

CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

Purpose

This policy establishes the standards of behaviour that are expected of all employees, volunteers and students on placement of St Kilda Community Housing (SCH) and that are consistent with the vision, mission and values of SCH.

Scope

This policy applies to all SCH employees, volunteers and students on placement (collectively referred to as **Staff** throughout this document).

Policy Statement

SCH is committed to the following guiding principles in its work:

- Equity – upholding people’s human rights by treating them in a fair, just and equitable manner
- Integrity - staff are expected to act with integrity at all times in their interactions with residents, other staff, contractors and external stakeholders
- Accountability – staff will take responsibility for their own actions, commit to safety and act in line with legislation and policy.
- Team work – staff will work collaboratively with others.
- Respect – staff will behave in a respectful, honest and courteous manner when dealing with residents, other employees, contractors and external stakeholders.

Ethical Behaviour and Decision-Making

SCH staff should:

- Treat residents, 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 work habits, behaviour and relationships in the workplace contribute to a harmonious and productive workplace.
- Make decisions in a fair and timely manner, giving due attention to all relevant legislation, regulations, 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.

Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying

All staff have an obligation to carry out their work with integrity and in a professional and impartial manner, including working towards the elimination of discrimination, harassment and bullying across the organisation. Staff must not harass or discriminate against colleagues, residents or stakeholders for any reason including gender and gender identity, physical appearance, pregnancy, age, race, sexual preference, ethnicity or national origin, religious or political conviction. See **SCH Enterprise Agreement, Anti-Discrimination Policy** and **Access and Participation Policy**.

Bullying at work is where:

- A person or group of people repeatedly act unreasonably towards others – including residents, contractors and external stakeholders
- The behaviour creates a risk to health and safety

Unreasonable behaviour includes victimising, intimidating or threatening.

Examples of bullying include:

- Behaving aggressively
- Teasing or practical jokes
- Pressuring someone to behave inappropriately
- Excluding someone from work-related events
- Unreasonable work demands.

Employment and Conflict of Interest

SCH staff 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. See **Privacy and Information Sharing Policy**.
- Disclose openly and fully any personal particulars and financial or other interests that may impact upon the work of SCH.

Staff should not engage in secondary employment without first seeking permission from the CEO. Secondary employment may involve activities that conflict with or are harmful to the business interests of SCH. Permission will not be unreasonably withheld.

Staff should not accept any gifts, hospitality, travel or other 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, staff 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, such as box of chocolates, may cause unnecessary offence. Gifts of nominal value may be accepted but, where there is any doubt, permission of the CEO must be sought.

SCH staff must not be under the influence of drugs or alcohol during working hours or when representing the organisation at a public forum or venue as this may adversely affect the reputation of SCH. See **Alcohol and Drugs Policy**.

All staff are expected to understand their responsibilities and obligations under the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic). Training in this area is provided to all staff on a regular basis. See **Occupational Health and Safety Policy**.

Use of Public Resources

SCH staff should be mindful that the organisation's resources are funded by the residents 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.

If authorisation is granted to use these for reasonable non-work purposes then staff are responsible for safeguarding, repairing or replacing, if lost, such property. See Use of **Computers and Internet Policy** and **Motor Vehicle Policy**.

Confidentiality

SCH staff frequently work with sensitive information regarding residents and applicants, as well as with information that is confidential to SCH.

Staff must ensure the following:

- They are familiar with, and uphold the provisions of, the SCH **Privacy and Information Sharing Policy**.
- They only disclose sensitive or confidential information when prior consent has been obtained or where it is required by law.
- They do not use any information obtained at work whether for financial reward or gain or for taking advantage of another person.
- They are familiar with SCH policies regarding records management and follow SCH practices in the collection, storage and disposal of files and other records.

Public Comment

All staff have the right to make public comment in a private capacity. Public comment concerning, or on behalf of, the organisation however is the responsibility of the CEO and the Chair of the Board – unless otherwise authorised. Public comments includes public speaking engagements, comments in the media, views expressed in letters to newspapers or in publications. This includes all social media. See **Media Policy**.

Misconduct, Fraud or Corruption

All staff have a responsibility for ensuring that SCH maintains the highest level of probity and that the organisation is not brought into disrepute. SCH takes seriously any actions that may constitute breaches of this Code of Conduct.

Staff must report the following matters to their manager or the CEO:

- Any breaches of this Code of Conduct
- Any discrimination, harassment or bullying
- Any observed conflicts of interest
- Any potential criminal activities or suspected corrupt conduct or improper administration by another staff member
- Inappropriate conduct by a staff member towards others.

Breaches of the Code of Conduct

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

- Counselling
- Disciplinary action (including termination as per the SCH Enterprise Agreement)
- The laying of criminal charges.

Related Policies and documents

Access and Participation Policy

Alcohol and Drugs Policy

Anti-Discrimination Policy

Computers and Internet Policy

Media Policy

Motor Vehicle Policy

Occupational health and Safety Policy

Privacy and Information Sharing Policy

Records management Policy

SCH Enterprise Agreement



Legislation and Standards

Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)

Health Records Act 2001 (Vic)

Housing Act 1983 (Vic)

Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic)

Privacy Act 1988 (Cwth)

Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic)

Victorian Housing Registrar Performance Standards for Registered Housing Agencies

Victorian Housing Register Operational Guidelines

Version control

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