Policy on the use of electronic signatures

This policy sets out the requirements for electronic signatures and defines the ways acceptable to Leeds Baby Bank for signing documents electronically.

In order to increase the speed and efficiency of its business processes Leeds Baby Bank requires that where feasible electronic signatures should be used in place of written signatures. For these electronic signatures to be effective it is important that they fulfil the same functions as written signatures and provide the appropriate level of authentication to a document.

1. Definitions

An electronic signature is data in electronic form which are attached to or logically associated with other electronic data and which serves as a method of authentication. This may include a process using email or a business system where a user is authenticated by their network login. It could also signature captured digitally.

An advanced electronic signature is an electronic signature that
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(a) is uniquely linked to the signatory,

(b) is capable of identifying the signatory,

(c) is created using means that the signatory can maintain under his or her sole control, and

(d) is linked to the data to which it relates in such a manner that any subsequent change of the data is detectable

2. Responsibilities

Leeds Baby Bank trustees are responsible for ensuring compliance with and the reviewing of this policy.

All trustees, volunteers and staff are responsible for ensuring they act in compliance with this policy.

A member of staff/volunteer who fails to comply with this policy may be subjected to action under the Leeds Baby Bank Disciplinary Policy. It is the responsibility of the trustees to ensure that their staff are made aware of the existence of this Policy and its content.

3. Existing Policies

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This policy relates to the following Leeds baby Bank policies:

Data Protection Policy

Requirements

a. Functional requirements

A signature is only as good as the business process and technology used to create it. Staff must ensure that any electronic signature used must meet the functional requirements needed from a signature in the business process.

The functional requirements of a signature include:

- confirming originality and authenticity of a document;

- demonstrating a document has not been altered;

- indicating a signer's understanding and/or approval;

- indicating a signer's authorisation;

- identifying the signatory and ensuring non-repudiation of a document.

b. Cases where an electronic signature is not acceptable

Electronic signatures should not be used in transactions where there is a legal

requirement for a written signature, for example in the signing of a deed or other

document where the signature is required to be witnessed.

c. Electronic forms

An electronic form can be used to prove the authenticity of an authorisation when

the system holding the form collects and stores an audit trail showing clearly the

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authorisation by an individual user.

The person signing the form should be able to access a copy of the submitted signed form for as long as it is required for business purposes.

d. Scanned image of signature

A scanned image of a handwritten signature can be used as an equivalent to a written signature for purposes where it meets the appropriate functional requirements.

Scanned images of signatures must only be used where permission has been granted by the author and they must be kept securely to prevent unauthorised access and use.

Responsibility for the use of a scanned signature remains with the individual whose signature it is unless the person using the signature is acting maliciously, fraudulently or negligently.

e. Authorisation by email

An email from an individual user's email address can be used as an equivalent to a written signature for internal purposes where it meets the appropriate functional requirements.

Where a member of staff allows a proxy to have write access to email it is important that the proxy is informed of the limits of his/her authority in the sending of emails on behalf of the member of staff/volunteer.

Responsibility for authorisations made by email remains with the email account holder unless the proxy is acting maliciously, fraudulently or negligently.

5. Evaluation and Review

This Policy will be reviewed annually.

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