

Creating a brighter future for children

Information for Clients

on

Privacy and Confidentiality

Access to Records

Feedback and Complaints



Program Name

Contact



marymead

children • families • community

Caring for Children • Supporting Families • Strengthening Community

Marymead respects the fundamental equality of all people and the right to live lives of dignity and value. Marymead incorporates human rights into the way we provide services to people. You have rights, including to privacy, freedom of expression, protection of family and children, and equality. We also have a responsibility to consider the rights of others. A person's individual rights are balanced with respecting the rights of other people. Marymead's privacy, access to records and complaints policies are in line with those rights.

You can remain anonymous

Your complaint can be anonymous if you would like it to be. The choice is yours: however, we may be able to resolve issues sooner, and give you feedback and further support, if we know who you are. However, if you make an allegation against a staff member, this cannot be investigated unless you provide your name.

Your complaint will be treated as confidential

Your complaint will be treated confidentially, with information only being shared with those who need to know in order to resolve the issue. However, if your complaint is about a staff member, they have a right to know about the complaint and be given time to respond.

If the matter you are complaining about involves an immediate threat of harm to anyone, or abuse or neglect of a child, action will need to be taken immediately to inform the police or care and protection services. In this situation, if you require an urgent response, please do not leave a message on somebody's phone: instead, call Marymead reception on 02 6162 5800 and ask to speak to any Program Manager, Senior Manager or the Chief Executive Officer, or contact the police on 131 444 or Care and Protection Services on 1300 556 729.

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of your complaint

You may take your complaint to an organisation or person outside of Marymead. The following organisations are ones you could approach to help you with your complaint:

Public Advocate of the ACT	02 6207 0707
The ACT Ombudsman	1300 362 072
ADACAS (ACT Disability, Aged and Carer Advocacy Service)	02 6242 5060
The Children and Young People’s Commissioner	02 6205 2222
Human Rights and Discrimination Commissioner	02 6205 2222
Health Services Commissioner	02 6205 2222
Disability and Community Services Commissioner	02 6205 2222
Advocacy for Inclusion	02 6286 9422
Foster Care Association of the ACT – South	02 6288 5994
Foster Care Association of the ACT – North	02 6241 1665
ACT Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services	133 427
Conflict Resolution Service	02 6162 4050

You may also wish to make a complaint to the relevant funding body.
The funding body for your program is:

.....
and the funding body can be contacted on:

.....

Privacy & Confidentiality

Summary



What sort of information does Marymead collect and record?

- Names
- Contact details
- Notes from conversations, phone calls and meetings
- Reports
- Court Orders
- Correspondence (including emails)
- Details about other services you or your child are using, which may include health or education services.

Why?

In order to provide a service to you and/or your child.

Who sees your information at Marymead?

The staff who work directly with you and/or your child, and other staff who may need to know, eg: your worker's supervisor or Program Manager, or other staff who work in the same team.

Your personal information will not be shared with staff from other Marymead programs, or other services, without your permission.



Privacy, Confidentiality and Access to Records

Marymead privacy information

Marymead aims to provide quality services for children and families. Part of our service to you requires us to gather personal information about you and/or your child. You have a right to have your personal information kept private. This brochure tells you how Marymead looks after your personal information, when and how we share information with others, and how you can access your information here at Marymead.

Legal requirements

Marymead is required by law to abide by the *Privacy Act 1988*, the *Privacy Amendment (Private Sector) Act 2000*, and the *Health Records (Privacy and Access) Act 1997*. These Acts set out principles of privacy, and what Marymead needs to do to ensure the collection, use and disclosure (or sharing) of your personal information is done in the proper way.

The sort of information Marymead has about you

In accordance with the *Privacy Act 1998*, the sort of information Marymead will collect about you and/or your child includes names, contact details and other information which is relevant for the direct provision of services. This information may differ from program to program. Marymead may also keep records of conversations, phone calls and meetings, reports, court orders, correspondence (including emails), and details of other relevant services in case files. If necessary for provision of Marymead services, information regarding health and education may also be collected.

Personal information about you and/or your child that is collected by Marymead will not be collected illegally or for illegal purposes. It will only be used for the purposes of providing a service to you and/or your child, and will be kept accurate and up to date.

How to make a complaint

You can make a complaint to any staff member at any time. Complaints can be made in person, over the phone, by email or by letter. When you make a complaint in person or over the phone, the person you speak to will write down your complaint, and may ask you for further information.

The first person to contact is your worker, who may be able to suggest ways to sort out the problem. Often the problem can be easily resolved.

If your complaint is about your worker, or you feel more comfortable talking to someone else, you can contact the Program Manager or the Senior Manager of the program. After talking to these people, if there is no resolution, or the matter is serious, you can contact the Chief Executive Officer of Marymead. Staff can all be contacted by ringing Marymead on 02 6162 5800.

If you wish, you can request a meeting at Marymead to discuss the complaint. If it is a serious, formal complaint, two staff members will meet with you. You are welcome to invite a support person to be present at the meeting.

How soon will Marymead respond to your complaint?

If your complaint comes by email, telephone message or letter, Marymead will let you know we have received your complaint as soon as practical, usually within 3 working days. At the time we receive your complaint we will discuss with you time frames for responding to your complaint.

Response to a complaint depends on the nature of the complaint. For informal complaints response will be made as soon as possible, within 5 working days at the most. For formal complaints, which may need more time to look into, some response will be made within 10 working days. After the complaint has been resolved, Marymead may seek your feedback on how you felt Marymead handled your complaint.

You have a right to an advocate

If you do not feel comfortable making a complaint to Marymead, you have a right to ask an advocate, or representative, to make a complaint on your behalf. This can be someone you know or someone from one of the advocate organisations listed below.

Marymead's Complaint Process



Marymead aims to provide quality services for children and families, and welcomes feedback, both positive and negative, from families we serve. If you have a complaint, or would like to make changes to the way Marymead delivers our service to you, we want to hear from you.

Making a complaint to Marymead will not affect your access to Marymead services, or prevent you from receiving services from Marymead in the future.

Marymead recognises it is not always easy to tell people that you don't like the way they are doing things, however we need to know if there is a problem. Marymead is committed to resolving issues and improving our service.

Different types of complaints

- An **informal** complaint is when you let us know you are dissatisfied with a service that Marymead provides, or a decision or action that involves you and/or your child. Informal complaints are usually resolved quickly, and do not require a formal complaints process.
- A **formal** complaint can be a complaint about the conduct of a staff member, or a more complicated issue regarding an aspect of our service delivery. A formal complaint is usually made in writing, via a letter, an email or a feedback form. Formal complaints are usually in regard to matters that are more serious, and therefore it may take more time for Marymead to respond to the complaint.

Who sees your information at Marymead?

Your information will only be seen by staff working directly with you and/or your child on a 'need to know' basis. Other staff who may 'need to know' your information include your worker's supervisor or Program Manager, and other staff working in the same program team. Staff from other Marymead teams or programs will **not** have access to your information without your consent. Client records will be stored securely in lockable filing cabinets, and on a secure computer network. Marymead also uses secure archiving facilities.

Sharing of your personal information

If there is a need to share personal information with another service or another Marymead program, we will first get your consent to share this information. You have the right to withdraw your consent at any time.

Certain information may be used to provide reports on clients of Marymead (for example, the number of Marymead clients who live in Belconnen or cultural background of clients). Reports of this kind will not include any identifying information about you or your child. Information will only be given to funding bodies or courts as required and you would be informed about this in advance (this will vary between programs and funding bodies: for more specific information you can ask your worker).

Access to your personal information held at Marymead

The personal information Marymead collects about you and/or your child will be made available to you on request as appropriate. It will not include personal information on other people. Requests to access your and/or your child's personal information at Marymead are to be made to the Marymead Chief Executive Officer in writing. You have the right to add information to your Marymead file, or insert an amendment, should you believe the information we hold is not accurate. If you or your child are or have been in residential or foster care, your file is not owned by Marymead. However, we can assist you to access your file under Freedom of Information legislation.

Exceptions to privacy and confidentiality

There is a limit to confidentiality if Marymead receives information regarding an immediate threat of harm to anyone, or abuse or neglect of a child. In these cases Marymead will need to make a report to child protection services or the police as appropriate.

Marymead is also legally obligated to provide any information regarding you or your family, to the courts if we are ordered to do so.

Breaches of confidentiality

If you believe the confidentiality of your personal information has been broken, you have a right to make a complaint through the Marymead complaints system.

Feedback

We would like to hear from you if you have some comment to make about the service you have received at Marymead. There are several ways of doing this, including in person, over the phone or forms available in waiting areas which can be used to give us feedback. You can either put them in the 'Suggestion box' provided, or give them to a worker, or mail it to us in a reply paid envelope.

Not happy about a Marymead Service?



Tell someone at Marymead

Who?

- Your worker
- The Program Manager
- The Senior Manager
- The Chief Executive Officer

How?

- Talk to someone in person
- Talk to someone on the phone
- Send an email
- Write a letter
- Fill in a feedback form

Marymead will

- Listen to you
- Look into the matter
- Get back to you in 3 working days
- Only tell people in Marymead who need to know

Who else can you talk to?

- A support person or advocate who can make the complaint for you
- The organisation that funds the service
- An organisation that takes complaints (see list in this brochure).



| **marymead**
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