

Autism Ontario Privacy Policy – Created June, 2004 Updated October 2025

At Autism Ontario (legally incorporated as Autism Society Ontario), the privacy of your personal information has always been an important aspect of how we operate. On January 1, 2004, the federal Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA) began to apply to provincially regulated organizations that collect, use and disclose personal information in the course of commercial activity. As such, Autism Ontario has developed the following Privacy Policy in order to ensure compliance with PIPEDA, as well as to inform individuals of our continuing commitment to the protection of their personal information.

What is personal information?

Personal information includes any factual or subjective information, recorded or not, about an identifiable individual. This includes information in any form such as a personal e-mail address, credit card numbers, home addresses, and so on. It does not include information normally found on a business card, such as name, title, company, business address, business e-mail address, business telephone or fax number.

Who is responsible for protecting the personal information collected, used and disclosed by Autism Ontario?

The Chief Executive Officer of Autism Ontario, Margaret Spoelstra, is the Chief Privacy Officer for the organization. The Chief Privacy Officer, along with Autism Ontario staff, volunteers, and board and committee members, are responsible for ensuring compliance with PIPEDA and with this Privacy Policy. At times, Autism Ontario staff may be delegated to act on behalf of the Chief Privacy Officer or to take responsibility for occasional collection, use and disclosure of personal information.

Why does Autism Ontario collect, use or disclose personal information?

Autism Ontario is dedicated to increasing public awareness about autism and the day-to-day issues faced by individuals with autism, their families, and the professionals with whom they interact. Autism Ontario and its Regions share common goals of providing information and education, supporting research, and advocating for programs and services for the autism community. In order to meet these goals, Autism Ontario may collect, use and disclose personal information, when applicable, for the following purposes:

- To assess applications for volunteering;
- To evaluate donor needs and interests;
- To assess applications for various Autism Ontario awards and reporting, with additional consent, the winners in Autism Ontario publications;
- To issue newsletters and event notifications;
- To solicit annual donations;
- To add information to our website, newsletters, displays and presentations;
- With additional consent to provide stories to media, research and other public relations work.

Autism Ontario does not sell or rent its member, volunteer, staff or donor information to any external parties.

How do individuals provide Autism Ontario with their consent for the collection, use and disclosure of their personal information?

Individuals may provide personal information expressly through the membership application, events/programs registration, or newsletter subscription process. During these processes, they may also provide their preferred contact information. Autism Ontario staff and Executive members have access only to the personal information provided by the member that is required to fulfill the purposes stated within this policy. At times, Autism Ontario may communicate information and details about future activities to these individuals. Autism Ontario will collect specific permissions on release forms for general use items such as photos, separate projects such as information for brochures and other projects. Information will not be released to any third party without the express permission of the Autism Ontario client. Consent can be withdrawn by contacting Autism Ontario's Chief Privacy Officer, who will ensure that the individual's personal information is no longer used or disclosed by the organization.

How much personal information does Autism Ontario collect, use or disclose?

Autism Ontario collects, uses and discloses personal information only to the extent required to fulfill the purposes stated within this policy.

How long does Autism Ontario retain personal information?

Autism Ontario retains personal information only for as long as is required to fulfill the purposes stated within this policy, and to meet all requirements by law. For example, inactive member records are retained in a protected storage facility for a five (5) year period as required by law. Another example is member's contact information being retained only for the duration of their active period. All financial transaction records are retained as long as required by the Canada Revenue Agency.

How accurate is the personal information collected, used and disclosed by Autism Ontario?

Personal information that is collected, used and disclosed by Autism Ontario is provided by individuals and is updated by the organization when requested by the individual. If an individual's personal information requires amendment, they may contact the Autism Ontario office at 1179 King Street West, Suite 004, Toronto, ON M6K 3C5 or by fax at 416-246-9417 or email info@autismontario.com to ensure that the correction is made.

How secure is the personal information stored at Autism Ontario?

Autism Ontario is committed to ensuring that personal information is protected from unauthorized access, unintended disclosures or theft. This protection is provided by firewalls in the computer system, passwords to protect databases, locked filing cabinets and restricted access to offices. Only the Chief Privacy Officer and delegated individuals have access to this information.

How is personal information collected, used or disclosed via Autism Ontario's websites?

In order to enhance your browsing experience when accessing Autism Ontario's websites, a small text file called a "cookie" is sent from our web server to your browser and stored on your computer. Cookies enhance your browsing experience, and also allow us to recognize you when you return to Autism Ontario's websites. You may set your browser to notify you when you receive cookies and you may choose to disable or delete cookies if you wish. Cookies are not programs or code, and are only used to optimize browsing. Autism Ontario's websites also log IP addresses of visitors. This information is used, in aggregate form, to provide statistical measures about usage of the site. This in turn allows us to continually improve the content and design of our websites. Autism Ontario's websites may contain links to other websites owned and operated by third parties. While we attempt to ensure that these organizations adhere to similar privacy policies, we are not responsible for the content or privacy practices of such sites. It is highly recommended that you review the privacy policies of other sites prior to providing any personal information on those sites.

How can individuals learn more about Autism Ontario's Privacy Policy?

Updated versions of this Privacy Policy will continue to be posted on the Autism Ontario website at www.autismontario.com as we make improvements. This Policy is also available in hard copy at the Autism Ontario office, a copy of which can be requested by contacting Autism Ontario at:

Autism Ontario
1179 King Street West, Suite 004 Toronto, Ontario M6K 3C5
Phone: (416) 246-9592
Fax: (416) 246-9417
E-mail: info@autismontario.com

How can individuals access their personal information held by Autism Ontario?

Individuals have a right to access their own personal information in the possession and control of Autism Ontario. They also have a right to know if their information has been disclosed to any third parties. If individuals wish to access their personal information, they need to contact Autism Ontario in writing at the above mailing or e-mail address. Autism Ontario reserves the right to charge a reasonable fee for the copying of this information.

How can individuals relay their concerns about their personal information held by Autism Ontario?

If individuals have a complaint related to Autism Ontario's Privacy Policy, they can contact the Chief Privacy Officer in writing using the above contact information. If the Chief Privacy Officer is unable to resolve the concern, or if there are further complaints, individuals may contact the Privacy Commissioner of Canada through www.priv.gc.ca or at:

Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada
30 Victoria Street
Gatineau, Quebec K1A 1H3
Toll-free: 1-800-282-1376
Phone: (819) 994-5444
TTY: (819) 994-6591