

STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY



The Master of Science (Speech-Language Pathology) Program in the School of Rehabilitation Science, McMaster University, is committed to ensuring the confidentiality and privacy of personal information shared and/or learned about in an educational context. As a speech-language pathology student you will have access to personal information through your encounters including but not limited to: volunteers, clients, students, and educators (*e.g.*, clinical instructors, tutors, faculty etc.).

All educational and clinical education learning-related personal information shall be treated as confidential. Each student shall be expected to ensure respect for, and demonstrate integrity of confidential information.

It is expected that any and all personal information that is used in all academic and/or clinical learning initiatives, including but not limited to written or oral presentations will be anonymized to protect the identity of all individual(s) involved. Unless directly permitted, no speech-language pathology student shall disclose, review or discuss client information in a real or online setting. Speech-language pathology students will, under no circumstances, remove confidential materials from the educational setting and shall not be permitted access to information at a clinical education site outside of the date(s) specified for the individual clinical education experience. Per the Informed Consent and Confidentiality sections of the Clinical Education Handbook:

Consent

CASLPO standards pertaining to consent include:

3.1 I obtain and document consent for all intervention plans or courses of action and any significant changes thereafter.

3.2 I obtain and document consent to collect, use, retain, and disclose health information, as required.

3.3 I consult with the patient and/or Surrogate Decision Maker (SDM) when establishing intervention plans and/or courses of action.

3.5 I respect the patient's and/or SDM's decision to decline intervention.

Additional information can be found in [CASLPO's guide for Obtaining Consent for Services \(http://www.caslpo.com/sites/default/uploads/files/GU_EN_Obtaining_Consent_for_Services.pdf\)](http://www.caslpo.com/sites/default/uploads/files/GU_EN_Obtaining_Consent_for_Services.pdf), and [Ontario's Health Care Consent Act \(https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/96h02\)](https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/96h02). Informed consent is a fundamental principle in ethical, client-centred practice. Students shall respect their clients' rights to be informed and to choose their preferred course of action.

Confidentiality

It is of critical importance to safeguard clients' confidential information. There are two sets of legislation and regulations governing privacy in Ontario:

- [Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act \(PIPEDA; https://www.priv.gc.ca/en/privacy-topics/privacy-laws-in-canada/the-personal-information-protection-and-electronic-documents-act-pipeda/r_o_p/\)](https://www.priv.gc.ca/en/privacy-topics/privacy-laws-in-canada/the-personal-information-protection-and-electronic-documents-act-pipeda/r_o_p/)
- Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA; <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/04p03>)

There are three (3) key aspects of practice relating to confidentiality:

- Identifying information should only be disclosed within the facility setting to individuals who have a direct clinical relationship with the client, and should never be disclosed outside of the facility setting.
- When clinical information needs to be shared with other team members, only the minimum necessary information to accomplish the required task should be shared.
- Clients have the right to inspect and use copies of their clinical information.

The following are some commonsense steps to help prevent breaching confidentiality:

- If you see a healthcare record in public view, cover the file, turn it over, or find another way to protect it.
- If you talk about clients as part of your job, try to prevent others from overhearing the conversation. Whenever possible, hold conversations about clients in private areas.
- When healthcare records are not in use, store them in office areas that are either locked or under supervision.
- Remove documents that contain confidential information from fax machines, copiers, and printers as soon as you can.
- When you need to discard documents that contain confidential information, put the documents in confidential bins for shredding. Be vigilant when discarding any paper used during the course of client interactions to ensure no identifying information is ever placed into regular garbage or recycling bins.
- Allow clients to make reasonable requests for private communication. For example, a client may ask a receptionist to contact the client at work rather than leave a message on the client's home voicemail.
- Do not leave detailed health information on an answering machine or voicemail.
- Discourage clients from communicating via e-mail. If clients wish to communicate via email, ensure they are fully aware of the lack of security and privacy in doing so, in addition to any requirements for documenting the email exchange.
- Do not remove original or copied healthcare records from the clinical placement site.
- Do not save confidential information to portable discs, zip drives, or any other portable media.

It is each speech-language pathology student's responsibility to actively become aware of, review and abide by any and all relevant legislation or documentation pertaining to confidentiality and privacy in specific facilities or settings relevant to their educational context (academic and clinical learning).

Any breach of confidentiality will be subject to sanctions as imposed by McMaster University and/or the clinical site and/or the Privacy Commissioner. Sanctions may include course failure and/or removal from the clinical education learning opportunity, and/or removal from the Master of Science (Speech-Language Pathology) Program, as per the McMaster University Graduate Calendar and the McMaster University Faculty of Health Science Professional Code of Conduct for Learners.

I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THE ABOVE STATEMENTS. I AGREE TO:

- ACT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE ABOVE STATEMENTS;
- ACT IN ACCORDANCE WITH ALL RELEVANT PROVINCIAL AND FEDERAL LAWS; AND
- ABIDE BY ANY CONFIDENTIALITY/PRIVACY POLICY AT ALL EDUCATIONAL AND CLINICAL SITES.

I ACKNOWLEDGE THAT ENSURING CONFIDENTIALITY IS MY RESPONSIBILITY.

Name (Please Print)	Witness (Please Print)
McMaster Student Identification Number	
Signature	Witness Signature
Date	Witness Date

Adapted, with permission, from Statement of Confidentiality / Queens University, School of Rehabilitation Therapy

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