

The Autism Society of Colorado Policy for Online Groups and Meetings

By registering or joining the online group/ meeting, participants are considered to have provided their consent to agree to the policies of the Autism Society of Colorado. Participants have the right to revoke their consent by unregistering or leaving the online group/ meeting at any time. (A policy is a general written document that establishes a standard by which the institution manages its affairs. A policy mandates, specifies, or prohibits conduct in order to enhance the institution's mission, ensure coordinated compliance with applicable laws and regulations, promote operational efficiency, and/or reduce institutional risk.)

1. Privacy and Confidentiality Policy:

- a. All participants and facilitators are expected to respect the privacy and confidentiality of others in the group.
- b. Participants are free to share their experiences, ask questions, and engage in discussions **voluntarily**.
- c. Discussions and personal information shared within the group should not be disclosed or shared outside of the group without explicit consent.
- d. If participants are jeopardizing or compromising other participants' privacy and/or confidentiality without knowing, they will be notified and disciplinary action will be taken.

2. Code of Conduct Policy:

- a. Participants are expected to treat each other with respect, kindness, and empathy.
- b. Harassment, discrimination, violence, hate speech, or any form of bullying will not be tolerated.
- c. Disagreements should be addressed in a constructive and respectful manner.
- d. Any violation of the code of conduct will be notified and disciplinary action will be taken, especially being removed from groups.

3. External Resource and Advice Policy:

- a. **This group is not to act in place of professional therapy.** We are a community connecting autistic individuals, families, and allies to help live full, vibrant, self-actualized lives.
- b. Participants should be aware that advice or information shared within the group is based on personal experiences and opinions, not professional advice.
- c. **It is recommended to consult qualified professionals for specific medical, therapeutic, or legal advice.**

4. Consent and Revoking Consent Policy:

- a. By joining the online group and/or meeting, participants are considered to have provided their consent to participate in group discussions and activities (including turning on their cameras, chatting, etc.).
- b. Participants must obtain explicit consent from other participants before sharing their personal information inside or outside of the group/ meeting.

- c. Participants must obtain explicit consent from all participants before taking screenshots (participants are not allowed to record or take photos of the group/ meeting without consent)
- d. By participating in an online group/ meeting, participants understand that their contributions (such as messages, comments, or shared resources) may be used within the group/ meeting context.
- e. Participants have the right to revoke their consent to participate in the online group and/or meeting at any time by leaving or unregistering from the group and/or meeting.
 - i. If a participant decides to withdraw their consent, they should inform the facilitators and their request should be respected.

5. Conflict Resolution & Moderation Policy

- a. The group has access to and understands established norms, rules, and/or guidelines for addressing conflicts or concerns.
- b. Participants are encouraged to report any issues to the ASC group facilitator or staff, who will investigate and take appropriate actions to resolve the issue.
- c. For moderation purposes such as oversized groups, attending multiple groups at the same time, or violating any policy that may cause harm or safety to participants, group environment, ASC facilitators or staff, ASC may limit or remove any participant from attending online group meetings and address any concerns that arises.
- d. **ASC group facilitators or staff have the authority to enforce policy, rules, and/or guidelines, remove any member of the group, and address any concerns that may arise.**

6. Group and Participant Comfort and Choice Policy

- a. There will be times the group will discuss a topic or subject that may be sensitive or uncomfortable for participants. Please know it is not to disturb or turn away participants of the group but to educate or share knowledge regarding autism spectrum topics. The point of the group is to connect with others, share experiences, and educate them regarding autism topics.
- b. Participants have the autonomy to decide whether they attend or continue participating in the online group based on their comfort level and personal needs. Please note this group is a voluntary and free optional resource for participants, it is not mandatory to attend.
- c. If a participant feels sensitive, uncomfortable, or overwhelmed during the group meetings, they are encouraged to prioritize their well-being and take necessary steps to ensure their own emotional safety (remove themselves from the group by walking away, asking to mute, leave for the meeting and join the next meeting, etc.).
- d. It's important to emphasize that participants should not feel obligated to stay in a group because it's causing distress. By acknowledging and respecting participants' autonomy, the group fosters an environment that prioritizes well-being and creates a space for self-care and growth.

7. Policy Updates:

- a. Any updates or changes to the policy will be communicated to participants in a timely manner.
- b. Participants will be given the opportunity to review and provide any concerns to the program director at program@autismcolorado.org.