**GUIDE TO CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY TEMPLATE**

**ABOUT THIS POLICY AREA**

This policy is a guide for the organisation’s code of conduct.

**Policy checklist**

The following checklist will help you check that an existing policy covers this area adequately.

The code of conduct should be:

* clear about the standard of behaviour that is expected of the people working and volunteering in your services.
* easily understood and accessible to staff, volunteers, Board members and the general community, including people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds and/or people with low literacy levels.
* dated for when it was approved
* dated for when it was last reviewed.

**COMPLETING YOUR CLIENT SERVICE CHARTER**

**Using the policy template**

The template provides some example statements. You can adapt these statements and include them in your policy or write your own statements to better suit the operations and

services of your organisation.

The policy templates include **red text** prompts to insert information that is specific to your organisation.

**Guidelines for each section of your policy**

***1. Purpose***

When identifying the purpose of the policy, consider how it might apply to your client group/s and other agencies you work with. Do you need to make specific statements to

ensure you are inclusive of particular groups, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

peoples, Australian South Sea Islanders, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, people with a disability and/or people with low level literacy and numeracy atttainment?

***2. Scope***

To determine the scope of the policy, consider the following question:

* Does this policy apply to all your organisation’s services and to all clients and stakeholders?
* Does this policy apply to your staff and volunteers only?
* Have you covered client behaviour/conduct standards in your Client Charter?

***3. Policy statement***

If you are adopting the policy statement in the template, consider whether there are any additional commitments your organisation wants to make.

***4. Code of Conduct***

*4.1 Code of Conduct statement*

All staff, volunteers and your Board of Management should be made aware of your Code of Conduct and the expectations of the behaviour of people working at your services. This is to be done at the earliest appropriate moment of employment /volunteering (preferably during induction) at your service. Your Code of Conduct is written for your staff in a language and format that can be easily understood by the staff as well as the client group. Staff and clients will ideally be involved in its development and review.

The Code of Conduct outlines:

• standards of behaviour that will be expected of staff and volunteers when working at your service

• specific examples of important areas of behaviour so that staff are clear about the organisation’s expectations

• how and when the Code of Conduct will be brought to the attention of new staff and volunteers.

An example of a Code of Conduct for a community organisation that may assist organisations to develop their own Code of Conduct is below.:

1. The personal behavior of staff will not bring discredit to the **Insert name of organisation**, to the work performed by the **Insert name of organisation** or to fellow staff members. Any complaints or problems about practices at any level should be discussed with the identified officer and appropriate investigation/grievance procedures will be followed, as required.
2. Staff will remain proficient in their practice and the performance of their duties. Staff will not undertake work beyond their capacity or competence. Staff will protect and enhance the dignity and integrity of their work and the **Insert Name of organisation.**
3. Staff will distinguish clearly between statements and actions made as a private individual and as a representative of the **Insert name of organisation**.
4. Staff will not exploit work relationships for professional gain or profit. Staff will not exploit clients/customers for personal advantage, nor solicit attendees of the **Insert name of organisation** for activities resulting in personal gain.
5. Under no circumstances will staff engage in sexual activities with clients receiving services from the **Insert name of organisation**.
6. Staff, paid and unpaid, shall disclose any personal relationships that may present a conflict of interest.
7. Staff will not use their position to promote personal, political, religious or business loyalty.
8. Staff will not practice, condone, facilitate or collaborate with any form of discrimination on the basis of race, colour, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, national origin, marital status or other conditions or status.
9. Staff will treat colleagues with respect, courtesy, fairness and good faith. Where serious disagreements cannot be resolved, they will be addressed as outlined in the grievance procedure.
10. Staff will respect the right of clients to privacy, and will similarly respect the confidences shared by colleagues in the course of their professional relationships and transactions.
11. Staff will be responsible and vigorous in discussion and critical review of their delivery of service, participating in outcome focused discussion and evaluation of their own and others work.
12. Where applicable, the delivery of services will not proceed without the informed consent of the client/customer. This involves explaining the nature, purpose, costs, alternatives and possible complications of a service, for example, where the Duty of Care overrides confidentiality in the event of illegal or life threatening matters.
13. Clients of the **Insert name of organisation** should be seen at the service offices and/or centres or it’s annexes. In some instances, where services are delivered regionally or where a disability limits access, other suitable locations may be used.
14. Any comments made to the media including comment made on the conditions of the local area, people or service issues will be carefully considered, and where appropriate, referred to the **Insert name of title of position of responsible officer**.
15. Both staff and volunteers are prohibited from acting in any capacity while under the influence of any mind-altering substance including alcohol.
16. Staff who have responsibility for employing and evaluating the performance of other staff members will act in a fair, considerate and just manner, performing evaluations on clearly enunciated criteria.
17. All staff are bound by both the ethical and legal aspects of confidentiality, and will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement.
18. Staff will not accept money or gifts of substance from clients/customers.
19. Staff will not use the assets of the **Insert name of organisation** for their personal benefit or gain. Staff may rent, lease or borrow assets of the Centre on a fee for use basis commensurate with policies and the fees and charges set out in the Schedule of Fees and Charges.

**Consequences for breach of Code of Conduct**

Breaches of the Code of Conduct or the Code of Ethics is considered to be very serious and severe disciplinary action (which may include termination of employment and/or referral to relevant authorities) may arise, following appropriate investigations.

Breaches of Code of Conduct by service users is also considered a serious matter and may also lead to withdrawal of services, where inappropriate conduct towards staff, volunteers and/or other service users is of a serious nature and/or ongoing. It may also lead to referral to appropriate authorities following initial investigation by management.

***5. Other related policies and documents***

The Code of Conduct should be linked to all human resource-related policies and governance and management policies.

***6. Review processes***

Consider how often the Code should be reviewed and the process for doing this:

• **frequency of review:** Most policies benefit from an annual review. The experience of implementing the client service charter is used to decide which changes are necessary. Consider reviewing your Code of Conduct as part of an annual review of your organisation’s policies or, if your organisation is small, perhaps over a three-year period. Critical incidents may prompt you to review the Code ahead of schedule.

• **responsibility for the review:** In most organisations, the person accountable for client service would be responsible for reviewing the Code whenever a related policy change is proposed. In small organisations, this may be the manager or coordinator. In larger organisations, this may be a client service manager.

• **process for the review:** Decide which particular staff, volunteers, external people and organisations will provide input to the policy review, and whether clients will be involved.

• **decision-making process:** Who will review draft changes to the Code and approve changes? What will be the timeframe for the review process?

• **documentation and communication:** What records of the policy review process are needed? How will changes to the Code be communicated to staff, volunteers and your Board of management ? In a small organisation, this may be as simple as noting the changes at a staff meeting. In a larger organisation, an email memo may be needed.

• **key questions for the review:** Is the Code of Conduct being implemented? Are procedures being followed? Is the Code clear? What has changed that may prompt a change to the Code? Have particular stakeholders had difficulty with any aspect of the Code? Can their concerns be resolved? How does the Code compare with that of similar organisations?