



Code of Conduct for Members, Volunteers and Employees

'We should assist the poor in every way and do it both by ourselves and by enlisting the help of others' St Vincent de Paul

Approved by the St Vincent de Paul Society NSW State Council on 31 August 2013

Version Control

Contact name	Role position /	Version number	Date	Review date
Paul Wilkinson	Policy Manager	2	13 August 2013	31 August 2015

Our Mission

The Society is a lay Catholic organisation that aspires to live the gospel message by serving Christ in the poor with love, respect, justice, hope and joy, and by working to shape a more just and compassionate society.

Our Vision

The St Vincent de Paul Society aspires to be recognised as a caring Catholic charity offering “a hand up” to people in need, regardless of creed, ethnic or social background, health, gender or political opinions. We do this by respecting their dignity, sharing our hope, and encouraging them to take control of their own destiny.

Background

The Society is an organisation of lay people within the Catholic tradition and it identifies itself with the life of the Church. The Society draws on the Gospel message, as well as the rich heritage of its founder, Frederic Ozanam. As members, volunteers and employees in the Society, we seek to integrate these elements into our daily working lives.

This Code of Conduct establishes a standard of behaviour and conduct that is consistent with the tradition, Mission and Vision of the Society as well as the ethos and values of the St Vincent de Paul Society in Australia. The Rule of the St Vincent de Paul Society, Australia states some essential virtues for members and volunteers, particularly love and respect for the poor, the abandoned, the victims of exclusion and adversity.

It reflects our commitment to working together to promote a professional and accountable work environment which promotes and emphasises transparency and openness under strong, compassionate leadership and where necessary, being timely and responsive to valid community concerns.

Policy Statement

All members, volunteers and employees are required:

- to be familiar with the Society’s *Code of Conduct*,
- to agree to abide by this Code and additionally if an employee to sign and return the Code of Conduct Agreement
- to adhere to the minimum standards of conduct in the Code at all times whilst carrying out their responsibilities at work.

Scope

This Code of Conduct shall apply to all members, volunteers and employees of the St Vincent de Paul Society, NSW.

Purpose

A Code of Conduct has been established to help the Society facilitate a performance and behaviour based culture, which is consistent with our Vision, Mission and Values.

This Code seeks to:

- Detail minimum standards of workplace behaviour. These behaviours help to build healthy and positive relationships with the people who receive Society services and govern the way we relate to each other, visitors and other stakeholders.
- Guide all members, volunteers and employees in their values and behaviours as part of their everyday work activities with colleagues, clients and communities. It should be used in conjunction with other relevant policies, guidelines and/or codes which may be specific to the service in which they work.
- Provide clarity for all members, volunteers and employees on the conduct and behaviours to be exhibited in the performance of our duties. In keeping with our Code, the Society will maintain public trust and confidence in the integrity and professionalism of the services provided to the community and to those for whom we care.
- Not attempt to address all possible issues, which we may face in our work in the Society.
- Support our legal obligations in a number of areas for example Work, Health and Safety, and Equal Opportunity.

THE RULE, 7th EDITION

- **National Vincentian Key Values**

Commitment

Loyalty in service to our mission, vision and values

Compassion

Welcoming and serving all with understanding and without judgement

Respect

Service to all regardless of creed, ethnic or social background, health, gender or political opinions

Integrity

Promoting, maintaining and adhering to our mission, vision and values

Empathy

Establishing relationships based on respect, trust, friendship and perception

Advocacy

Working to transform the causes of poverty and challenging the causes of human injustice

Courage

Encouraging spiritual growth, welcoming innovation and giving hope for the future

- **Vincentian Essential Virtues**

Simplicity

Frankness, integrity, genuineness

Humility

Accepting the truth about our frailties, gifts, talents and charisms yet knowing that all God gives us is for others, and that we can achieve nothing of eternal value without His grace

Gentleness

Friendly assurance and invincible goodwill, which mean kindness, sweetness and patience in our relationship with others

Selflessness

Dying to their ego with a life of self-sacrifice; members share their time, their possessions, their talents and themselves in a spirit of generosity

Zeal

A passion for the full flourishing and eternal happiness of every person.

ST VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY NSW ORGANISATIONAL VALUES**Professionalism**

Working in a highly ethical and professional manner at all times.

Transparency

Transparency implies openness, communication and accountability. It is an important element in fostering a work environment which incorporates it into everything that is done. Such a workplace culture is directly opposed to corruption.

Accountability

We are all responsible / answerable / liable for our actions, behaviours and use of Society resources.

Collaboration

Collaboration is working together to achieve a goal. Being courteous, sensitive to the needs of others and honest in communications and working cooperatively with others to achieve common goals and a safe and harmonious work environment.

Respect

Respect all individuals and their diversity in cultural, ethnic, religious, age, gender, socio-economic, sexual orientation and other forms of diversity.

Confidentiality

Treat any sensitive and personal information with strict confidentiality.

Compliance

Adhere to all lawful requests and directions given by appropriate supervisors. Comply with any other policy and conduct requirements that are prescribed by the Society.

Lawfulness

At all times, comply with all applicable Australian and NSW laws.

DEFINITIONS

Conduct

Personal workplace behaviour of an individual.

Employees

For the purposes of this document an employee is a person employed by the St Vincent de Paul Society (NSW) on a permanent, temporary or casual basis.

Members

In this document the term Member includes Conference, Associate and Volunteer Members.

Volunteers

Applies to students, interns, corporate volunteers, and others who perform unpaid work for the Society as well as through various schemes such as 'work for the dole' and 'community service order' schemes. In this document 'Volunteer' does not include 'Members'.

CODE OF CONDUCT AGREEMENT

Purpose of the agreement:

- To set out minimum standards of behaviour as examples for each of the Society's organisational values.
- To provide a means to capture the written agreement of all employees to a *Code of Conduct*, through the Code of Conduct Agreement which will be retained by the Society.
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- To act as a future reference source to assist whenever a particular situation might arise.

All current members, volunteers and employees as a term of their continuing employment or involvement with the Society will be asked to agree to abide by this Code and if they are an employee to additionally sign a copy of the *Code of Conduct Agreement* which will be retained by:

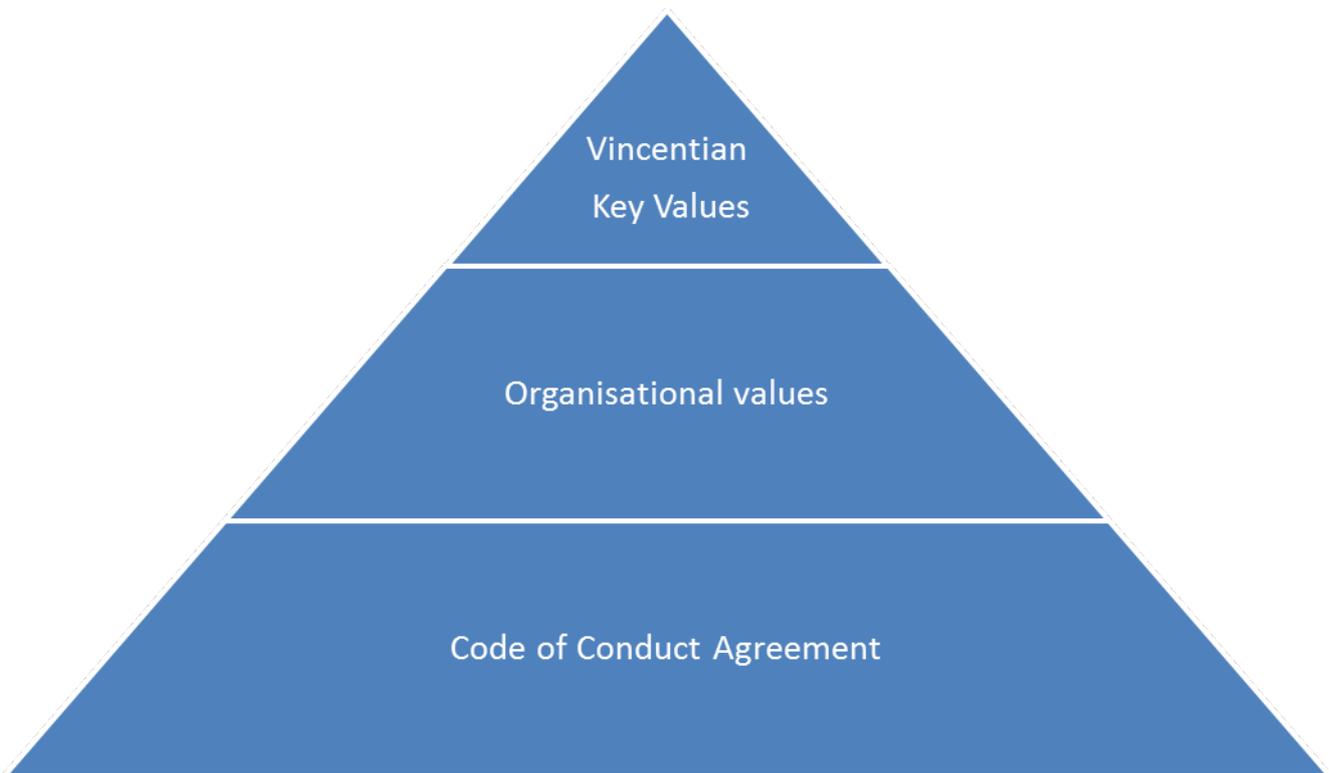
- The Central Councils, Executive Officer as appropriate for their employees.
- State Support Office and its Special Works, Executive Officers as appropriate for their employees

All new Members, Volunteers and employees joining the Society will also be required to read the Code of Conduct and employees will be required to sign the agreement as part of the offer of acceptance of their appointment.

The examples detailed in the “I will demonstrate this....” in each section in the *Code of Conduct Agreement* are not meant to be an exhaustive list. These examples help to explain best practice working behaviours and indicate some of those behaviours which are contrary to the Society’s organisational values.

CODE OF CONDUCT IN CONTEXT

In the St Vincent de Paul Society, NSW, members, volunteers and employees are united by the Society’s Vision and Mission and in carrying out all our activities in a highly professional and ethical way. The *Code of Conduct Agreement* is built upon by the National Vincentian key values and the Society’s organisational values.



Implementation of the Code

Receiving the Code of Conduct

Each current member, volunteer and employee of the Society will receive a copy of the *Code of Conduct* once approved by State Council at an information session, or as part of another training course. Each current member, volunteer and employee of the Society will then be asked to read, sign and return a signed copy of the *Code of Conduct Agreement* to the Society for retention as detailed above, after attending an information session.

New members, volunteers and employees will be required to read the Code when commencing work in the Society, and employees will additionally be required to sign the Code of Conduct Agreement.

The signed copy will be retained by each Central Council Executive Officer for employees in their area and at the State Support Office the Workplace Relations Team for employees.

Inability to read the Code of Conduct

If any member, volunteer or employee, is physically unable to read the Code of Conduct, a manager or supervisor or President (Conference, Regional or Central Council for members) shall personally explain their responsibilities in the Code of Conduct to them, and sign the Code of Conduct Agreement their behalf if the individual is an employee, with an appropriate note such as 'signed on behalf of *'name of individual'*'.

Members and Volunteers

Members and volunteers are required to be familiar with the Code of Conduct requirements, but are not required to sign the Code of Conduct Agreement unless this is specifically required as part of a role they are undertaking.

Information sessions

A series of regular information sessions will be held across the Society to familiarise existing Members, Volunteers and Employees with their responsibilities under the Code. These sessions are expected to be held over a number of months and will also be held regularly thereafter as required.

Performance review for employees

Adherence to the *Code of Conduct Agreement* will be part of the annual Performance Review discussion with the person to whom you report.

Breach of the Code

This **Code** of Conduct guides members, volunteers and employees to carry out Society activities in an ethical manner. All members, volunteers and employees have a responsibility to act consistently with the behaviours in this Code.

Where it is established that a member, volunteer or employee has breached the *Code of Conduct* or exhibited a behaviour which is unacceptable to the Society or related Society policies, they may be subject to an investigation into their behaviour and actions which may result in a variety of sanctions including formal warnings, performance management or termination of employment or being asked to leave the Society.

Where it is suspected that a criminal offence has been committed, the matter will be referred to the Police.

Reporting a breach of the Code

There are informal and formal ways of raising a breach of this Code. If you believe that a suspected breach of the Code may have arisen, you are encouraged to raise this in the first instance with the person concerned (where you feel you can) or in all other cases with the person to whom you report.

If the breach involves your manager or the person to whom you report, you should raise this direct with your Central Council Executive Officer or relevant Central Council President.

In the Child Protection Policy, 2012, if an allegation refers to reportable conduct, this policy and procedures must be used. 'Reportable conduct' is:

- Any sexual offence, or sexual misconduct, committed against, with or in the presence of a child (including a child pornography offence); or
- Any assault, ill treatment or neglect of a child; or
- Any behaviour that causes psychological harm to a child.

The Society's *Dealing with Fraud Policy, 2011* provides guidance on any fraud allegations and the Internal Audit and Risk Manager should be contacted for advice on any fraud related matter. (Tel: 9568 0270)

More information

If you are uncertain about whether your actions or the actions of others are in accordance with this Code, you are encouraged to seek guidance from, and discuss with, your manager, supervisor, or your Central Council Executive Officer.

References

- St Michael's Family Centre, 2009, *Code of Conduct*, June 2009,
St Vincent de Paul Society National Council of Australia, September 2012, *The Rule of the St Vincent de Paul Society in Australia*, 7th Ed,
St Vincent de Paul Society NSW, 2008, *Workplace Manual 2008*,
St Vincent de Paul Society NSW/ACT, 2004, *The Ethos of the St Vincent de Paul Society in Australia*
St Vincent de Paul Society NSW/ACT, May 2002, *St Vincent de Paul Society NSW/ACT Centres of Charity Code of Conduct*,
St Vincent de Paul Society NSW, 2008. *Caroline Chisholm Centre for Social Justice – Policy: Rights & Responsibilities/ Code of Conduct*,
St Vincent de Paul Society NSW, 2012, *Child Protection Policy*,
St Vincent de Paul Society NSW, 2010, *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*,
St Vincent de Paul Society NSW, 2012, *Work, Health and Safety Policy*,
St Vincent de Paul Society NSW, 2010, *Media Policy and Procedures*
St Vincent de Paul Society NSW, 2011, *Dealing with Fraud Policy*
St Vincent de Paul Society NSW, 2010, *Records Retention Policy*
St Vincent de Paul Society NSW, 2011, *Conflicts of Interest Policy*
St Vincent de Paul Society NSW, *Draft-Members and Volunteers Grievance Policy*
St Vincent de Paul Society NSW, *Draft-Procedures for Members and Volunteers Grievance Policy*
St Vincent de Paul Society NSW, *Member and Volunteer Charter*, July, 2013
St Vincent de Paul Society NSW, *Engaging with Government*, July, 2013
St Vincent de Paul Society, *National Council of Australia*, 2012, *Social Media Policy*
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CODE OF CONDUCT AGREEMENT

I agree to abide by the Society's Code of Conduct whilst working for the Society.

Values	I will demonstrate this by the following behaviours:
<p>Professionalism <i>High level of professional and ethical behaviour</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A commitment to assisting 'people in need' with compassion and respect • Acknowledging that I am responsible for behaving in accordance with the ethos, Mission and Vision, the values detailed in the Rule of the Society and the <i>Code of Conduct</i> • Acting in a way that enhances the reputation of the Society • Keeping up to date with advances and changes in my work area and participating in relevant training, information sessions and meetings • Only making comments in public including social media (e.g Twitter, Facebook, YouTube) and in the media on behalf of the Society when authorised • Ensuring any public comments made as a private citizen are identified as personal opinion and not necessarily the opinion of the Society • Conducting myself honestly, reliably, being punctual and acting without favouritism at all times • Implementing the policies and decisions of the Society impartially • Acknowledging that I will not misuse or manipulate my position with the Society to gain any personal benefit • Dressing in an appropriate professional manner when conducting Society activities • Accepting supervision, guidance and requesting support from others when needed
<p>Transparency <i>Openness, communication and accountability.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making decisions which take all the relevant facts into account, in a fair and impartial manner • Maintaining adequate documentation to support any decisions made as part of my work responsibilities as well as for any clients I may assist • Refraining from offering gifts to clients especially children or vulnerable individuals unless they are from the Society • Accepting personal gifts or other benefit only when I consider them of token value (typically say less than \$25 in value), offered in the spirit of goodwill where nothing is expected in return • Declaring any personal gifts worth in excess of \$25 including hospitality to the relevant Central Council President or Executive Officer • Ensuring that any employment outside the Society does not give rise to any conflict or perceived potential conflict of interest • Recognising good performance and addressing performance concerns quickly, fairly and openly for any people I may manage or supervise • Raising any workplace related issue or grievance in accordance with Society policy

<p>Accountability <i>Responsible, answerable and liable for actions, behaviours and use of Society resources</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refraining from fraudulent or criminal behaviour, bribery or the inappropriate or unauthorised use of any Society resources (e.g. internet, email, technology, financial and misuse of any donations, grants and external funding received) • Avoiding real or perceived conflicts of interest at all times • Accurately recording, reporting and maintaining Society information • Taking responsibility for my work and my performance for the Society • Respecting and protecting the physical and intellectual property of the Society
<p>Collaboration <i>Working together to achieve common goals and a harmonious work environment</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working collaboratively with others and to the best of my ability to achieve the Society's aims and objectives • Actively supporting, encouraging and promoting diversity in our people and those who use our services • Supporting the Society in creating a culture where there is genuine care for the individual's welfare and where safety in the workplace is respected as a worthy and core belief in its own right • Ensuring relationships between Members, Volunteers, employees and clients (including interactions on social media) maintain appropriate boundaries and avoid behaviours that will adversely affect the area and team in which I work • Informing the Society of any changes in my personal circumstances which may impact on my work, performance or attendance
<p>Respect <i>Respecting differences and diversity</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respecting individual differences, diversity, privacy and personal space • Abstain from all forms of disrespectful or unlawful behaviour such as discrimination of any kind, harassment, bullying and victimisation • Valuing and acknowledging the opinions and contributions of others • Not exploiting Society clients including children and other vulnerable people in any way and promptly acting and reporting on any reasonable suspicion that exploitation is occurring
<p>Confidentiality <i>Treating sensitive and personal information with strict confidentiality</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protecting and respecting the privacy and confidentiality of the Society, its people, clients, donors, partners and other supporters • Treating all clients and their personal information with dignity and respect • Never making public details of any clients of the Society including photos (unless with consent), names, or other identifying information • Keeping the location of some Society services (e.g. involving children and vulnerable adults) confidential to protect privacy and safety of our clients • Maintaining confidentiality after leaving the Society
<p>Compliance <i>Abiding to all lawful requests and directions and compliance with Society policies and procedures</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complying with any lawful and reasonable directions given by persons in authority • Refraining from being under the influence of alcohol or non-prescribed drugs whilst undertaking Society activities • Acknowledging that alcohol and non-prescribed drugs are not to be consumed during working hours and that gambling activities are not to be conducted on Society premises • Recognising that failure to adhere to this Code may result in disciplinary action • Complying with Society policies and procedures • Acting responsibly when becoming aware of any suspected unethical behaviour, or wrongdoing by any member, volunteer or employee

	and promptly reporting such conduct to my Manager or Supervisor or the Central Council President
Lawfulness <i>Acting at all times in accordance with Australian and NSW laws</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaving in a lawful manner • Disclosing any charge or conviction that may impact on my ability to undertake my responsibilities • Working safely, reporting any concerns and supporting the safety, health and well-being of all Society people and others we interact with • Supporting and not victimising anyone who might raise a breach of this Code or of any Society policies

Date Signed Agreement at an information session.....

Please retain this copy of the Code



For completion at an information session

CODE OF CONDUCT AGREEMENT

As an employee of St Vincent de Paul Society, NSW, I agree to abide by the *Code of Conduct*.

I understand that the list of examples of behaviour provided in each values section is designed to give context to the topics covered and is not an exhaustive list. I understand that this Code supplements the various legal and policy obligations I have as an employee of the Society. If I am between 14 and 18 years old , I confirm that a parent, guardian or responsible adult has gone through the Code of Conduct with me and has signed below.

Name (Capital letters)

.....

Signature.....

Position Title

.....

Central Council and or location

Date.....

Signature of Parent or Guardian or Responsible Adult.....

(If applicable)

I confirm I have explained the Code of Conduct to the named individual above.

Date.....
