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Mandatory Shredding Guidelines

Originals: *All staff are prohibited from shredding original documents. The ACS Records Manager is solely responsible for the shredding of original documents.*

- Original documents include, but are not limited to, case records, financial documents, administrative records, timesheets, calendars, etc.
- In situations where the original document is sent out of the agency, the copy retained by the agency is regarded as the original.

Copies: *Copies of documents may be shredded at the director's discretion.*

- The supervisor needs to confirm that there is at least one other copy in the agency before allowing the shredding of any document.

Copies of documents containing confidential information must be shredded and not placed in the trash.

- Confidential items include, but are not limited to, documents containing: child and family names, addresses, social security numbers, case information, details of allegations of abuse, confidential employee information, medical information and other personal information.

Policy: *All staff must adhere to the above mandatory guidelines when considering the shredding of any document.*

Note: All information received, created or compiled by officials or employees of the City of New York for the City is an official record, and is therefore the property of the City of New York.

See attached "Confidentiality Policy" dated February 20, 2004

For information regarding the destruction or retention of documents, contact
Kenny Charles at (212) 341-9010.



Administration for Children's Services

150 William Street 18th Floor
New York, New York 10038

WILLIAM C. BELL
Commissioner

To: All Staff

From: William C. Bell

Date: February 20, 2004

Re: Confidentiality Policy

This memo outlines the procedures to be followed relating to the retention and disposal of ACS documents. All information received, created or compiled by officials or employees of the City of New York for the use of the City is an official record, and is therefore the property of the City of New York. It is prohibited to destroy or remove files or official records without proper authorization.

I. Staff handling direct files of children and families

Staff who work directly with families and maintain various forms of case records must adhere to the procedures outlined in this section. Staff in this category include, but are not limited to, casework staff, attorneys, nurses and medical staff, and staff from the Office of Advocacy.

Active Case Related Materials

Documents that may be included in a case record: ACS follows the guidelines included in the Model Case Record. For a comprehensive list of documents that may be included in the case record please see the attached list or visit the ACS Intranet.

Confidentiality of current case records: The case record and any documents contained therein should be considered confidential. When not currently being used, ACS case records are to be placed in a secure area (i.e. files cabinet, desk, storage room). In addition, ACS case records should be kept out of public view when in use.

Discarding

- a) **Active Case Records:** Employees may not discard any case record materials. The ACS Records Manager will inform staff regarding retention periods, length of storage, and proper method of disposal. Individual sites are prohibited from shredding original case record documents.
- b) **Case Sensitive documents deemed not needed for the case file:**
 - 1) **Originals: All original documents must be maintained as a part of the case file.** Employees are required to obtain permission from the ACS Records Manager prior to discarding case file. The ACS Records Manager will inform staff regarding retention periods, length of storage, and proper method of disposal. Individual sites are prohibited from shredding original documents.
 - 2) **Copies:** At the supervisor's discretion, staff may shred documents not needed for the case file (**this should never include originals**). Individual units are responsible for shredding copies using shredders provided by the ACS Division of Administration. All documents containing confidential or case sensitive information must be shredded prior to disposal.

Closed Case Related Material

Sites are required to retain closed case records for two years. After the two year period, staff is required to contact the ACS Records Manager who will arrange for the case records to be transported to the warehouse.

Non-Case File Materials

Since many non-case file materials contain confidential information, this policy also sets forth the procedures for retaining and discarding non-case file items. Confidential items include, but are not limited to, documents containing: child and family names, addresses, social security numbers, case information, details of allegations of abuse, confidential employee information, social security numbers, medical information, and other personal information.

Discarding non-case file materials

- 1) **Confidential materials**
 - a) **Originals:** Individual sites are prohibited from shredding original documents. The ACS Records Manager will inform staff regarding retention periods, length of storage, and proper method of disposal. Originals include, but are not limited to calendars, financial documents, administrative records, case records, timesheets etc.
 - b) **Copies:** Copies of documents may be shredded at the supervisor's discretion. Individual units are responsible for shredding copies using shredders provided by the ACS Division of Administration. Copies of documents containing confidential information *must* be shredded and not placed in the trash.

- 2) Non-Confidential materials
 - a) Originals: Individual sites are prohibited from shredding original documents. Originals include, but are not limited to calendars, financial documents, administrative records, case records, timesheets etc. The ACS Records Manager will inform staff regarding retention periods, length of storage, and proper method of disposal.
 - b) Copies: Copies of non-confidential documents may be shredded at the supervisor's discretion. Individual units are responsible for shredding copies using shredders provided by the ACS Division of Administration.

II. Non-Case work staff

Staff who are not directly responsible for cases or who do not maintain official case files often handle case sensitive material and confidential documents that are not an official part of the case record. The procedures outlined below apply to all employees who deal with case specific and confidential information.

Case-related documents and other documents containing confidential information (that are not required to be part of the case record)

Confidential items include, but are not limited to, documents containing: child and family names, addresses, social security numbers, case information, details of allegations of abuse, confidential employee information, social security numbers, medical information, and other personal information.

Discarding case related and confidential materials

- a) Originals: Employees are required to obtain permission from the ACS Records Manager prior to discarding original material. The ACS Records Manager will inform staff regarding retention periods, length of storage, and proper method of disposal. Originals include, but are not limited to calendars, financial documents, administrative records, case records, timesheets etc. Individual sites are prohibited from shredding original documents.
- b) Copies: Copies of documents may be shredded at the supervisor's discretion. Individual units are responsible for shredding copies using shredders provided by the ACS Division of Administration. Copies of documents containing confidential information *must* be shredded and not placed in the trash.

Discarding Non-Confidential and non-case related materials

- a) Originals: Employees are required to obtain permission from the ACS Records Manager prior to discarding original material. Originals include, but are not limited to calendars, financial documents, administrative records, case records, timesheets etc. The ACS Records

Manager will inform staff regarding retention periods, length of storage, and proper method of disposal. Individual sites are prohibited from shredding original documents.

- b) Copies: Copies of non-confidential documents may be shredded at the supervisor's discretion. Individual units are responsible for shredding copies using shredders provided by the ACS Division of Administration.

III. Site Closing

In the event that a site closes and staff is required to move, **the program manager must determine which items are required to be maintained as part of case files. The program manager must also determine which non-original items can be discarded and must ensure that such items are discarded in accordance with this policy. The program manager must ensure that all case files are appropriately prepared for transport to either the new location or the warehouse.**

The **program manager** is required to notify the ACS Records Manager as soon as a move date is determined. The ACS Records Manager will arrange for transport of case records and provide information for the proper disposal and storage of documents.