

Code of Conduct

What is a Code of Conduct?

A Code of Conduct sets out the standards of behaviour expected of staff, contractors and third parties, including volunteers. It is a list of behaviours that guide people on how to perform their duties in a professional or ethical way. A Code of Conduct forms part of your organisation's broader suite of policies.

Why do I need a Code of Conduct?

Codes of Conduct are not a legal requirement, but they are a good tool for setting expectations of behaviour. Having a Code of Conduct provides an overarching, high-level approach for what your organisation expects of its staff, service users, clients, contractors and third parties, including volunteers. A Code of Conduct is a useful risk management tool and assists your organisation to comply with its work, health and safety obligations. A Code of Conduct is also a useful tool for promoting inclusion in your organisation.

What do I need to think about when creating a Code of Conduct?

As a Code of Conduct is a set of high-level principles about expectations of behaviour, it is useful to consult with other staff about what it should include. Volunteering Australia recommends the following considerations when writing a Code of Conduct:

- Consult with those who are bound by the Code of Conduct ensuring all staff, both paid and unpaid, can contribute ideas and share their opinions.
- Focus on inclusion by making sure the Code of Conduct reflects not just cultural and linguistic diversity, but diversity of ethics and values.
- Ensure your Code of Conduct is accessible by using inclusive language and plain English.
- Get support from all levels of the organisation. Setting and monitoring organisational culture is the responsibility of an organisation's Board of Governance, and operationalisation of this culture is through the CEO and the staff. Consult with persons at every level of your organisation to ensure your Code of Conduct is fit-for-purpose, reflects organisational values, and is owned by everyone it affects.

What should a Code of Conduct include?

A Code of Conduct may include the following:

- Ethical principles underlying your organisation's expectations of behaviour.
- Your organisation's values and how these can be demonstrated in the workplace and when persons are representing your organisation externally.
- Scope, including recognition that everyone is accountable for upholding the Code of Conduct.
- References to any compliance requirements in accordance with applicable legislation or standards.

When does the Code of Conduct apply?

Your Code of Conduct applies to all staff, both paid and unpaid, whenever they are working for or representing your organisation.

Sample Code of Conduct

The below sample Code of Conduct includes items your organisation may wish to think about when creating or reviewing its own Code of Conduct.

Introduction/Policy Statement

Organisation name expects all staff to act lawfully, honestly, ethically and with integrity at all times and in every aspect of their involvement with *organisation name*. Staff are accountable for their own actions in accordance with *insert any relevant legislation* and all other applicable laws and standards.

Scope

All employees, volunteers, Board Members, students, interns, contractors, consultants, clients, and service users are bound by the Code of Conduct.

The *Board of Governance* is responsible for organisational culture, including a biennial review of *organisation name's* Code of Conduct in consultation with staff.

The *Chief Executive Officer* is responsible for ensuring the Code of Conduct is provided to all persons identified in the scope, and for ensuring all persons understand their obligations with respect to the Code of Conduct.

Code of Conduct Example

The following is a sample Code of Conduct that demonstrates the types of behaviours and values your organisation may choose to solidify in writing.

We will:

- Treat everyone with respect, courtesy and sensitivity, taking into account people's individual experiences and views.
- Strive to build a harmonious workplace based on values in action.
- Always act in an inclusive and non-discriminatory manner towards all persons.
- Act with honesty and integrity and make decisions that are fair and equitable.
- Perform our work fairly and honestly and to the best of our ability.
- Apply our skills, knowledge and experience with due diligence and care.
- Follow all lawful and reasonable direction.
- Uphold the organisation's vision, mission and values.
- Comply with all relevant legislation, standards and other compliance mechanisms.
- Refrain from providing false or misleading information in relation to the organisation, its staff, or service users.
- Be accountable for our own actions.