



# Code of Conduct

*Document number: PO2022-021*

## Approval

Policy owner	Executive Director, People, Culture and Strategy		
Approved by	Board and State Council		
Date approved	Board: 04.18.2022 State Council: 17.08.2022	Review date	17.08.2025

## Purpose

1. The Society of St Vincent de Paul (NSW) and the company titled the St Vincent de Paul Society NSW (together the Society) have developed this Code of Conduct to provide guidance to, and to enable our people to act in a manner that is consistent with our Vision, Mission, Aspiration and Values.
2. This Code of Conduct:
  - details minimum standards of workplace behaviour
  - provides guidance to Society Personnel on expected behaviours
  - must be read in conjunction with other Society policies, procedures and guidelines, and any relevant professional codes
  - is consistent with the Society's legal obligations
  - is informed by our Mission, Vision, Aspiration and our Key Values of Commitment, Compassion, Respect, Integrity, Empathy, Advocacy, Courage.<sup>1</sup>
3. All Society Personnel (members, volunteers and employees) are expected to understand, sign and comply with the Society's Code of Conduct.

## Scope

4. This Code of Conduct applies to all Society Personnel (including members, volunteers, and employees – see Appendix 1: Definitions).
5. This Code of Conduct applies:
  - at all work sites owned and managed by the Society, including any activities undertaken offsite as part of Society operations, such as home visitations or outreach activities
  - in connection with work, even if it occurs outside normal working hours
  - during work activities, for example when engaging with the people we assist (clients)
  - at work-related events, for example at conferences, Society supported training, events and work-related social functions
  - when Society Personnel are identifiable as a representative of the Society, including when wearing a Vinnies uniform or logo.
6. This Code of Conduct also applies to professional and personal use of all social media channels

## Related policies and procedures

7. Related Society policies and procedures include:
  - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Protocol
  - Conflict of Interest Policy
  - Counselling and Disciplinary Policy
  - Diversity and Inclusion Policy
  - Gifts and Entertainment Policy
  - Managing Fraud and Dishonest Behaviour Policy

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<sup>1</sup> The Rule, 7<sup>th</sup> Edition 2012, Australia (amended May 2014).

- Managing Underperformance Policy
- Internal Grievance Policy
- Incident Management Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Procurement Policy
- Reconciliation Action Plan
- Records Management Policy
- Respectful Workplace Policy
- Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy (under development)
- The Rule
- Volunteer Policy
- Whistleblower Policy
- Health and Safety Policy

## Code of Conduct

1. The Society is guided by its key values and takes this Code of Conduct and related policies very seriously. This Code of Conduct translates these values into minimum standards with which all Society Personnel are required to comply in their work with the Society.
2. This Code of Conduct covers minimum standards, however, it cannot cover every possible circumstance. At all times, Society Personnel must act in accordance with the Society's values, policies, and procedures.
3. If unsure whether conduct is consistent with the Code of Conduct, Society Personnel should discuss the matter with their manager/supervisor/President.

### *Society values*

4. I will:
  - promote and model the Society's values and the spirit of the Society in all interactions with the people we work with, members, volunteers, employees and the broader community
  - uphold the integrity and good reputation of the Society.

### *Respect*

5. I will:
  - treat everyone with respect, fairness, compassion, and empathy, regardless of sex, gender identity, age, race, ethnicity, language, religion, ability, sexual orientation, intersex status, or any other attribute status protected by law
  - never bully, harass, or discriminate against anyone
  - comply with all of the Society's related policies, including but not limited to: Respectful Workplace Policy and Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

*Safeguarding vulnerable adults (people we assist)*

6. When interacting or working with vulnerable adults, I will:

- adhere to the Society's Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy
- treat the people we assist with compassion and respond respectfully to each person's circumstances, including their cultural or religious background, sexual identity and age
- respect the belongings of the people we assist
- respect the privacy and individual rights to freedom of expression, self-determination, and decision-making in accordance with applicable laws and conventions
- empower people to make informed decisions by ensuring they are aware of their rights, and are provided with information and options in a format accessible to them
- maintain clear professional boundaries and appropriate behaviours with the people we assist and discuss any concerns or potential concerns regarding boundaries or conflict of interests with my Manager take all reasonable steps to protect vulnerable adults from any form of harm and abuse
- immediately report any concerns about abuse or risk of harm to vulnerable adults or any other breaches of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy
- adhere to the Society's Gifts and Entertainment Policy when accepting gifts or other benefits.

7. When interacting with vulnerable adults I will not:

- have unnecessary physical contact or engage in any form of sexual conduct
- exploit or harass a person we assist
- form intimate or inappropriate relationships with a person we assist while they are engaged with the Society
- contact any person we assist using technology or social media, unless related to official Society business
- supply, use or share alcohol, drugs, or tobacco with the people we assist, unless part of an approved Vinnies Service
- take images of the people we assist without their or their guardians informed written consent
- give advice that is outside of position description
- allow my values, cultures, gender identities, sexualities, or beliefs to negatively impact the quality of support provided
- share or request unnecessary personal information or sharing personal experiences with other people, or people we assist including children and young people
- engage in business relationships with the people we assist.

8. Safeguarding children and young people The Society acknowledges and operates in accordance with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and the NSW Child Safe Scheme.

9. While undertaking my Society work, I will:

- adhere to the Society's Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy

- treat all children and young people with respect and compassion, and value their ideas and opinions
- respect all children and young people and treat them equally and without favouritism
- promote the safety, participation, and empowerment of all children and young people
- take all reasonable steps to protect children and young people from any form of harm or abuse
- maintain clear boundaries and appropriate behaviours with children and young people
- immediately disclose all charges, convictions and other outcomes of an offence that relates to child exploitation and abuse that occurred before or during my association with the Society
- immediately report any concerns for the safety or wellbeing of children or young people that I witness or become aware of, or any other breaches of the Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy, to the Safeguarding team and relevant authorities.

10. When interacting with children and young people I will not:

- engage in any unlawful activity with or in relation to a child or young person
- engage in any activity or behaviour that is likely to physically, sexually, or emotionally harm a child or young person
- unlawfully discriminate against any child, young person or their family members
- be alone with a child or young person, unnecessarily
- contact any child or young person using technology or social media, unless related to official Society business
- take images of children or young people without their informed written consent and the consent of a parent or guardian and only on a Society device
- use inappropriate language in the presence of children or young people
- show or provide children or young people with access to inappropriate images or materials
- interact with children or young people while under the influence of alcohol or prohibited drugs
- ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse or risk of harm
- have any unnecessary or inappropriate physical contact with children or young people including kissing, cuddling, lap-sitting
- do things of a personal nature that a child or young person can do for themselves including toileting, dressing and personal care
- allow my values, cultures, gender identities, sexualities, or beliefs to negatively impact the quality of support provided
- share or request unnecessary personal information or personal experiences relating to myself, other people or people we assist including children and young people.

#### *Performance of duties*

11. I will:

- comply with the requirements of my role, agreed work plan and level of responsibility
- carry out my work efficiently and effectively, and strive to achieve the highest standards

- contribute to an inclusive, collaborative and productive workplace, respectful of diversity and each person's contribution
- take responsibility for my health, wellbeing and safety and that of others
- carry out my role consistent with the Society's Health and Safety Policy and relevant work health and safety legislation.

#### *Use of resources*

12. I will:

- use resources (funds or equipment) responsibly, effectively, economically and sustainably
- ensure I have the required delegation to authorise expenditure or use of Society resources
- conserve and efficiently use resources through reusing, recycling, energy saving and waste minimisation
- maintain the integrity and security of Society intellectual property, organisational, commercial and other information.

#### *Conflict of interest*

13. I will:

- observe the Society's Conflict of Interest Policy, including:
  - take reasonable steps to avoid any conflict of interest (actual, potential or perceived)
  - declare any financial or non-financial personal interests
  - carefully manage any conflicts of interest.
- declare any work (paid or unpaid) outside my Society role, which may present a conflict of interest, to my supervisor/manager/President (if I am unsure if a conflict of interest exists I will discuss the matter with my supervisor/manager/President)
- only accept gifts or other benefits of a nominal value that are offered in goodwill (see Gifts and Entertainment Policy).

14. I will not:

- improperly use my status, authority or information to:
  - gain, or seek to gain, a benefit or advantage for myself or any other person
  - to cause, or seek to cause, detriment to the Society, or any other person
- conduct or undertake any other paid or unpaid work at the same time as I am undertaking my Society role.

#### *Integrity*

15. I will:

- behave ethically, responsibly and with integrity at all times
- maintain professional transparency and comply with the Society's privacy, confidentiality and information management policies
- report any loss of license, or loss of certification or registration required for my role to my supervisor/manager/President

- respectfully challenge behaviours that may be in breach of the Code of Conduct
- report dishonest, fraudulent or unlawful behaviour through the appropriate channels (see Managing Fraud and Dishonest Behaviour Policy and Whistleblower Policy).

## Breaches of the Code of Conduct

16. Breaches of the Code of Conduct are serious and will be investigated. If Society Personnel are found to be in breach of the Code of Conduct or related Society policies, appropriate disciplinary action may be taken.
17. Depending on the nature of the breach, this may range from performance counselling, formal warnings, or performance management. Serious breaches may result in suspension, demotion or dismissal.

## Reporting a breach of the Code

18. There are informal and formal ways of raising a possible breach of the Code of Conduct. If you believe that a breach of the Code of Conduct may have arisen, you are encouraged to raise the matter with the person concerned (where you feel you can) or with the person to whom you report or someone you feel comfortable with.
19. If the breach involves your manager or the person to whom you report, you should raise the matter with your Executive Director, Chief Financial Officer, Regional Director or relevant Central Council President.

## Review

20. This Code of Conduct and its implementation will be reviewed every three years, or on a needs basis as required to align with legislative or practice changes.

## Further assistance

21. Society Personnel should speak with their manager, supervisor or President regarding any questions about the implementation of the Code of Conduct.
22. Feedback regarding the implementation of the Code of Conduct can be provided to the Executive Director, People, Culture and Strategy.

## References

23. Legislation, regulations or other instruments relevant to the Code of Conduct include:

- *Age Discrimination Act 2004* (Cth)
- *Aged Care Act 1997* (Cth)
- *Anti-Discrimination Act 1977* (NSW)
- *Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986* (Cth)
- Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission Governance Standards
- *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998* (NSW)
- *Corporations Act 2001* (Cth)

- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)*
- *Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)*
- *National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013 (Cth)*
- *National Disability Insurance Scheme Code of Conduct 2018*
- *Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) including the Australian Privacy Principles*
- *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW)*
- *Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)*
- *Racial Hatred Act 1995 (Cth)*
- *Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)*
- *State Insurance and Care Governance Act 2015 (NSW)*
- *Treasury Laws Amendment (Enhancing Whistleblower Protection) Act 2018 (Cth)*
- *Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (NSW)*
- *Work Health and Safety Regulation 2017 (NSW)*
- *Workers Compensation Act 1987 No 70 (NSW)*
- Work Health and Safety Codes of Practice

## Approval and amendment history

Version	Approval authority	Date	Amendment summary
Doc # NA	State Council	13.08.2013	NA
Doc # PO2020-021	Board & State Council	08.04.2020 & 22.04.2020	New Code of Conduct developed. Previous Code of Conduct rescinded.
Doc # PO2020-021 Version 2	Executive Director, Corporate Services	27.07.2020	Policy ownership updated to align to organisational structure changes.
Doc # PO2022-021	Board & State Council	04.08.2022 17.08.2022	Desktop review conducted – nomenclature updated and additional text on Safeguarding vulnerable people and safeguarding vulnerable children and young people



## Appendix 1: Definitions

24. Relevant definitions include:

<b>Bullying</b>	Workplace bullying is <i>repeated</i> and <i>unreasonable</i> behaviour directed towards a person or a group of people that <i>creates a risk to health and safety</i> . (WHS Act 2011 and Fair Work Act 2009).
<b>Child and Young Person</b>	In this document ‘child’ means persons between the ages 0-15, a ‘young person’ is any person between the ages 16-17.
<b>Child abuse</b>	Any non-accidental act or acts that endangers a child’s health, wellbeing or development. This includes behaviour by parents, caregivers, other adults or older adolescents that entails a substantial risk of causing physical or emotional harm to a child or young person. Child abuse can be physical, emotional, sexual, or through exposure to domestic or family violence. Child abuse can be intentional or unintentional and can include acts of omission (i.e. neglect) and commission (i.e. abuse).
<b>Child Safe/Child Safe Culture</b>	Child Safe means: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• adopting strategies and taking action to promote child wellbeing and prevent harm to children and young people</li> <li>• placing children’s participation, safety and wellbeing at the centre of practice by building a culture in alignment with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and NSW Child Safe Standards.</li> </ul>
<b>Safeguarding children, young people, and vulnerable adults</b>	Actions, policies and procedures that create and maintain protective environments for children, young people and vulnerable adults including to protect them from exploitation and abuse of all kinds.
<b>Child Safe Organisation</b>	An organisation that is compliant with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and the NSW Child Safe Standards
<b>Conflict of interest</b>	<p><i>Actual</i></p> <p>Where there is a direct conflict of interest between the private interests of an individual and the performance of their official duties and responsibilities.</p> <p><i>Potential</i></p> <p>Where a person has private interests that could interfere with the performance of their official duties and responsibilities in the future.</p> <p><i>Perceived</i></p> <p>Where it might appear to others that a person’s private interest could inappropriately influence the performance of official duties and responsibilities, whether or not this is in fact the case.</p>
<b>Discrimination</b>	Discrimination is treating, or proposing to treat, someone unfavourably because they have, or are assumed to have, a particular characteristic protected by law.  Personal characteristics or attributes protected under federal and state law include: race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, descent, ethnic or ethno-religious or national origin, social origin, age, medical record, criminal record, marital or

	relationship status, pregnancy or potential pregnancy, breastfeeding, family or carer responsibilities, impairment, mental, intellectual or psychiatric disability, physical disability, nationality, sexual orientation, gender identity, transgender or intersex status, trade union membership or activity, or association with someone who has, or is assumed to have, one of these characteristics.
<b>Employee</b>	An employee is a paid member of staff unless otherwise specified. This includes full time, part time, fixed term or casual staff, and contractors providing services to, or engaged in the performance of duties on behalf of, the Society.
<b>Harassment</b>	Workplace harassment is any behaviour that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is unwelcome and unsolicited</li> <li>• the person considers offensive, intimidating, humiliating or threatening</li> <li>• a reasonable person would consider offensive, humiliating, intimidating or threatening.</li> </ul>
<b>Manager</b>	The Society member, volunteer or employee responsible for the supervision of members, volunteers or employees.
<b>Member</b>	The term Member includes Conference, Associate and Volunteer members as per The Rule.
<b>Person we assist</b>	People we assist 18 years of age and older, receiving Society services, whether those services are financial or non-financial, and whether those services are delivered in the person's home, a formal setting or elsewhere.
<b>Reportable conduct</b>	Defined by the Ombudsman Act 1974 and as at 1 March 2020, the Children's Guardian Act 2019, as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• any sexual offence, or sexual misconduct, committed against, with or in the presence of a child (including a child pornography offence); or</li> <li>• any assault, ill treatment or neglect of a child; or</li> <li>• any behaviour that causes psychological harm to a child, with or without the consent of the child.</li> </ul>
<b>Society Personnel</b>	All Society Personnel including members, volunteers, employees, office holders and Directors. This policy does not distinguish between the roles and responsibilities of paid and unpaid Society Personnel unless specifically prescribed by relevant legislation.
<b>Supervisor</b>	The Society member, volunteer or employee responsible for the supervision of members, volunteers or employees.
<b>Volunteer</b>	A volunteer is any person who performs unpaid work for the Society.
<b>Vulnerable adults</b>	People who may be considered vulnerable adults: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• people we assist 18 years of age and older, receiving Society services, whether those services are financial or non-financial, and whether those services are delivered in the person's home, a formal setting or elsewhere</li> <li>• people experiencing situations or circumstances of vulnerability, including but not limited to homelessness or domestic violence</li> <li>• people with mental health conditions, impaired intellectual or physical</li> </ul>

	<p>functioning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• people from a low socioeconomic background</li> <li>• people who are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders</li> <li>• English as a second language</li> <li>• people with low levels of literacy or education</li> <li>• people subject to modern slavery, which involves human exploitation and control, such as forced labour, debt bondage, human trafficking, and child labour.</li> </ul>
<b>Work</b>	<p>Work includes any Society-related activities engaged in by Society Personnel, wherever they occur. Work is not limited to the confines of a physical workplace, but includes offsite activities, such as home visitations, remote work, and attendance at conferences, functions, and work-related events, including retreats and Society social events.</p>
<b>Workplace (also ‘at work’)</b>	<p>Workplace applies to all sites owned and managed by the Society, including any activities undertaken offsite as part of Society operations, such as home visitations, it is not limited to the confines of a physical workplace.</p> <p>The workplace also includes remote work, attendance at work-related conferences or functions, and attendance at client or other work-related events, including retreats and social events.</p>



### **CODE OF CONDUCT AGREEMENT**

As a member, volunteer or employee of the St Vincent de Paul Society NSW, I agree to abide by the Society’s Code of Conduct.

I understand that this Code of Conduct supplements the various legal and policy obligations I have as a member, volunteer or 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** .....

**Position location** .....

**Date** .....

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**Name of Parent, Guardian or Responsible Adult**

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**Signature of Parent, Guardian or Responsible Adult**

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*(If applicable)*

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

**Date**.....