**Communication Policy**

## Media Communication

Inquiries concerning CASA of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, its policies, practices, or clients, must be referred to the Executive Director. Volunteers and staff are not permitted to make any statements involving CASA to the media without the consent of the Executive Director.

## CASA Branding

All CASA of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ staff and volunteers shall refer to and adhere to National CASA branding requirements. The National CASA branding guide can be accessed through the National CASA website or upon inquiry to the CASA of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ program.

## Social Media

CASA of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ recognizes and values the role of social media in our everyday lives. We encourage our staff, volunteers, and board to use social media platforms to highlight the important contribution of our work in the community while remaining aware of the risks and responsibilities associated with an open public forum.

When you engage in social media and online communication, you become a public figure. As a public figure who is associated with CASA of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, you have a responsibility to help protect this organization and our clients. The following social media policy will assist you in making responsible decisions about your use of social and online media in connection with your role with CASA of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

(Social media includes all means of communicating or posting content of any sort on the Internet, including blogs, journals or diaries, personal websites, social networking or affinity sites, bulletin boards or chat rooms.)

#### Online Communication and Social Media Expectations:

1. ***Never reveal confidential information.*** Sharing stories that illustrate the value of CASA advocacy for children is often the most powerful way to engage the public in our cause. However, the sharing of confidential information about the children and families we serve is prohibited. This includes names, ages, case-specific details, time-specific statements, and photographs. It is acceptable to discuss general details and to use non-time-specific statements so long as it does not contain information recognizable to the family or anyone associated with the family or case.

For example, use general terms such as “youth” instead of “13-year-old-girl.” You must be careful to protect the dignity of families, children and social agencies, even if they are not named.

NO: “My 18-year old CASA kid just graduated from Lincoln High…Congratulations!” YES: “Congratulations to my CASA youth for graduating high school today!”

2. **Uphold a respectable reputation.** Be fair and courteous to fellow employees, volunteers, or board members, the families we serve, the stakeholders with whom we work, and the vendors we retain. If you have a complaint or criticism, you are encouraged to address it through the appropriate internal channels of communication. Additionally, do not respond to any negative comments posted online about CASA of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ or any other CASA program including local and national organizations. We would appreciate you informing the Executive Director if you see any negative representation of the organization online so we may determine the best way to respond or not.

3. **Be considerate.** Never post discriminatory or harassing comments. Be respectful of all individuals and families served by CASA of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_; CASA employees, volunteers, or board members; any community stakeholder including individuals or organizations within or outside the judicial and child welfare systems; or any other persons associated with CASA of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

NO: “Great day as a CASA volunteer! The Judge finally made the right decision in our favor.” YES: “Great day as a CASA volunteer! Can’t believe what a difference one person can make.”

4. **Maintain a high standard of professionalism.** You should maintain professional relationships at all times. Avoid connecting via social media with a child or family you know through your work with CASA of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ or as a volunteer. If for some reason you feel you must communicate through a social network about a CASA-related matter, check first with your supervisor. You should not add children or families as friends on social media or request that they add you. Remember that your communication while on CASA of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ business may be discoverable in court. Do not communicate with the judge or court regarding a CASA case or any other CASA of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ matter not specific to a case via social media.

5. **Use good judgement.** Refrain from including any inappropriate content, providing links to inappropriate websites, or including any inappropriate photos in postings or comments directly or indirectly referring to CASA of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, any individuals associated with CASA of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, or your role with the organization. Inappropriate material includes depictions or descriptions of illicit substances and/or their paraphernalia; underage drinking; harassing, hostile, false, or confidential information; and any other acts that violate local, state, or federal law and/or CASA statutes, rules, and regulations. Prejudice or discriminatory content is also prohibited. When using social media in connection with your capacity as a CASA volunteer, take a moment to consider all online comments with respect to the above framework before posting. Using good judgement extends to the selection of sources of news and research. The sources you base your arguments on should be reputable and well-established, and ideally bipartisan or nonpartisan. Remember that the Internet archives almost everything, so even deleted posts can be searched!

6. **Share public content but not private content.** You are free to share content from National CASA/GAL’s public website and Ohio CASA’s public website and social media accounts with the general public. However, you may not share content from any member portal that is password protected unless it was intended specifically for sharing.

7. **Respect copyright.** Make sure facts are accurate before posting and you have permission to post any copyrighted information. When discussing others’ research or opinions, make it clear that the research or opinions are not coming directly from you by citing the source.

8. **Be transparent.** Your online comments represent only your personal opinions. Never present yourself as a spokesperson for CASA of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Always be clear and open about the nature of your association with CASA of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and when necessary make it clear that your views do not represent those of the organization or anyone else associated with the organization.

9. **Try to add value.** Does your post provide worthwhile information and perspective? Does it pertain to your mission and work? Does it help you, your coworkers, volunteers, and supporters better understand and feel more connected to our cause? Does it build a positive sense of community?

When using social media in connection with your capacity as a CASA volunteer, take a moment to consider all online comments with respect to the above framework before posting.

##### *Violation of Social Media Policy*

Online content produced by CASA of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ volunteers in conflict with the above guidelines or including discriminatory remarks, harassment, and threats of violence or similar inappropriate or unlawful conduct will not be tolerated and may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination from your role with CASA of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Furthermore, retaliation or any negative action against any staff, volunteer, or board member for reporting a possible deviation from this policy or for cooperating with an investigation will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination from your role with CASA of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

## Crisis Communications

CASA of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ has a separate crisis communication policy that volunteers and staff shall refer to in regards to issues that shall be escalated to the CASA program, State CASA/GAL Association and National CASA leadership.

# Scheduling Review of this Document

This one page document is to be included in the Communication Policy. The Communication Policy should be reviewed by the Executive Director every three years or as changes need to be made. Below is the scheduling of the next review.

**Last Revised:** Jan 23rd. 2021

**Next Review Scheduled:** Jan. 2022

**First Adopted:** Feb. 2021

**Revision History:** Created by CASA of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Jan. 23rd 2021