

CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

Providing affordable accommodation for low income and disadvantaged single people

Policy Statement

This Code of Conduct clarifies the standards of behaviour that are expected of all staff, volunteers, management and Board members of St Kilda Community Housing (SCH) in the performance of their duties. It gives guidance in areas where personal and ethical decisions need to be made.

The Code does this by providing an ethical framework to guide actions, but also by highlighting the existing requirements for staff, volunteer and Board member behaviour so that all are aware of the standards expected of them.

This Code should also guide the behaviour of contractors' staff, volunteers, and employees of other organisations with whom SCH has contracts or agreements.

The Board and staff have a legal and moral responsibility to manage the organisation in the best interests of the community it serves. Board and staff will demonstrate

professional ethical behaviour at all times – in their responsibilities to the organisation, in their professional relationships with each other, and in their professional service to the community – and will be required to adhere to this code of conduct.

SCH is committed to the principles of:

- Equity
- Integrity
- Accountability
- Team Work
- Respect

Procedure

1. Ethical Behaviour and Decision-Making

SCH staff, volunteers, Board members and contractors should:

- Treat tenants, stakeholders and members of the public with respect, courtesy, honesty and fairness and have proper regard for their interests, rights, safety and health and welfare.
- Ensure our work habits, behaviour and relationships in the workplace contribute to a harmonious and productive work environment.
- Make decisions in a fair and timely manner, giving due attention to all relevant information, legislation, organisational policies and the principles of procedural fairness.
- Respect diversity of thought, experience and skills.
- Comply with all lawful or reasonable requests given by an authorised colleague.

2. Employment

SCH staff, volunteers, Board members and contractors have an obligation to carry out their work with integrity and in a professional and impartial manner and should:

- Engage in personal and professional conduct at all times that will uphold the reputation of SCH.
- Abide by the confidentiality policies of SCH.
- Disclose openly and fully any personal particulars and financial or other interests that may impact upon the work of SCH.

3. Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest arises when our duty to SCH is, or appears to be, at odds with a private interest we may have. Board members should:

- Declare any conflict of interest at the commencement of Board meetings and, where necessary, absent themselves from any decision making processes when the matter is under discussion.

Staff members should:

- Not engage in secondary employment without first seeking permission from the CEO. Secondary employment could potentially be seen as compromising the staff members' duties. Permission will not be unreasonably withheld.

All SCH staff, volunteers, Board members and contractors should:

- Not accept any gifts, hospitality, travel or benefits that might in any way tend to influence, or appear to influence, their ability to act impartially.

In deciding whether to accept any gift or benefit, SCH staff volunteers, Board members and contractors should consider the relationship of SCH to the donor, the primary business of the donor and any possible adverse consequences for SCH.

In certain circumstances, declining a gift of nominal value may cause unnecessary offence. Gifts of nominal value may be accepted but only if declared and accepted by the CEO or the Board.

4. Use of Public Resources

SCH staff volunteers, Board members and contractors should be mindful that the organisation's resources are funded by tenants and should be used efficiently and appropriately and on work-related matters. Approval to use these resources for non-work purposes must be sought from the CEO or the Board.

If authorisation is given to use these resources for reasonable non-work purposes then SCH staff volunteers, Board members and contractors are responsible for safeguarding, repairing or replacing, if lost, such property.

5. The Workplace

SCH staff, volunteers, Board members and contractors should treat everyone with respect and adhere to the policies and procedures of the organisation.

SCH staff, volunteers, Board members and contractors must not harass or discriminate against colleagues, tenants or clients for any reason including gender, physical appearance, pregnancy, age, race, sexual preference, ethnicity or national origin, religious or political conviction.

SCH staff, volunteers, Board members and contractors must not be under the influence of drugs or alcohol during working hours or when representing the organisation at a public forum for venue.

SCH staff, volunteers, Board members and contractors are all expected to understand their responsibilities and obligations under the Workplace Health & Safety Act.

6. Confidentiality

Confidential information must not be disclosed other than in the course of SCH business, when required by law, or when specifically authorised. Staff should ensure that confidential information is stored in a secure manner.

7. Public Comment

All staff, volunteers, Board members and contractors have the right to make public comment in a private capacity. Public comment on behalf of the organisation is the responsibility of the CEO and the Chair of the Board unless otherwise authorised. Public comment in this instance includes public speaking engagements, comments in the media, views expressed in letters to newspapers or in publications.

8. Breaches of the Code of Conduct

Every individual has a responsibility for ensuring that SCH maintains the highest level of probity and that the organisation is not brought into disrepute. As such, each person has an individual responsibility to report possible breaches of the Code of Conduct to the appropriate persons for investigation. Breaches of the Code of Conduct may be subject to a range of administrative actions.

Depending on the nature of the breach, sanctions may include:

- Verbal or written warnings
- Undertakings to correct behaviour, attending training or mentoring to improve behavior
- Counselling
- Disciplinary action (including termination of employment as per the Enterprise Agreement)
- The laying of criminal charges.

9. Related Policies

- Privacy and Confidentiality Policy
- Access and Participation Policy
- Anti-Discrimination Policy

10. Relevant Legislation and Other Documents

This policy implements SCH obligations where they exist under:

- Privacy Act 1988 (Commonwealth)
- Privacy and Data Protection Act (Vic)
- Housing Act 1983 (Vic) Part VIII A – Social Housing
- Performance Standards for Registered Housing Agencies
- DHHS Victorian Housing Register Operational Guidelines
- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities 2006
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Commonwealth)
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Commonwealth)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Commonwealth)
- Anti-Discrimination Act 1998 (Victoria)
- Anti-Discrimination Amendment Act 2001 (Victoria)
- SCH Enterprise Agreement 2016-2019

St Kilda Community Housing Ltd

102 St Kilda Road, St Kilda, Vic 3182

Phone: 9534 1809

Fax: 9537 1456

Email: admin@stkch.org.au

www.stkch.org.au