**CASA of Franklin County**

**Online Communication and Social Media Guidelines**

**For Staff and Volunteers**

There are many CASA of Franklin County staff and volunteers contributing to online spaces such as blogs, social networking sites, wikis, forums and photo and video sharing sites. All kinds of new communications and social networking tools are available to staff and volunteers and anyone who wants to share insights, express opinions and communicate in a globally distributed conversation. The following guidelines will help you talk about your involvement with CASA of Franklin County in a transparent and professional manner.

While CASA of Franklin County recognizes the value of posting personal online content, it is important that volunteer Guardians ad litem (GALs) who choose to tell their story online understand what is recommended, expected and required.

**General Internet Policy**

Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) volunteers and staff shall refrain from posting inappropriate material, links to inappropriate websites, or undesirable comments, references or pictures anywhere on the web where the posting directly or indirectly makes reference to CASA of Franklin County or any name meant to refer to the organization. Anyone found to be in violation of this policy may be sanctioned at the discretion of CASA management staff.

This policy is built largely on the work of the American Red Cross and the Easter Seals. We thank these organizations for disclosing their policies publicly so that all of us can learn from them.

**A note about personal web sites, blog and networking profiles**

If you choose to identify yourself as a volunteer GAL or discuss matters related to CASA of Franklin County on a personal Web site, blog or networking profile, many readers will assume you are speaking on behalf of our organization.

In light of this possibility, your communications should be transparent, ethical and accurate. CASA of Franklin County expects staff and volunteers to respect our mission and hold confidential most details of their work.

These guidelines will further explain the expectations and responsibilities of communicating online and having a presence in social media.

**CASA of Franklin County Online Communications Guidelines**

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| **Do** | **Don’t** |
| **Use disclaimers** | **Reveal confidential information** |
| **Be transparent** |   |
| **Be accurate** |   |
| **Be considerate** |   |
| **Respect copyright laws** |  |
| **Tell us about your blog** |   |
| **Be generous** |   |
| **Be a good blogger** |   |
| **Respect work commitments** |   |

**Do Use Disclaimers**

Make it clear that the views you are expressing are yours alone and not necessarily those of CASA of Franklin County.

**Do Be Transparent**

If you discuss CASA of Franklin County, then you have a duty to disclose your role within the organization.

If you are creating an online space specifically for CASA of Franklin County, use the entire chapter/region name. Social networks function well as smaller communities. Representing your community will increase activity from supporters in your community.

National CASA and Ohio CASA are responsible for creating national and state CASA online presences.

**Do Be Accurate**

Even though your blog posts may be primarily made up of personal opinion, do your research well and check that your facts are accurate. Make sure you have permission to post any copyrighted or confidential information (e.g., images, statistics) to your blog, and be careful about posting or linking to items that may contain viruses.

**Do Be Considerate**

Remember that anyone, including fellow volunteers and CASA of Franklin County staff, may be actively reading what you publish online. Refrain from using your blog to bash or embarrass CASA of Franklin County, families, our donors or your colleagues.

If you have suggestions for improvements at CASA of Franklin County, please state them constructively or better yet, go through the proper channels to air your concerns and share your suggestions.

**Respect Copyright Laws**

Show proper respect for the laws governing copyright and fair use of copyrighted material owned by others, including CASA of Franklin County and National CASA copyrights and registered trademarks.

Please note that any photos taken by CASA of Franklin County Staff may be used in our own marketing documents and on-line publications.

**Tell Us About Your Blog**

We want to aggregate all the powerful stories volunteer GALs are telling and showcase your individual contribution to the overall mission and gather links on our website. If you have a blog and you intend to discuss CASA of Franklin County, please contact Anne Konarski at 614-462-7450 for questions, concerns or general guidance on how to engage the blogosphere.

**Be Generous**

The Internet is all about building relationships via connecting with links, so if you see something interesting, valuable or relevant, link to it! The more you link to relevant material, the more contacts you will make and the more popular your own blog will become.

**Be a Good Blogger**

Writing captivating online content is hard work and a commitment. We suggest if you decide to jump into the blogosphere, do so with a commitment to post regularly and well; link to others and show your unique contributions.

**Respect Work Commitments**

Please remember that blogging and other social networking activities are personal and should be done on your own time unless you have specifically been assigned to perform an online activity related to your CASA of Franklin County responsibilities as an employee or volunteer.

**Don’t Reveal Confidential Information**

Your work at CASA of Franklin County is largely confidential. If you do blog about CASA of Franklin County or participate in a discussion of the program on other online sites, you must accomplish this while respecting the privacy and confidentiality of the court and all parties to a case. When making decisions about your online content, refer often to the following documents you agreed to when you became a volunteer:

Conflict of Interest Statement

Statement of Confidentiality.

 Policies and Procedures

If involved on a current case, always remember that you must maintain objectivity and refrain from subjective language. It is unacceptable to discuss online any identifiable details of current cases.

It is acceptable to discuss general details and to use non-identifying pseudonyms so long as the information provided does not violate your confidentiality agreement, and does not contain information recognizable to the family or others associated with the family and/or case. You may use the general terms “children’s services” and “John Doe”, etc. You should be careful to protect the dignity of families, children and social agencies, even if they are not named.

Do not link to personal pages of families or children you may encounter in your capacity as a volunteer for CASA of Franklin County. This includes e-mail addresses, instant messenger names, blogs, photo sharing sites and social networking sites such as facebook, myspace, twitter and youtube. In addition, it is not advisable to give your email address or cell phone number to the child(ren), or family members on any case which you are assigned.

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I have read and agree to follow the online and social media guidelines for staff and volunteers of CASA of Franklin County.

Print Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signature\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_