



## CHURCH BOARD POLICY

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### PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY OF INFORMATION

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Policy 01

#### 1. PURPOSE & SCOPE

The policy details the responsibility of the Church for maintaining privacy of personal information that is collected in the provision of ministry and pastoral care services to meet the requirements of the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (PIIP Act).

#### 2. RESPONSIBILITIES

- Church Board
- Senior Minister
- Ministry Staff
- Church Office Administration Team (voluntary helpers)

#### 3. REFERENCES

##### Legislation:

- Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1988 (PIIP Act)
- Freedom of Information Act 1989

#### 4. DEFINITIONS

**Member of congregation** – Any person to whom a ministry team member owes a duty of care in respect of the provision of ministry / pastoral care services

**Personal information** –

Any personal information collected for the purposes of the provision of ministry / pastoral care. This will generally include information relating to name, address, phone numbers and members of family. It may also include personal information relating to issues surrounding but not limited to family circumstances, such as relationships, divorce, financial situation etc.

#### 5. POLICY

##### 5.1 SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITY

The Church Board has a legal responsibility to comply with privacy law. The Church is bound by the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (PIIPA) as well as other related obligations including the Freedom of Information Act 1989

The Church Board, Senior Minister and Ministry Staff acknowledge and takes seriously their obligations under the Acts to ensure privacy of information collected in the provision of ministry and pastoral care services. Staff are informed of their responsibilities to maintain privacy at induction and documented in written position descriptions.



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---

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---

Policy 01

Voluntary members forming part of the Church Office Administration Team will have their responsibilities clearly defined by the Church Office Administration Manager.

#### 5.2 PERSONAL INFORMATION

Information collected in the provision of ministry services relates to the following sources:

- Personal information relating to members of the Church Congregation, i.e. Intermediate members through visitation and or one to one support services.
- Pastoral care ministry through
  - Telecare
  - Prayer care
  - Senior care
  - Home care and
  - Home care
- Food hamper ministry
- Participants in Church Life Groups
- Recovery Courses as well as
- Personal information collected by church attendance registers, email and or telephone enquiries.

#### Using personal and private information

- The Church Board, all staff and voluntary helpers of Wollongong Church of Christ are to ensure that they keep all information they may obtain or have access to, in the course of their work or voluntary role, private and confidential.

As Ministry staff you will **never**:

- Use official information without proper authority or for purposes that breach privacy law
- Use or disclose official information acquired in the course of your employment outside of the workplace or professional relationships unless required by law or given proper authority to do this.
- Misuse information gained while undertaking your work role for personal gain.
- The Senior Minister, Administration Manager and Ministry staff are responsible for seeing that premises are secure and that suitable arrangements are in place to maintain security of confidential and sensitive documents.
- Where appropriate, the Board and Senior Minister should make sure that confidential papers are tabled at Board Meetings rather than circulated and that any copies are collected and destroyed at the end of the meeting.



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---

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**Policy 01**

---

**5.3 SECURITY OF OFFICIAL INFORMATION**

- Ministry Staff within the Church are to ensure that confidential and / or sensitive information in any form; (eg. documents, emails, computer files) cannot be accessed by unauthorised persons.
- A nominated data manager authorises access to global groups and manages the security of User Groups. Access to computers is by password and the Church will protect the privacy, integrity and confidentiality of the electronic information that it holds by allowing only authorised access to that information by remote access users or voluntary team members.
- The security of confidential and / or sensitive official information overnight must be maintained at all times when the Church Office is unattended.
- All staff must ensure that confidential information is only discussed with people who are authorised to have access to it (either within or outside the Church). It is considered a serious offence to deliberately release confidential documents or information to unauthorised persons.

**5.4 EMPLOYEE INFORMATION**

- Staff files are confidential and are to be accessed by the Senior Minister only or his / her delegate.
- Information about staff members of the Church should not be released to external bodies (eg. Freedom of Information) without appropriate legal authority and the authorisation of the Board and Senior Minister.
- Under the Freedom of Information Act 1989, a document is exempt from release if it contains matters, the disclosure of which would disclose matters relating to a protected disclosure within the meaning of the Protected Disclosure Act, 1994. – i.e. fraudulent behaviour.
- There are some instances when authorisation in writing is required (eg. insurance matters). In some instances information regarding employment will be provided to external bodies (eg. Superannuation and the Taxation Department).

**5.5 CHURCH OFFICE VOLUNTEERS**

- The Church Office Administration Team Procedure CO-05 details the responsibilities of voluntary workers within the Church Office.
- Each volunteer will be required to sign a Confidentiality undertaking statement and their responsibilities will be explained by the Church Office Administration Manager.



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---

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---

**Policy 01**

**6. DOCUMENTATION**

- Confidentiality disclosure of information Form 05
  - Original retained by the Administration Manager for volunteers and by the Senior Minister for Ministry Staff

**7. REVISION & APPROVAL HISTORY**

Date	Revision No.	Author and Approval
August 2008	0	Rose Gavin (Church Office Administration Team- Voluntary Helper) Approved by Chairman of the Board: David Stumbles