

Customer Service, Confidentiality and Privacy Policy

Policy Statement

Customer Service is the cornerstone of all of Meerilinga's interaction with workers, external customers, clients and stakeholders. Good customer service builds trust and loyalty and helps to establish Meerilinga as a centre of excellence in children's services. In addition the consistent application of Meerilinga's customer service standards will enable our customers and clients to access programs and services in a safe and familiar environment. Customer service encompasses our customer service standards, confidentiality, privacy, support services and membership.

The Customer Service Policy, particularly in relation to confidentiality and privacy, embraces the Privacy Act of 1988 and the Privacy Amendments Act 2000. This policy is not intended to prevent disclosure where disclosure is required to fulfil their responsibilities or have authority under statutory right, including authorities outside of Meerilinga.

Customer Service Standards

Meerilinga has developed a set of customer service standards that are based upon the International Standards for Customer Service. The standards address four key perspectives of the customer. They are:

- Service
- Financial
- Operational
- Learning and Growth

The customer service standards reflect the manner in which all Meerilinga workers are to interact with both internal and external customers and clients.

Confidentiality

It is the policy of Meerilinga that Governors and workers of Meerilinga may not disclose, divulge, or make accessible confidential information belonging to, or obtained through their affiliation with Meerilinga to any person, including relatives, friends and business and professional associates, other than to persons who have a legitimate need for such information and to whom Meerilinga has authorised disclosure.

Privacy

Meerilinga will uphold all of the principles of the Federal Government's Privacy Principles as set out in the Commonwealth Privacy Act (1988), subsequent amendments and the Australian Privacy Principles.

Workers must adhere to the privacy principles and uphold them at all times.

Policy Purpose

Meerilinga is committed to providing an efficient and courteous service, which is responsive to children's, families, workers and the community's needs. The Customer Service Policy provides guidance to workers about the service standards to be consistently provided to both internal and external customers.

Application of Policy

Good customer service is based upon creating a service culture. This will involve each worker of Meerilinga being provided with an orientation when first employed.

One aspect of the orientation is to review the privacy policy. It is the responsibility of each team leader to ensure that the workers that they supervise are fully aware and adhere to the policy and related standards.

Where necessary workers are to be provided with training or coaching to ensure that their work practice is in accordance with the customer service standards. Governors and workers will use confidential information solely for the purpose of performing services as Governors or workers for Meerilinga.

Governors and workers must exercise good judgment and care at all times to avoid unauthorised or improper disclosures of confidential information. Conversations in public places, such as restaurants, elevators, and airplanes, should be limited to matters that do not pertain to information of a sensitive or confidential nature. In addition, Governors and workers should be sensitive to the risk of inadvertent disclosure and should for example, refrain from leaving confidential information on desks or otherwise in plain view, refrain from the use of speaker phones to discuss confidential information if the conversation could be heard by unauthorised persons. Provide private sources.

All workers records and financial records are to be kept in either a locked cabinet or in password accessible electronic files.

At the end of a Governors term in office or upon the termination of worker's employment, he or she shall return, at the request of Meerilinga, all documents, papers, and other materials, regardless of medium, which may contain or be derived from confidential information, in his or her possession.

The Privacy Statement for Meerilinga should be displayed in all services and be included in all information to customers, including the website.

The purpose of this policy is to outline the guidelines when working with personal and sensitive information to all users of Meerilinga's services to maintain the confidentiality and privacy of information within the organisation.

Privacy

Meerilinga refers to Meerilinga Children and Community Foundation Inc. (ABN 60 366 468 001) and Meerilinga Children and Community Services Inc. (ABN 39 362 912 956).

Meerilinga is committed to ensuring that your personal information is kept private. We will handle your personal and sensitive information in accordance with the Commonwealth Privacy Act (1988), subsequent amendments and the Australian Privacy Principles. This privacy policy explains how we use the information collected by you, how you can instruct us if you prefer to limit the use of that information and procedures that we have in place to safeguard your privacy.

The terms “personal information” and “sensitive information” are referred to throughout this Policy.

Personal information refers to *information or an opinion, whether true or not, and whether recorded in a material form or not, about an identified individual, or an individual who is reasonably identifiable.*

Examples include, an individual’s name or pseudonyms, signature, address, telephone number, date of birth, medical records, bank account details and commentary or opinion about a person. Sensitive information is a type of personal information and information that Meerilinga collects can include details such as an individual’s racial or ethnic origin, philosophical beliefs, health information and genetic information.

The use of pseudonyms for individuals is only available where practical in delivering the appropriate service to individuals. For example Meerilinga Training College is unable to provide students with Certificates without their legal names.

Meerilinga will only collect information that is necessary to provide individuals with the service they require, or to comply with any applicable laws/or regulatory requests. The information that is collected will depend upon a customer’s chosen type of interaction with Meerilinga.

In order for Meerilinga to assist our customers, the following information may be collected:

- Your name, address, email address, date of birth, gender, phone numbers
- Financial details such as bank details.
- Health information
- Racial or ethnic origin
- Educational background
- Citizenship
- Any disability or impairments
- Employment details
- Genetic information

How Meerilinga collects and holds personal information

Meerilinga collects all information directly from individuals when it is provided regarding themselves and their dependants. This information is collected in the following ways:

- Through our Meerilinga, Children’s Week WA and growusupstrong websites
- Through Application and Registration Forms for any of our Programs and Services.
- When contacting Meerilinga through the telephone, by post or by email

All personal and sensitive information can be held in electronic and hard format. All records are kept at our premises in either in a locked location or in password accessible electronic files. Meerilinga have firewalled our computer systems, limited employee access to data and system password protection.

If personal and sensitive information is received by Meerilinga that was not requested, within a reasonable period of receiving this information it will be determined whether the information is required and meets the Australian Privacy Principles if it had been requested. If it is not then the information will be destroyed or de-identified.

All personal and sensitive information is held in our archives for a reasonable period of time as per Australian Law dictates. Once this information is no longer required Meerilinga will take reasonable steps to destroy the information or to ensure it is de-identified. Meerilinga also uses an external provider, CTI Records Management, for secure and confidential off-site storage. See Records Management Policy

Meerilinga will not provide any individual's information to any third party unless permission has been received or as required to comply with applicable laws and/or regulatory requests. All information will be used solely for what is necessary for the functions and activities of our business. Where third parties are engaged to support the delivery and development of programs and services and store data, personal information will still be protected, handled in accordance with privacy laws and used solely for the use consented.

Meerilinga will not use personal information to contact individuals for purposes outside of the service which is being provided, unless permission has specifically been obtained. This includes but is not limited to e-newsletters and the opportunity will be available to opt in and out of this service. Permission will be granted beforehand, and a third party provider may be used to distribute the information, such as the distribution of Meerilinga E-newsletters. The provider will hold information on our behalf for our use and will not be available for their or other organisations use.

Digital Information

The websites referenced in this Privacy Policy use Google Analytics, a web analytics service provided by Google Inc. Our Google Analytics service may gather information and statistics collectively about all visitors to this Website which may include the use of 'cookies'. 'Cookies' are small text files placed on your computer, to help the website analyse how you are using the site. You may refuse the use of 'cookies' by selecting the appropriate settings on your web browser. 'Cookies' make it easier for you to log on to and use this website during future visits. They also allow us to monitor website traffic and to personalise the content of the site for you. Such information gathering will help us to improve this website. Such information disclosed to third parties will be in the aggregate form and will not involve individual names or identifying information.

If desired customers can change the setting of your browsers so that 'cookies' are not accepted or you are provided with options to accept or reject them as they are sent to your browser.

Photo and Video Permission

Photo and videos of individuals are treated as personal information in accordance with the Australian Privacy Act 1988 and Privacy Principles. All people, including children participating in Meerilinga programs and services have the right to personal privacy and the right to give or withhold consent to being photographed or otherwise recorded. Photo and video consent will be sought and advised through the application and registration process.

These images will not be made available to any other organisation or person. The use of images may include, but are not limited to:

- Brochures
- Flyers/Posters
- Events
- Website/social
- Promotional material representing Meerilinga
- Media releases
- Calendars
- Newsletters
- Annual report

Authorised images will remain copyright of Meerilinga. Consent may be withdrawn at any time by written notice.

Purpose for handling personal information

Meerilinga only collects information that is necessary to provide individuals with the service you or your dependants require, to comply with any applicable laws and/or regulatory requests.

For example we process an Application for a dependant to attend Meerilinga's Pre-Kindy Early Learning Program. This information is necessary for Meerilinga to provide the appropriate care to our dependants whilst in our care and to provide information about the Services offered through Meerilinga.

We may provide you with communications regarding information about Meerilinga and any Services that we provide that may suit your needs unless requested not to by you. If communications is provided it will be dictated by the Services that we have originally provided to you.

Sensitive information

Sensitive information will only be collected on a need basis. This information will only be used for the purpose that it was collected and as permitted by the Australian Privacy Principles. For examples upon applying for Meerilinga's Pre-kindly Early Learning Program children's allergies and medical conditions must be provided in case of emergencies whilst they are in our care.

Updating details

If any of the information provided to Meerilinga changes, for example change of name or email address, please advise us of the correct details in writing.

This privacy policy has been produced in response to the Commonwealth Privacy Act 1988 and subsequent amendments.

All queries or complaints about this policy, please contact the Chief Executive Officer in writing, by email at mycf@meerilinga.org.au, or by post at the following addresses: PO Box 1177, WEST LEEDERVILLE, WA 6901. Meerilinga will endeavour to resolve any complaint to your satisfaction.

You can check the information we hold or ask us to amend any inaccuracies or request its removal by writing to us or emailing us at the above address. We will take the necessary action within the time limits provided for under the Privacy Act. We reserve the right to use reasonable measures to check your identity before any information will be disclosed to you.

Consent

By submitting your information you consent to the use of that information as set out in this policy. Any changes to the privacy policy will be posted on the website.

Policy Review

The customer service policy will be reviewed on an annual basis as a part of the organisational review.

Scope

This policy applies to the Board of Governors, Chief Executive Officer and all workers including students, volunteers, clients, visitors and those employed on a fee for service or contract basis.