



Chair
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Statement of Principles

The Council's Statements of Principles are binding on all publications which are subject to its jurisdiction.

The Council's Standards of Practice relating to print and online publishing are contained in the Statement of General Principles and the Statement of Privacy Principles, detailed below.

The Statement of General Principles

Publications are free to publish as they wish by reporting facts and expressing opinions, provided they take reasonable steps to comply with the following Principles and the Council's other Standards of Practice:

Accuracy and clarity

1. Ensure that factual material in news reports and elsewhere is accurate and not misleading, and is distinguishable from other material such as opinion.
2. Provide a correction or other adequate remedial action if published material is significantly inaccurate or misleading.

Fairness and balance

3. Ensure that factual material is presented with reasonable fairness and balance, and that writers' expressions of opinion are not based on significantly inaccurate factual material or omission of key facts.
4. Ensure that where material refers adversely to a person, a fair opportunity is given for subsequent publication of a reply if that is reasonably necessary to address a possible breach of General Principle

Privacy and avoidance of harm

5. Avoid intruding on a person's reasonable expectations of privacy, unless doing so is sufficiently in the public interest.
6. Avoid causing or contributing materially to substantial offence, distress or prejudice, or a substantial risk to health or safety, unless doing so is sufficiently in the public interest.

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Integrity and transparency

7. Avoid publishing material which has been gathered by deceptive or unfair means, unless doing so is sufficiently in the public interest.
8. Ensure that conflicts of interests are avoided or adequately disclosed, and that they do not influence published material.

Statement of Privacy Principles

Along with the Statement of General Principles and the Specific Standards, the Privacy Principles are applied by the Council when providing advice or adjudicating on individual complaints.

Privacy Principle 1: Collection of personal information

In seeking personal information, journalists should not unduly intrude on the privacy of individuals and should show respect for the dignity and sensitivity of people encountered in the course of gathering news. In accordance with General Principle 7 of the Council's Statement of General Principles, media organisations should take reasonable steps to avoid publishing material which has been gathered by deceptive or unfair means, unless doing so is sufficiently in the public interest. Generally, journalists should identify themselves as such. However, journalists and photographers may at times need to operate surreptitiously to expose crime, significantly antisocial conduct, public deception, or some other matter in the public interest. Public figures necessarily sacrifice their right to privacy, where public scrutiny is in the public interest. However, public figures do not forfeit their right to privacy altogether. Intrusion into their right to privacy must be related to their public duties or activities.

Privacy Principle 2: Use and disclosure of personal information

Personal information gathered by journalists and photographers should only be used for the purpose for which it was intended. A person who supplies personal information should have a reasonable expectation that it will be used for the purpose for which it was collected. Some personal information, such as addresses or other identifying details, may enable others to intrude on the privacy and safety of individuals who are the subject of news coverage, and their families. To the extent lawful and practicable, a media organisation should only disclose sufficient personal information to identify the persons being reported in the news, so that these risks can be reasonably avoided.

Privacy Principle 3: Quality of personal information

A media organisation should take reasonable steps to ensure that the personal information it collects is accurate, complete and up-to-date.

Privacy Principle 4: Security of personal information

A media organisation should take reasonable steps to ensure that the personal information it holds is protected from misuse, loss, or unauthorised access

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Privacy Principle 5: Anonymity of sources

All persons who provide information to media organisations are entitled to seek anonymity. The identity of confidential sources should not be revealed, and where it is lawful and practicable, a media organisation should ensure that any personal information derived from such sources that it holds does not identify the source.

Privacy Principle 6: Correction, fairness and balance

In accordance with Principle 3 of the Council's Statement of General Principles, media organisations should take reasonable steps to ensure that factual material is presented with reasonable fairness and balance, and that writers' expressions of opinion are not based on significantly inaccurate factual material or omission of key facts. In accordance with Principle 4 of the Council's Statement of General Principles, media organisations should take reasonable steps to ensure that where material refers adversely to a person, a fair opportunity is given for subsequent publication of a reply if that is reasonably necessary to address a possible breach of General Principle 3. A media organisation should take reasonable steps to provide a correction or other adequate remedial action for publishing any personal information that is significantly inaccurate or misleading, in accordance with Principle 2 of the Council's Statement of General Principles. The media organisation should also take steps to correct any of its records containing that personal information, so as to avoid a harmful inaccuracy being repeated.

Privacy Principle 7: Sensitive personal information

In accordance with Principle 6 of the Council's Statement of General Principles, media organisations should take reasonable steps to avoid causing or contributing materially to substantial offence, distress or prejudice, or a substantial risk to health or safety, unless doing so is sufficiently in the public interest. Members of the public caught up in newsworthy events should not be exploited. A victim or bereaved person has the right to refuse or terminate an interview or photographic session at any time. Unless otherwise restricted by law or court order, open court hearings are matters of public record and can be reported by the press. Such reports need to be fair and balanced. They should not identify relatives or friends of people accused or convicted of crime unless the reference to them is necessary for the full, fair and accurate reporting of the crime or subsequent legal proceedings.

The Principles focus on four sets of key values:

The Statements of Principles are interpreted and applied by the Council in response to particular complaints. Along with the Specific Standards, they form the Council's Standards of Practice.