



Code of Conduct Policy 1.0 ¹

Version	1.0	Approved by	Derryck Klarkowski
		Approved date	20 February 2019
Responsible person	Executive Officer	Review date	30 January 2020

1. Introduction

The purpose of the Code of Conduct is to ensure that acceptable standards of conduct and work performance are maintained within our organisation, and to ensure that individuals are treated in a consistent and fair manner.

We Care Connect has the responsibility of ensuring employees and volunteers are made aware of, and fully understand, their responsibilities and the organisation's rules and standards of conduct and behaviour. We Care Connect must ensure that employees and volunteers are given the opportunity to reach the standards expected of them.

Everyone has a right to work and/or volunteer in an environment that is free of bullying, harassment, victimization and discrimination. Bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination are illegal under Australian legislation.

We Care Connect is committed to promoting and protecting the best interests of children involved in its volunteer programs. All children, regardless of their gender, race, religious beliefs, age, disability, sexual orientation, or family or social background, have equal rights to protection from abuse.

We Care Connect has zero tolerance for child abuse. Everyone working at We Care Connect is responsible for the care and protection of the children within our care and reporting information about suspected child abuse.

2. Purpose

The main aim of this Code of Conduct is to define behaviours that are acceptable and non-acceptable according to the standards and procedures of the organisation. Failure to comply with this Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action.

We are committed to ensuring all disciplinary procedures and actions are fair and just, and comply with legislative standards.

¹ This document is directly based with permission on St Kilda Mums 'Code of Conduct 3.0'

The Code of Conduct relates to all employees and volunteers, and it is the responsibility of employees and volunteers to have a full understanding of the standards and behaviours outlined in this Code and the Volunteer Manual.

3. Zero tolerance of “negative behaviour”

Bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination are behaviours identified as “negative” and for which there is zero tolerance.

This list is not exhaustive and does not limit or preclude other actions, conduct or behaviour from being identified as a “negative behaviour” and therefore being inappropriate and in breach of this policy.

There is zero tolerance for behaviour which bullies, harasses, victimises and/or discriminates against an employee or volunteer of We Care Connect or any external party.

Managers and Team Leaders (whether employed or volunteering) are required to ensure that all employees and volunteers are treated fairly and equitably and no one is subjected to any negative behaviour.

Managers and Team Leaders are required to, as reasonably practicable, ensure that complainants and witnesses are not victimised in any way. Any report of bullying, harassment, victimisation and/or discrimination will be treated seriously and sympathetically and will be investigated thoroughly and confidentially. Disciplinary action may be taken against anyone found to be guilty of demonstrating negative behaviour towards a co-worker, co-volunteer or external party.

Documented Grievance Procedures will be followed in these cases.

4. P.I.P (People Interaction Principles)

The three (3) essential People Interaction Principles are:

- Be Polite
- Be Kind
- Be Considerate

The basic principle is – if you can always reflect on any interactions with anyone and say that you were polite, kind and considerate then you can be happy that you are a pleasant and enjoyable person to be served by or work with.

It is never okay to be rude, cruel or inconsiderate to anyone and if this occurs, it is expected that there would be an explanation of the behaviour between those involved, together with an apology.

Where an issue cannot be resolved by the parties involved, Management will step in to assist.

5. Behaviour Principles

General community and common law standards of behaviour will generally apply, in conjunction with the following indicative examples:

Acceptable Behaviours

It is expected that employees and volunteers will demonstrate the following:

- Carry out tasks in a conscientious and proficient manner and to a standard acceptable of our organisation
- Present for work or volunteering appropriately dressed
- Treat others in a cooperative, fair, dignified, professional and open manner, consistent with principles of fair treatment and non-discrimination
- Treat others in kind, considerate and polite manner
- Comply with proper and safe instructions from Team Leader, manager and other Committee of Management members
- Comply with all Policies and Procedures and relevant statutory regulations
- Ask a Team Leader if unsure of course of action they are about to take
- Conduct yourself in a manner which supports and promotes a healthy, safe workplace at all times
- Immediately inform a Team Leader of any damage to property, accidents, incidents or near misses and complete an appropriate incident form.
- Immediately report negative behaviours or the witnessing of negative behaviours, such as bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination

Unacceptable Behaviours

The following behaviours are indicative of what is not acceptable:

- Failure to treat anyone in a co-operative, fair, dignified, professional and open manner, consistent with the principles of fair treatment and non-discrimination
- Repeated incidents of rude, inconsiderate and/or cruel behaviour
- Failure to report “negative behaviours” or the witnessing of “negative behaviours” such as bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination
- Interference with anyone to the detriment of that person’s safety and/or performance of their duties

- Continual absenteeism from work, tardiness or poor time keeping
- Repeated failure to achieve acceptable standards of work performance in respect to quality, quantity and timeliness
- Failure to observe safety rules and procedures or working/volunteering in an unsafe manner
- Failure to report an accident/incident
- Reporting to work in a manner which gives the Team Leader reasonable grounds to believe that the employee is unable to perform their usual duties properly
- Failure to use appropriate supplied safety equipment
- Sleeping on the organisation's premises during recognised working hours
- Utilising the organisation's time, uniforms or equipment for private or personal use without authorisation
- Failure to comply with the organisation's Policies, Procedures and relevant statutory regulations

6. Serious and wilful misconduct

Employees and volunteers may be in breach of the code of conduct if they are performing tasks or conducting themselves in an unsatisfactory manner or they are found to be guilty of serious and wilful misconduct.

Examples of serious and wilful misconduct are as follows:

- Unauthorised possession or removal of any property or material belonging to the organisation, another employee or volunteer
- Any form of dishonest or criminal damage in connection to the organisation's property
- Failure to follow the organisation's cash handling or banking procedures
- Falsification of timesheets / attendance records / medical records / reimbursement receipts or any other records that would result in payment to which an employee or volunteer is not entitled
- Failing to obey a reasonable instruction issued by a supervisor or refusal to perform work which is neither unsafe nor illegal and which an employee or volunteer might reasonably be expected to do
- Consumption of illegal drugs or alcohol or smoking in the workplace

- Working under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol that leads to impairment of performance and/or gives rise to a situation endangering safety of other employees or volunteers
- Wilful damage to and/or misuse of property or gross negligence resulting in damage or loss to the organisation
- Use of abusive or threatening language, intimidating behaviour, assault on any person during working/volunteering hours
- Engaging in practical jokes or irresponsible actions, which could put at risk the safety of anyone, endanger life or cause damage to property
- Deliberate breach of any safety regulation or wilful misconduct endangering the safety of anyone
- Committing, on the organisation's property, any act, which violates the organisation's policy on harassment, discrimination, bullying or victimisation
- Inappropriate social media posts that:
 - Damage reputation and business interests;
 - Disclose confidential information to others outside the organisation
 - Harass, discriminate, victimise or bully anyone;
 - Disparage customers or clients of the business
- Any form of dishonest or criminal behaviour which is in violation of relevant statutory regulations and which places the organisation at risk on non-compliance with statutory regulations.

Note: The above is not a complete list of all acts of misconduct that may warrant disciplinary action. It is an indication only and there may be other acts of misconduct, which warrant disciplinary action to be taken.

7. Child Protection

All people involved in the care of children on behalf of We Care Connect will:

1. Work towards the achievement of the aims and purposes of the organisation;
2. Be responsible for relevant administration of programs and activities in their area;
3. Maintain a duty of care towards others involved in these programs and activities;
4. Establish and maintain a child-safe environment in the course of their work;
5. Be fair, considerate and honest with others;
6. Treat children and young people with respect and value their ideas and opinions;

7. Act as positive role models in their conduct with children and young people.
8. Be professional in their actions;
9. Maintain strict impartiality;
10. Comply with specific organisational guidelines on physical contact with children;
11. Respect the privacy of children, their families and teachers/carers, and only disclose information to people who have a need to know;
12. Maintain a child-safe environment for children and young people;
13. Operate within the policies and guidelines of St Kilda Mums; and
14. Contact the police if a child is at immediate risk of abuse, phone 000.

No person shall:

1. Shame, humiliate, oppress, belittle or degrade children or young people;
2. Unlawfully discriminate against any child;
3. Engage in any activity with a child or young person that is likely to physically or emotionally harm them;
4. Initiate unnecessary physical contact with a child or young person, or do things of a personal nature for them that they can do for themselves;
5. Be alone with a child or young person unnecessarily and for more than a very short time;
6. Develop a 'special' relationship with a specific child or young person for their own needs;
7. Show favouritism through the provision of gifts or inappropriate attention;
8. Arrange contact, including online contact, with children or young people outside of the organisation's programs and activities;
9. Photograph or video a child or young person without the consent of the child and his/her parents or guardians;
10. Work with children or young people while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs;
11. Engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children;
12. Use inappropriate language in the presence of children; or
13. Do anything in contravention of the organisation's policies, procedures or this Code of Conduct.

8. Expectations and Disciplinary Action process

All employees and volunteers are expected to familiarise themselves with We Care Connect's policies and procedures and to work to them.

Employees and volunteers are expected to monitor and regulate their own activities to ensure that, when at We Care Connect, they can perform to the standards expected of them.

Breaches of this Code of Conduct will be dealt with according to the Disciplinary Actions & Grievance Procedure (Employees) and the Performance Review and Management Policy, or the Grievance Policy contained within the Volunteer Manual, as appropriate.

9. Disciplinary Actions and Grievance Procedure

The key steps in the disciplinary action process include:

1. Verbal discussion / counselling (optional).
2. First written warning.
3. Second written warning.
4. Third and final written warning.
5. Termination

In certain situations it may be reasonable to skip steps, i.e. serious or gross misconduct.

During a probationary period, a disciplinary action / performance counselling meeting is not required as We Care Connect has the right to terminate a probationary employee's employment for any reason at any time during the probationary period. However, if deemed appropriate, an employee may be given the opportunity to make necessary improvements to their performance prior to We Care Connect making a decision about the employee's suitability to the position on an ongoing basis.

Long-term employees cannot be placed back on probation after having successfully completed probation. All warnings and communications should be documented and placed on an employee's file. All warnings must be issued to the employee in person and should be signed by the employee to acknowledge receipt. However, refusal by an employee to sign or acknowledge a warning will not devalue, undermine or invalidate the We Care Connect's disciplinary process.

Where possible and appropriate, warnings should be witnessed when issued. All final warnings must be issued in consultation with the EO.

10. Related Legislation and Policies

Other Policies and documents that have an impact on this Code of Conduct include:

- a) Fair Work Act 2009
- b) Occupational Health and Safety Act 1985
- c) Work Health and Safety Act 2011 No 10
- d) Principles of Volunteering - Volunteering Australia
- e) Volunteers Policy and Procedures Manual
- f) The NSW Office of the Children's Guardian <https://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/child-safe-organisations/become-a-child-safe-organisation>

11. Acknowledgement

This document is directly based with permission on St Kilda Mums 'Code of Conduct 3.0', drafted by Mary Brown, approval date 19 September 2018.