



The Ontario Special Education (English) Tribunal

Date of Issue: Issued March 2006; Amended October 2007, May 2008

Subject: **ANONYMIZATION OF TRIBUNAL DECISIONS**

INTRODUCTION

The goal of the anonymization process is to protect minor children and their families and to ensure that the Tribunals' website and its procedures are responsive to the privacy issues under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FIPPA). In carrying out their mandate, the Special Education Tribunals (English and French) address very sensitive and intimate matters relating to special needs students. The Tribunals take a best practices approach in respect of its practices and procedures. At the same time, it is important for the discharge of the Tribunals' mandate that the public may access the decisions of the Tribunals. Accordingly, this policy seeks to balance the goals of privacy for parties with the Tribunals' access to information mandate.

PROCEDURES FOR DISTRIBUTION OF DECISIONS

Two versions of all new decisions are completed as follows:

1. A confidential version for the Parties

A personalized written decision is provided to the parties and contains all the identifying information about the student, the parents, the school board and witnesses.

The written decision for the parties is prepared by the members of the Tribunal panel which heard the appeal. The decision text may refer to the parent as the appellant, and to the school board as the respondent, and refers to the student by name. Other identifying information about the student's program, the school board and the names of witnesses will be included, as appropriate. Similarly, the cover page of the decision statement lists all the parties and witnesses by name. This is deemed the official version of the decision. It is signed by the members of the Tribunal panel that heard the case and it is forwarded to the parties in hard copy only.

2. A version anonymized for general distribution and website access

In preparing the anonymized version of the decision, all identifying information is removed to protect the privacy of the family. This version is not signed by the Tribunal members. The anonymized decision is posted on the Tribunals' website at <http://www.oset-tedo.ca>.