**Text Messaging and Other Virtual Messaging Policy**

**SAMPLE**

*Safeguarding the children of our community and the volunteers who advocate for them is central to the CASA/GAL mission. In the interest of both, CASA of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_has adopted the following guidance and restrictions regarding texting and virtual messaging (i.e. messenger).*

The use of texting and/or virtual messaging in a CASA case should fall within the scope of the CASA volunteer’s role and responsibilities and the boundaries of professionalism. Appropriate use of texting and/or virtual messaging for CASA volunteers and the required documentation are defined below.

1. **With children/youth in assigned cases (all ages):**

Volunteers may communicate via text and other virtual messaging platforms with children and youth assigned to them on a limited basis (e.g. confirming scheduled meetings, gaining contact information, offering congratulations). Volunteers are required to record a summary of the communication in OPTIMA.

Any other substantive communication via text or virtual messaging platform must have prior approval of the CASA supervisor. Examples might include a youth over 18 in foster care, a youth for whom distance or type of placement makes other forms of communication difficult, etc.

If a volunteer receives an unexpected text or virtual message from her/his assigned child or youth, the volunteer should immediately:

\*notify the CASA supervisor via email,

\*record the wording of the text message(s) in OPTIMA and,

\*check with the CASA supervisor regarding any future use.

1. **With case-involved persons 18 or older:**

Volunteers may communicate via text and other virtual messaging platforms with adults involved in their assigned cases. Volunteers are required to record a summary of the communication in OPTIMA.

1. **With children/youth under 18 NOT involved in assigned cases:**

Volunteers are advised against texting/using other virtual messaging platforms with minors in general unless parental consent has been secured and there is an organizational structure and protocol (school, youth group, team, etc.). Texts are a more personal form of communication that can easily be misinterpreted by children, youth, or parents. These platforms are also widely used by potential abusers/offenders. Keeping a record of any communication of this nature is recommended as a matter of self-protection.