

# PRIVACY & INFORMATION MANAGEMENT POLICY

*Autism Abilities acknowledges the traditional owners of the land on which we live, work and travel and pays respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander elders past, present and future. We are committed to the cultural safety of all children including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and children with a disability. Everyone is welcome at Autism Abilities regardless of their background, race, culture, religion, gender identity or sexual orientation.*

<b>What</b>	Privacy & Information Management Policy
<b>Who</b>	All stakeholders
<b>Why</b>	Information about how and why Autism Abilities collects and uses information and how to provide feedback or ask about how information is used
<b>When</b>	Ongoing, permanent

## Privacy Policy

**The privacy of the information you give us is important to us.**

Autism Abilities respects every person's right to privacy, dignity and confidentiality and operates in accordance with the Australian Privacy Principles under the Commonwealth Privacy Act (1988).

This privacy policy provides information about how Autism Abilities collects and handles information and how Autism Abilities stakeholders can ask or provide feedback on how personal information is used.

### Types of information

Autism Abilities collects personal information that is necessary for our work and helps us to engage with each stakeholder. If you do not wish to provide some or all of the personal information requested, Autism Abilities may not be able to do what was intended by collecting your personal information, for example, we may not be able to manage or provide you with supports/services or respond to your queries.

### How information is collected

Autism Abilities collects personal information from you by various methods

including (but not limited to) the following:

- through your interactions with Autism Abilities staff
- when you access and use our website
- when you contact us by telephone, letter or email
- by contracting with us or completing intake forms
- by completing surveys, providing feedback or complaints to us

Where reasonable and practical, Autism Abilities will collect your personal information only directly from you. However, Autism Abilities may also collect information about you from third parties including but not limited to other individuals and companies, health professionals, social and community workers and the government, with your consent or as legally required.

If you provide personal information to us about someone else, you must ensure that you are entitled to disclose that information to us, as Autism Abilities may collect, use and disclose that information as outlined in this policy.

### **Why information is collected and how it is used**

Autism Abilities uses the personal information provided to us in a variety of ways.

Uses of the information may include, but are not limited to:

- communications
- service delivery and procurement
- marketing activities
- the administration of our business operations
- employment processes
- fees and transactions
- website management
- updating our records and keeping your contact details up to date
- processing and responding to any feedback or complaint made by you
- complying with any legal requirements.

## Use of Artificial Intelligence

Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools are used at times at Autism Abilities. This is to enhance our service delivery and reduce the time spent and charged for report writing. AI will be used only to improve grammatical accuracy and readability of reports produced.

In line with OAIC (Office of the Australian Information Commissioner) recommendations, Autism Abilities does not enter any personal information, and particularly sensitive information, into publicly available generative AI tools, due to the significant and complex privacy risks involved.

In accordance with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) guidelines, the use of artificial intelligence at Autism Abilities aligns with the principles of safety, accountability, and evidence-based practice. Any AI tools that are used are validated, reliable, and appropriate for clinical settings. The use of AI at Autism Abilities does not compromise professional judgment, patient consent, or confidentiality, all of which are prioritised and our practitioners remain fully responsible for their clinical decisions based on evidence made with AI assistance.

All AI tools are regularly reviewed to ensure the use of AI is compliant, safe and maintains high-quality standards of support.

## Direct Marketing

Autism Abilities may use your personal information to provide you with current information about our current services, special offers you may find of interest, changes to our organisation, or new services being offered by us. By providing Autism Abilities with your personal information, you consent to us using your information to contact you on an ongoing basis for these purposes, including by mail, email, SMS, social media and telephone.

If you do not wish to receive marketing information, you may decline at any time to receive such information by contacting us via telephone (0481 112 928) or email ([hello@autismabilities.com.au](mailto:hello@autismabilities.com.au)). We will not charge you for giving effect to your request and will take all reasonable steps to meet your request at the earliest possible opportunity.

## **Storage and protection of information and data**

Autism Abilities takes all reasonable steps to protect the personal information provided to us from misuse, interference and loss, and from unauthorised access, modification or disclosure. Personal information is stored for the required timeframes in accordance with the applicable legislative requirements, and when the information is no longer needed for any purpose for which the information may be used or disclosed, it will be destroyed or permanently de-identified.

Autism Abilities may store your data in:

- electronic information management systems
- web or cloud-based platforms
- contracted third party database storage or cloud hosting services in Australia or overseas

We engage third party data storage and cloud-based application providers that may transfer personal information outside Australia to countries whose privacy laws may not provide the same level of protection as Australia's privacy laws. When engaging third party offshore data storage or cloud-based application providers, Autism Abilities will take reasonable steps through our contract and agreement arrangements to try and make sure they are compliant with Australian Privacy Principles and the Australian Privacy Act.

By providing Autism Abilities with your personal information, you give consent to us disclosing your information to entities located outside Australia and, when permitted by law to do so.

## **Disclosure of information and data relating to the people we support**

At the commencement of a service or a support with Autism Abilities we will ask for consent to obtain or release information to relevant stakeholders. In the course of providing our services, we may disclose your personal information to:

- companies and contractors retained to provide services for us, such as IT developers, lawyers, consultants and auditors, who will need to have access to your personal information to provide those services; and
- other individuals or companies consented to by you.

This consent will be updated whenever the intended use of the information needs to

change. Consent to disclose information can be changed or revoked at any time by notifying Autism Abilities in writing.

Autism Abilities may disclose de-identified data to meet regulatory obligations or for other purposes (for example statutory reporting, research or quality assurance). On occasion, Autism Abilities is required or authorised by law to disclose your personal information. For example:

- the service user has a notifiable disease or there is some statutory notification requirement (e.g. notification of a case of child abuse);
- a court or other agency authorised by statute has issued a subpoena for specific information; or
- Autism Abilities is seeking information or has been requested to provide information under State or National legislation.

### **Managing actual or potential privacy breaches**

Autism Abilities regularly reviews its data security systems and those of any engaged third-party providers to ensure that all data is kept secure and confidential according to the Australian Privacy Principles.

In the event of a breach of Autism Abilities data security, Autism Abilities follows the Privacy Amendment (Notifiable Data Breaches) Act 2017 requirements for informing the relevant stakeholders who provided the information as to the potential or actual breach.

### **Accessing & correcting information, or lodging a query or complaint about privacy and data management**

We take all reasonable steps to ensure that the quality of the information we hold about you is accurate, up-to-date, complete and relevant. You should contact us if you think your personal information is wrong. We will take reasonable steps to verify your identity before granting access or making any corrections to your information.

If you would like to access or correct your personal information, have a query or complaint about how we manage your personal information, or would like to know more, please contact us at any time: [hello@autismabilities.com.au](mailto:hello@autismabilities.com.au) / 0481 112 928.

If any National or State legislation prevent us providing access to, or amending your records, you will be given an explanation and told of the processes available to you.

## Privacy of Information & the Privacy Principles

The privacy of the information you give us is important to us. There are Commonwealth and State/Territory laws about privacy. These laws have created thirteen “Australian Privacy Principles” (APPs). Autism Abilities follows these Principles and complies with Commonwealth and State laws about privacy.

The Australian Privacy Principles (APPs) are:

### **APP1 - Open and transparent management of personal information**

We manage personal information in an open and transparent way. We have a clearly expressed and up to date APP Privacy Policy. We make that Policy available to you and it provides details about how we manage information.

### **APP2 — Anonymity and pseudonymity**

We give individuals the option of not identifying themselves, or of using a pseudonym. Limited exceptions apply, for instance where the law requires you to identify yourself for the purpose of obtaining particular services.

### **APP 3 — Collection of solicited personal information**

We will only solicit and collect personal information that is necessary for us to provide a service to you or on your behalf. We will only gather information with your consent.

### **APP 4 — Dealing with unsolicited personal information**

If we receive information about you that we have not requested, we will protect that information and deal with it as if we had collected the information directly from you. We will only keep that information if it is necessary for us to keep it.

### **APP 5 — Notification of the collection of personal information**

Before collecting information from you, we will tell you: who we are and will give you our contact details, why and how we are collecting information about you, and the possible consequences if information is not collected.

### **APP 6 — Use or disclosure of personal information**

It may be necessary for us to use or disclose personal information that we hold. We will only do this with your informed consent or if we are required by law or by a Code of Ethics. We may be required by law or by a Code of Ethics to disclose information when it is believed necessary to protect you, some other person or in answer to a subpoena. We will explain the circumstances in which we are required to disclose information when we meet you.

### **APP 7 — Direct marketing**

We will only use or disclose personal information for direct marketing purposes if you agree. You will be given the option of telling us that you do not want your information used in this way and we will comply with your request.

#### **APP 8 — Cross-border disclosure of personal information**

We are required to take certain steps in order to protect personal information before it is disclosed overseas. These steps are set out in our Privacy Policy.

#### **APP 9 — Adoption, use or disclosure of government related identifiers**

We will not use a government related identifier to identify you in our records and we will not use or disclose a government related identifier that has been given to you. A “government related identifier” may include your Medicare number or social security number.

#### **APP 10 — Quality of personal information**

We will take reasonable steps to ensure the personal information we collect is accurate, up to date and complete. We will also take reasonable steps, such as reviewing the information with you, to ensure the personal information we use or disclose is accurate, up to date, complete and relevant, having regard to the purpose of the use or disclosure.

#### **APP 11 — Security of personal information**

We will take reasonable steps to protect personal information we hold from misuse, interference and loss, and from unauthorised access, modification or disclosure. We will destroy or de-identify personal information if we have held the information for at least 6 years or, if you were under the age of 18 at the time of collection, when you turn 25.

#### **APP 12 — Access to personal information**

You may request access to personal information held by us about you. We must provide access to you of that information unless we reasonably believe that we are not required under the Privacy legislation to give you access. We may not be required to disclose information if: there is a risk of harm to you or to others; it may affect the privacy of others; we believe the request to be frivolous or vexatious; it would be unlawful.

#### **APP 13 — Correction of personal information**

We will take reasonable steps to up-date, correct and keep complete the personal information we hold about you. You may ask us to correct or amend personal information that we keep about you. If we decide not to change that information, we will tell you in writing and we will give you the reasons why we have not changed the

information.

**If you have any questions or need advice about and/or assistance with any aspect of this policy please contact autism Abilities on 0481 112 928 / [hello@autismabilities.com.au](mailto:hello@autismabilities.com.au)**

**END.**

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