

Courtney Thom

Educational Psychologist

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POPIA Privacy Policy

1. Introduction

Courtney Thom Educational Psychologist ("the practice") is committed to protecting the confidentiality, integrity, and privacy of all personal information in compliance with the **Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA), No. 4 of 2013**, the **Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) Guidelines**, and other relevant laws of the Republic of South Africa.

As an Educational Psychologist, the practice processes sensitive personal information daily in order to provide professional services such as psycho-educational assessments, therapy, parental guidance, and family support.

This Privacy Policy explains how personal information is collected, used, stored, shared, and disposed of, and how data subjects can exercise their rights.

2. Definitions

- **Personal Information** – information relating to an identifiable individual (child, parent, adult client, staff, or service provider).
- **Processing** – any operation involving personal information (collection, recording, storing, updating, sharing, or deleting).
- **Responsible Party** – Courtney Thom Educational Psychologist.
- **Operator** – a third party who processes information on behalf of the practice (e.g., IT service providers, billing administrators).
- **Data Subject** – any person whose personal information is processed by the practice (clients, parents, guardians, staff).
- **Information Officer (IO)** – the designated person responsible for ensuring compliance with POPIA and responding to access requests.

3. Purpose of this Policy

This policy ensures:

- Compliance with POPIA confidentiality standards.
- Transparency to clients, parents, and families about how their personal information is handled.
- Lawful processing of information for defined purposes only.
- Appropriate technical and organisational measures to secure information.
- Data subjects' rights to access, correct, or request deletion of their personal information.

4. Collection of Personal Information

Personal information is collected only when necessary and with informed consent. Information may be obtained:

- Directly from clients, parents, or guardians during intake, interviews, or therapy.
- From referring professionals, schools, or healthcare providers (with consent).
- From administrative documents such as invoices, medical aid records, or court orders.

Categories of personal information:

- Names, ID numbers, passport numbers, dates of birth.
- Contact details (address, email, phone).

- Health, developmental, and educational history.
- Psychological assessment results, therapy notes, and reports.
- Financial/billing information and medical aid details.
- Guardian/parent details for minor clients.

5. Consent

By engaging with this practice, clients (and where applicable, parents/guardians of minors) provide **informed consent** for the collection, use, and processing of personal information in line with POPIA, HPCSA ethical rules, and other applicable laws.

- Consent is obtained in writing at the start of services (intake forms, contracts, or assessment agreements).
- Clients/guardians may **withdraw consent** at any time by providing written notice to the Information Officer.
- Withdrawal of consent is subject to legal and ethical requirements for record-keeping (e.g., HPCSA rules on minimum retention periods).
- Clients/guardians may also object to the processing of personal information for purposes not directly related to service provision (e.g., direct marketing).

6. Purpose of Processing

Personal information is processed to:

- Deliver psycho-educational, therapeutic, and guidance services.
- Communicate with parents, schools, and multidisciplinary teams.
- Submit concession and accommodation applications.
- Maintain proper clinical and administrative records.
- Comply with HPCSA ethical requirements and South African law.

7. Retention of Records

- In line with **HPCSA Booklet 9**, patient records will be retained for **at least 6 years** after the last contact, or until a child client reaches the age of **21 years** (whichever is longer).
- Records required by law (e.g., tax and financial records) will be kept in line with the **Income Tax Act**.
- After expiry of retention periods, records will be **securely destroyed** (shredding or permanent electronic deletion).

8. Rights of Data Subjects

Clients, parents, guardians, and staff have the right to:

- Be informed when their information is collected or shared.
- Access the personal information held about them.
- Request corrections, updates, or deletion of inaccurate or outdated information.
- Object to certain forms of processing (e.g., direct marketing).
- Be notified in the event of a data breach.
- Submit a complaint to the Information Officer or to the Information Regulator.

9. Security Safeguards

The practice employs **reasonable and appropriate measures** to secure information, including:

- Locked filing cabinets for physical records.
- Password-protected devices and encrypted digital storage.
- Secure cloud platforms hosted with providers offering POPIA-aligned safeguards.
- Confidentiality agreements with staff and service providers.
- Secure destruction of obsolete information.

10. Sharing of Personal Information

Information may be shared only with:

- Parents/guardians (for child clients).

- Schools, teachers, or allied professionals – only with informed written consent.
- Medical aids and insurers (for billing purposes).
- Courts, regulatory authorities, or HPCSA, where legally required.

Operators (e.g., IT service providers) will only receive the minimum necessary information and are bound by contracts to uphold POPIA standards.

11. Personal Information Request Form

Data subjects may request access to their personal information using the **PAIA Form C**.

These forms are available:

- From the Information Officer via email.
- From the Information Regulator's website: www.justice.gov.za/forms/paia/PAIA-FormC.pdf.

Proof of identity is required before any request is processed. Fees may apply in terms of the PAIA Regulations.

12. Complaints Procedure

If you believe your information has been unlawfully accessed, misused, or not processed in line with POPIA, you may:

1. Submit a written complaint to the practice's Information Officer.
2. If unresolved, escalate to the **Information Regulator of South Africa**:
 - **Tel:** 010 023 5200
 - **Email:** complaints.IR@justice.gov.za
 - **Website:** <https://inforegulator.org.za>

13. Information Officer

- **Name:** Courtney Thom
- **Role:** Information Officer | Educational Psychologist (HPCSA Registered)
- **Email:** courtneywthom@gmail.com
- **Phone:** 069 645 8432
- **Address:** 82 Lancaster Avenue, Craighall Park, Johannesburg, 2196

14. Availability of Policy

This policy is available:

- On the practice website.
- At the practice premises during working hours.
- From the Information Officer upon request.

15. Updates

This policy will be reviewed **annually** or when legal/ethical requirements change. Updates will be published on the website.