

CODE OF ETHICS – OVERVIEW

Exploring Ethics Series No 1/10

The SA Public Sector Code of Ethics

The Code of Ethics (the Code) exists to support you in your professional activities and personal conduct. The Code provides a guide that defines standards of behaviour and the values that underpin them. These are prescribed as *Professional Conduct Standards*

Professional Conduct Standards

Professional and Courteous Behaviour	Public Comment	Handling Official Information
Use of Government/ Public Resources	Conflicts of Interest	Outside Employment
Acceptance of Gifts and Benefits	Criminal Offences	Reporting Unethical Behaviour

Values

These values are the foundation of ethical behaviour in the public sector:

- Democratic values
- Service, respect and courtesy
- Honesty and integrity
- Accountability
- Professional conduct standards.

Who does the Code of Ethics apply to?

As public sector employees, we are all required to comply with the Code. This includes people who are employed under the *Children's Services Act*, *Education Act*, or the *Public Sector Act*.

Our expectations

Working for DECD means that there are certain expectations of us. We need to be professional and courteous in the performance of our duties, work collaboratively with colleagues and the community and to play our part in creating a safe workplace. Every day, our actions, decisions and behaviour are what define the public opinion of the public sector – including our organisation.

Leaders and managers

Leading by example is the most effective way to demonstrate strong leadership for staff. Ensure your people are aware of the objectives, values and Professional Conduct Standards of the Code.

Breaches of the Code

The Professional Conduct Standards form the disciplinary provisions of the Code. Breaches of the Code may result in disciplinary action being taken. For example, minor breaches may be dealt with by an explanation, apology or written warning. Possible penalties for more serious breaches include a written reprimand, suspension from duty without pay,

reduction of your remuneration level, or termination of employment.

Resources

We'd like you to play a part in shaping the Code's role as a document that defines what it means to be a public sector employee.

Code of Ethics resources are available at:

<http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/hrstaff/pages/default/CodeOfEthics/>

A Power Point presentation is available to help you learn about the context and content of the Code, and to promote discussion and debate.

Fast facts provide an overview of the objectives, values and Professional Conduct Standards of the Code. These can be shared with volunteers, parents, caregivers and others involved with your work.

The *Scenarios* support group activities focusing on issues, perspectives and possible actions.

You are encouraged to visit the website regularly for the *Exploring Ethics Series* newsletters.

Integrating the Code with other DECD policies and procedures

Continuous improvement

Everyone can contribute to a culture in DECD that promotes continuous improvement and innovative thinking. Consider how working towards improvement connects with the values and Professional Conduct Standards in the Code.

Induction

Programs that welcome new DECD employees or volunteers can inform new staff about the Department's expectations of staff conduct.

Decision-making

The Code's values and principles, embedded in the Professional Conduct Standards, are relevant to all aspects of decision-making, such as recruitment and deployment of staff, budgets, and reporting to parents/community.

Performance Management and Development

Focus on accountability to ensure clarity about work direction, purpose and goals. Alternatively, examine contributions towards high-quality service delivery both from individual and team perspectives.

For further information, contact:

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