



## INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE POLICY

**Chapter 2:** Administration of Child Welfare Services

**Section 08:** Accessing and Maintaining Records in the Case Management System

**Effective Date:** October 1, 2022

**Version:** 3

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### POLICY OVERVIEW

In order to comply with Indiana Code and maintain the confidentiality of those served by the Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS), the electronic records maintained in the case management system are only accessed for work purposes related to a DCS employee's job duties.

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### PROCEDURE

DCS will maintain electronic records housed in the case management system for all open and closed Child Abuse and Neglect (CA/N) reports, assessments, and cases. DCS employees who gain or give unauthorized access to **any** child welfare records, including case management system records, will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination (see the Information Resources Use Agreement [IRUA] and the DCS Code of Conduct for additional information).

**Note:** Improper disclosure of confidential information is against the law and may subject the employee to action under IC 5-14-3-10, pursuant to IC 35-44.2-4-1.

DCS may restrict access to reports, assessments, or case records in the case management system pertaining to DCS employees or immediate family members of DCS employees. DCS reserves the right to restrict access to reports, assessments, or cases when there may be a conflict of interest (see policy 4.39 Restricting Assessments in the Case Management System).

DCS employees will:

1. Staff with their supervisor regarding whether particular access is within their assigned job duties to determine whether viewing or documenting the records in the case management system is appropriate;

**Note:** Employees may be required to justify the reason for accessing specific assessments or cases. Any unresolved concerns may be referred to the DCS Ethics Officer and/or Internal Affairs. Failure to adequately justify the access of a report, assessment, or case was within assigned job duties may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination (see IRUA and Code of Conduct).

2. Access, document, and view only the records in the case management system that are related to assigned job duties; and

**Note:** It is acceptable for DCS employees to view the case management system records regarding assessments or cases that are pertinent to assigned duties for reasons such as placement options, potential safety concerns, or other issues that may arise that may be cause for reviewing the case management system records (e.g., participation in a Practice Model Review [PMR] or Child and Family Services Review [CFSR]).

3. Report concerns to their supervisor of any known conflicts of interest involving any assessments or cases that may need to be restricted.

**Note:** If concerns arise regarding a potential conflict of interest, DCS employees should speak to their supervisor immediately and prior to accessing any assessments or cases related to the potential conflict of interest.

DCS supervisors will:

1. Discuss concerns regarding accessing the case management system with their employees when:
  - a. Concerns arise regarding whether access is within an employee's assigned job duties, or
  - b. There are concerns of a possible conflict of interest.
2. Determine if viewing and documenting records in the case management system is appropriate.

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## RELEVANT INFORMATION

### Definitions

N/A

### Forms and Tools

- DCS Ethics Officer email - [ethics@dcs.in.gov](mailto:ethics@dcs.in.gov)
- [Information Resources Use Agreement \(IRUA\)](#)

### Related Policies

- [DCS Code of Conduct](#)
- [4.39 Restricting Assessments in the Case Management System](#)

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## LEGAL REFERENCES

- [IC 5-14-3-10: Classified confidential information; unauthorized disclosure or failure to protect; offense; discipline](#)
- [IC 31-33-26-5: Establish access restrictions; maintain confidentiality; read only access by child services ombudsman](#)
- [IC 35-44.2-4-1: Disclosure of confidential information](#)
- [42 IAC 1-5-6: Conflicts of interest, decisions and voting](#)
- [42 IAC 1-5-10: Benefiting from confidential information](#)
- [42 IAC 1-5-11: Divulging confidential information](#)
- [42 IAC 1-5-12: Use of state property](#)

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## PRACTICE GUIDANCE- DCS POLICY 2.08

*Practice Guidance is designed to assist DCS staff with thoughtful and practical direction on how to effectively integrate tools and social work practice into daily case management in an effort to achieve positive family and child outcomes. Practice Guidance is separate from Policy.*

### **Conflict of Interest**

DCS staff will not allow private or personal interests or relationships, financial or otherwise, to conflict with or influence their professional duties and responsibilities; this includes behavior that would lead a reasonable person to believe that private or personal interests have motivated an action or decision. See the DCS Code of Conduct for additional information on conflict of interest.

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