box 5218, Sydney NSW 2001

14. Updates to This Policy

This policy is reviewed regularly and may be updated to reflect:

- Changes in laws or professional standards
- Updates to the PsyBA Code of Conduct
- Changes in practice systems or technology

Clients will be provided access to the most current version on request or via our website (if applicable).

