



Staff Code of Conduct

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PURPOSE

The purpose of this Staff Code of Conduct Policy is to provide staff with guidance on the standards of behaviour expected of them in performing their duties of employment and in their dealings with fellow workers, clients, Board members and members of the community.

- encourage staff to adopt values within the workplace aimed at achieving a high level of integrity, accountability, teamwork, respect and innovation
- outline appropriate standards of conduct for staff

SCOPE

- This policy applies to **all** staff including employees, casuals, relief workers, contractors, consultants and students on placement.



POLICY STATEMENTS

Hope Street's strategy is to promote a spirit of co-operation, inclusiveness and quality service to young people who are homeless and to the broader community.

All staff always have a responsibility to:

- behave in a way that upholds the values, integrity and good reputation of Hope Street Youth and Family Services
- treat other staff, clients and community members with fairness, courtesy, respect and without discrimination or harassment
- act honestly and avoid situations which may give rise to a conflict of interest or the perception of such a conflict. (*Refer to Conflict of Interest Policy.*)
- carry out their duties in a professional, responsible, and diligent manner and not engage in any unlawful conduct or unsafe practices
- report immediately any unlawful behaviour of staff members to the Operations Manager who will inform the CEO, or the CEO will be informed directly regarding staff members reporting directly to Operations Manager.

Where a staff member is in any doubt as to the propriety or appropriateness of any proposed action, they should seek advice and direction from their supervisor.

It is a condition of employment that all staff **read and sign** the Staff Code of Conduct Policy.

RATIONALE

Hope Street is committed to professional and ethical conduct in providing the best possible service to our clients and treatment to each other. We are committed to observing the highest standards of conduct. The staff code of conduct sets the expectations of Hope Street staff behaviour.

PROCEDURES

Standards of Conduct

In line with the above policy statements Hope Street staff are expected to adhere to the following standards of conduct.

Embrace Hope Street Values

The values adopted by Hope Street are:

- **Fairness:** We treat people with impartiality and dignity.
- **Collaboration:** We work with young people, young families, local communities and our partners – believing that together we achieve more.
- **Social Justice:** We believe that all people have the right to be equal citizens in society and we will strive to achieve this within our purpose.
- **Integrity:** We are true to ourselves and each other in all of our interactions.
- **Diversity:** We create inclusive cultures that celebrate differences and similarities.
- **Hope:** We draw on our strengths to build a better future.

Staff will always ensure that their conduct is consistent with the values, philosophy and policies of Hope Street and be committed to its goals and reputation.

Where a staff member's personal values or opinions conflict with those of Hope Street they will in the course of their work only present and implement the aims, policies and decisions of Hope Street.



Raising Ethical Differences and Opinions

On occasion there may be differences around decisions at a governance, operational or program level. Where staff have different views from those of Hope Street they are encouraged to discuss and present their views in appropriate internal forums, such as:

- with their supervisor
- at team meetings.

Staff members may also request that separately held views are recorded in the minutes of meetings. In addition, staff may express dissatisfaction with a decision through formal grievance channels (*refer to Employee Grievance Policy and Procedure*).

Adhere to Policies and Procedures

Staff will familiarise themselves with Hope Street policies and procedures and adhere to them at all times.

Adhere to Child Safe Standards

Hope Street is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all young people and their children accessing Hope Street's programs. We welcome inclusion and diversity, and provide ongoing support, supervision, and training to ensure compliance and currency of these standards. Staff will familiarise themselves with the Child Safe Standards and how they are implemented within Hope Street programs.

Act in the Client's Best Interests

In line with duty of care requirements outlined in the Case Management policy and the Child Safe Standards, staff have a responsibility to:

- engage the young person in meaningful ways to assist them to make their own informed decisions
- provide the necessary information and supports that will assist young people and young families maximise their human potential
- treat as confidential all client information and not disclose this information except with the written, informed consent of the young person, or where required by law
- treat complaints from clients and the community seriously and respond to constructive feedback as an opportunity for improvement
- not force their own beliefs and value judgements on clients
- maintain a professional relationship with clients at all times, this means:
 - not accepting gifts when clients seek to express their appreciation
 - not disclosing one's home phone numbers or addresses or have contact with clients outside working hours
 - not accepting meal invitations from clients outside work hours or from those with whom outreach work is undertaken
 - not being involved in home visits outside business hours
 - not physically, financially, mentally, verbally or sexually abuse clients; to do so would be considered gross misconduct and grounds for instant dismissal
 - not entering into any sexual or intimate relationships with clients; to do so would be considered gross misconduct and grounds for instant dismissal
 - not encouraging or being involved in any illegal activities; this would be considered grounds for instant dismissal
 - not smoking cigarettes with clients. You may engage with clients while they are smoking but you must not smoke in their presence.
 - not using coercive measures with clients in making decisions or taking directions.



- maintaining clear boundaries in the worker and client relationship to assure professional integrity and responsibility. Staff will avoid any form of physical contact which may violate professional boundaries, result in unintentional psychological harm or damage the professional working relationship or the reputation of the organisation. Staff will remain sensitive and informed to the variety of ways in which clients and others may interpret physical contact, with particular reference to cultural and gender differences.

Commit to Excellence in Service Delivery

Hope Street is entrusted with public funds to develop and deliver services to the community on behalf of government and the community. Staff therefore have a responsibility to:

- deliver services fairly, respectfully and effectively to maximise self-worth of young people
- use resources efficiently and economically
- maintain the standards of knowledge, skills and learning appropriate to professional development
- request support when needed
- participate constructively in supervision and performance appraisal activities, come prepared to these meetings and be open to receiving constructive feedback to promote professional growth
- maintain service delivery practices in line with industry standards. (*Refer, for instance, to the Department of Health and Human Services, Human Services Standards, the Quality Innovation Performance's QIC Health and Community Services Standards 7th edition, and Rainbow Health Victoria's Rainbow Tick framework.*)

Demonstrate a High Standard of Workplace Behaviour and Personal Conduct

Staff have a responsibility to always conduct and present in a professional manner and demonstrate respect for all persons. Accordingly, they will:

- treat co-workers, clients, Board members and members of the public with courtesy and respect, be appropriate in their relationships with them, and recognise that others have the right to hold views which may differ from one's own
- respect and uphold the right to privacy and confidentiality of fellow staff
- ensure their conduct reflects a commitment to a workplace that is inclusive and free from bullying, sexual assault, assault, sexual harassment, harassment and discrimination
- avoid acts or omissions, which one can reasonably foresee, would be likely to injure someone
- ensure their own fitness for duty, and maintain the safety, health and welfare of themselves and others in the workplace, whether fellow workers or clients
- be punctual for meetings and appointments, giving due notice if unable to attend
- inform their supervisor as soon as possible if unable to attend work promptly comply with all reasonable and lawful directions given by line managers or any person having authority to give the direction.
- be professional and respectful to and with co-workers, clients, Board members and external stakeholders in all forms of communication, including face to face contact, written communication, telephone and online communications

Act Always in the Interests of Hope Street

This requires all staff to:

- be committed to the goals and reputation of Hope Street, and engage in continuous quality improvement activities
- never engage in any activity that may leave Hope Street open to criticism



- be honest in their use of Hope Street facilities, funds, staff and equipment and shall not permit their misuse by any other person or body
- not use Hope Street resources for private purposes (other than when supplied as part of a contract of employment), unless legally and properly authorised to do so
- not carry on a private business from Hope Street premises
- take due care with Hope Street property and resources and promptly report any damage or malfunction
- not provide comment to the media on behalf of Hope Street without authorisation from the CEO
- provide a friendly, respectful and courteous service at all times; this includes contact over the telephone, by letter, on-line networking and email, etc.
- be ethical and responsible when using computers, Internet and electronic communications or when accessing Hope Street's shared drive or the SHIP database (*Refer to ICT Appropriate Use and Protection Policy.*)

Dress Code, Dress Standards and Grooming

Hope Street expects all employees to always uphold professional work standards in the workplace, and when representing Hope Street outside of the workplace.

To assist in the presentation of Hope Street as a professional organisation, it is the responsibility of all staff to be tidy in their appearance and wear clothing, footwear and apparel that is neat, clean, practical and appropriate to their work. The responsible supervisor, in consultation with the Operations Manager/CEO, will determine the extent to which clothing is considered appropriate.

In addition, it is expected that staff will practice good personal hygiene and grooming. Attention to good personal hygiene prevents the spread of germs and infectious diseases. It is mandatory for staff to follow the workplace safety control measures, and policy and procedures implemented for each of the Hope Street sites.

Behaviour at Hope Street Social or Sporting Functions

Staff attending a Hope Street organised or approved social, sport or other function, or any function whether held on or off Hope Street premises, must be mindful that they are still representatives of Hope Street and ensure their behaviour is in line with Hope Street values and policies.

Please note:

- drug use is not permitted at any Hope Street functions
- alcohol consumption is **not** permitted at any Hope Street premises.

Any irresponsible, inappropriate, negligent or unlawful behavior at these functions is subject to Hope Street's Disciplinary Policy.

BREACHES TO STAFF CONDUCT POLICY

If you fail to comply with the Staff Conduct Policy, you may be subject to disciplinary action ranging from informal feedback, coaching and formal disciplinary process to referral to Victoria Police and criminal proceedings.

Breaches to this Staff Conduct Policy will be dealt with in accordance with Hope Street's Disciplinary Policy and breaches that are deemed serious misconduct may result in immediate termination of employment.



MONITORING, REVIEW and EVALUATION

Individual staff member's adherence to this Staff Conduct Policy will be monitored by the person's line supervisor through supervision and formal performance appraisal processes.

Hope Street will continue to monitor the appropriateness and effectiveness of this Staff Conduct Policy and may amend the document to ensure it remains effective and relevant to Hope Streets operations.

The policy will be reviewed at least every three years by the CEO.

RELATED POLICY, PROCEDURES AND OTHER KEY DOCUMENTS

- Access, Equity and Inclusion Policy and Procedures
- Case Management Policy (See duty of care requirements)
- Child Safe Standards
- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Data Storage Policy and Procedure
- Disciplinary Policy
- Employee Grievance Policy and Procedure
- Employee Probationary Procedure
- Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)
- Fraud Risk Management Policy
- ICT Appropriate Use and Protection Policy
- iPhones Policy
- Prevention of Discrimination Harassment, Sexual Harassment, Bullying Policy and Procedures
- Privacy and Confidentiality Policy
- Protected Disclosure Policy
- Vehicles and Driver Safety Policy
- Vision, Purpose, Philosophy, Values Statements
- Position descriptions
- Human Services Standards
- QIC Health and Community Services Standards

REFERENCES

Department of Health and Human Services, Human Services Standards, July 2020,
<https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/human-services-standards-policy>

Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth) including 2020 amendments,
<https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2020C00153>

Quality Innovation Performance, *QIC Health and Community Services Standards 7th edition*, October 2017.

Rainbow Health Victoria, Rainbow Tick, <https://www.rainbowhealthvic.org.au/rainbow-tick>



EMPLOYEE SIGNING OF THIS POLICY

All new employees will be provided a copy of this policy on commencement for signing and returning. It may also be provided at any time during the course of their employment where amendments are made.

In meeting Hope Street obligations, the employee will:

- Read this Code of Conduct, and ensure they understand their responsibilities.
- Sign the Code of Conduct declaration below, which indicates your agreement to abide by the Code.
- Always follow the Code of Conduct during your employment with Hope Street, and where you have responsibilities after your employment with Hope Street, such as in the areas of confidentiality and intellectual property.

The employee must sign and date the Staff Conduct Policy, confirming that they have read and understood the policy. Any questions regarding this Policy can be discussed with People and Culture.

Name:

(Employee)

Signature:

(Employee)

Date:
