



CODE OF CONDUCT

1. Introduction

The Illawarra Children's Services Code of Conduct has been developed with reference to the *Model Code of Conduct* prepared by the NSW Premier's Department.

The Illawarra Children's Services Code of Conduct should be read in conjunction with the *Code of Ethics* adopted by Early Childhood Australia Inc. for employees involved directly or indirectly with the provision of early childhood services for children aged between birth and eight years. Copies are available from Children's Services Managers.

2. Standard of Conduct

Illawarra Children's Services employees are to treat children, families, agency partners, community members and colleagues fairly and consistently, in a non-discriminatory manner and with proper regard for their rights and obligations.

All employees must perform their duties in a professional and responsible manner, and ensure that their decisions and actions are reasonable, fair and appropriate to the circumstances.

3. Reputation of Illawarra Children's Services

Employees are to promote confidence in Illawarra Children's Services, its operations and employees. Employees should act always in the organisation's interest. Employees should protect the reputation of Illawarra Children's Services and should not engage in activities, in or outside their work, that may bring the organisation into disrepute.

4. Ethical Conduct

All employees are required to act ethically and professionally at all times.

Conflicts of interest arise when it is likely that an employee could be influenced by a personal interest in carrying out their employment responsibilities.

Some interests that may give rise to a conflict of interest include:

- financial interests in a matter the organisation deals with or having friends or relatives with a known interest;
- personal beliefs or attitudes that influence the impartiality of advice given;
- separate employment that compromises the integrity of the employee and the organisation; and
- party political activities or making adverse political comments that impact on the reputation or perceptions of Illawarra Children's services.

It is the responsibility of employees to avoid any financial or other interests that could compromise the impartial performance of their duties.

Employees must disclose any potential or actual conflict of interest to their supervisor or the Manager, People and Performance. If employees are uncertain whether a conflict exists, they should discuss the issue with their supervisor or the Manager, People and Performance.

5. Conflicts of Interest

Potential conflicts of interest may be resolved by:

- recording the details of the potential conflict of interest and taking no further action because the potential for conflict is minimal or can be eliminated by disclosure or effective supervision (for example, a selection panel member knowing an applicant for an advertised position, but not having a personal or familial relationship with that applicant);
- the employee relinquishing a personal interest (for example, an employee contributing significantly to a decision to contract an organisation to provide services to Illawarra Children's Services when the person has a financial stake in that organisation or a personal or familial relationship with people in that organisation); or
- the employee transferring (at no disadvantage in their terms and conditions of employment) from the area of work or particular task where the conflict arises.

Disputes over alleged conflicts of interest may be resolved through the organisation's grievance procedure.

6. Acceptance of Gifts or Benefits

Employees should not accept a gift or benefit that is intended to, or is likely to, cause them to act in a partial manner in the course of their duties. Employees may accept token gifts or benefits provided that there is no possibility that the recipient might be compromised in the process.

Employees should inform the Manager, People and Performance or CEO if they believe they have been offered a bribe, or if they have been offered or received a favour or benefit.

Managers, directors and employees who have access to sensitive information relating to investigations or commercial dealings should be particularly alert to inappropriate attempts to influence them.

7. Reporting Corrupt Conduct

All employees are required to report actual or perceived corrupt conduct by other employees, contractors or agency partners engaged by Illawarra Children's Services.

8. Discrimination and Harassment

Employees must not harass or discriminate against children, families, contractors, agency partners, members of the public or Illawarra Children's Services employees. (Note: This section should be read in conjunction with the policy and procedures on workplace harassment and bullying at Section 11 in this manual.) Such harassment or discrimination may constitute an offence under the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1977*.

Managers, directors and supervisors must ensure that the workplace is free from harassment and discrimination, and that the employees they supervise are informed of these principles.

9. Public Comment

Public comment by employees includes public speaking, media comment, and views expressed in books, journals or notices where it is expected that the comments will spread to the community at large.

Employees have the right to make public comment and enter into public debate on political and social issues. However, such comment should be made in a private capacity and not as official comment on behalf of Illawarra Children's Services.

Comments made by employees on behalf of Illawarra Children's Services should be confined to factual information and should not express any negative opinion about Illawarra Children's Services policy or practice unless required to do so, e.g. by direction of a court.

10. Information Security

Illawarra Children's Services employees and contractors have a duty to maintain the confidentiality, integrity and security of information for which they are responsible or to which they have access.

Employees must ensure that they do not disclose, disseminate or make use of any official information without prior authorisation.

Employees must take reasonable steps to ensure that any information in any form cannot be accessed, misused or modified by unauthorised people. Unauthorised disclosure or use of confidential information may result in disciplinary proceedings for misconduct.

Employees must report to their director or manager, any actual or suspected misuse of information.

11. Corporate Facilities and Equipment

Official facilities and equipment should only be used for private purposes when official permission has been given.

12. Other Employment

Employees must consider carefully whether engagement in other employment may adversely affect the performance of their duties and responsibilities with Illawarra Children's Services, or give rise to a conflict of interest.

13. Political Representation

Employees must make sure that any participation in party political activities does not conflict with their duties with Illawarra Children's Services.

14. Corporate Credit Cards

Corporate credit cards are provided to nominated staff as a convenient method of payment for legitimate business expenses and to reduce the need for administration and security of cash advances.

Corporate credit cards are to be used only by the person whose name appears on the card, only to the approved limits and only for legitimate business needs. No expense is to be incurred on a corporate credit card unless appropriately authorised.

Misuse of a corporate credit card may result in the card being withdrawn, disciplinary action and/or legal action.