

YWCA Australia

M001 Employee Code of Conduct

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to provide an ethical framework for the decisions, actions and behaviour of the Employees of YWCA Australia (YWCA). It explains the values that guide the organisation, the principles covering appropriate conduct in a variety of contexts, and outlines the minimum standard of behaviour expected of YWCA Employees.

2. Scope

This Code applies to the YWCA staff, contractors, students and volunteers (Employees).

3. Policy Statement

This Code of Conduct acknowledges that our colleagues, the community and our donors are entitled to expect the work of YWCA to be conducted with efficiency, economy, fairness and integrity.

All individuals are to take responsibility for their own conduct, and managers are expected to lead ethical behaviour and work practices. Active discussion of ethical issues and dilemmas will contribute to a positive organisational culture and work environment.

4. Responsibilities

The Director, People and Culture will ensure this policy is compliant with the applicable legislation and will review the policy over time to evaluate its ongoing effectiveness. The Executive Team is responsible for administering and monitoring compliance with this policy for Employees.

Compliance is mandatory for all Employees listed within the scope of this document.

5. Values

The work of YWCA is underpinned by the organisation's five core values of Feminism, Inclusion, Excellence, Innovation, and Integrity. Employees are required under this Code of Conduct to perform their duties and behave in manner that upholds these values.

6. Principles

This Code of Conduct commits all Employees, to:

- act in a lawful and ethical manner, and according to this Code
- take all necessary steps to ensure the health and safety of the individual and others whilst at work
- implement the policies of the YWCA to the best of the individual's abilities
- comply with all proper and reasonable instructions and directions, while being free to follow up any concerns with the appropriate manager
- not misuse or support the misuse of the organisation's information or resources
- not manipulate others for their own advantage
- treat colleagues and others concerned with YWCA business with respect and sensitivity to their rights
- ensure that claims for work related expenses are accurate
- not attend work under the influence of alcohol or other drugs
- act according to 'procedural fairness' so that a fair decision is reached in an impartial and objective manner

- be open and honest when confronted by ethical dilemmas and seek to resolve these by participating and consulting with management
- lead by example and encourage others to exercise the personal and professional behaviour expected under this Code

In addition, this Code of Conduct commits managers and supervisors to provide leadership and the relevant policies and procedures to assist Employees to reach the required level of performance.

7. Implementation of this Code

7.1 Conflict of interests

All Employees are personally responsible for identifying, assessing, declaring, and actively managing any conflict of interests that arise during the course of their work. This applies to any actual, reasonably perceived, or potential conflicts of interests that are either financial in nature or concern relationships with others.

Individuals have a responsibility to:

- assess whether their personal interests conflict, or have the potential to conflict, with their duties
- be aware of any changes in their circumstances that may create a conflict
- take appropriate action to remove or manage the conflict
- disclose the conflict to their manager, and not participate in any decision making associated with the matter
- review any disclosed conflict of interests regularly until the conflict is resolved or adequately managed

7.2 Gifts and benefits

Individuals must not solicit or accept gifts, favours, entertainment, services or other benefits where the gift is being, or could be reasonably interpreted as being, offered to secure influence or preferential treatment in favour of the person or organisation giving the gift or benefit.

Individuals may accept token gifts in line with the *Gifts and Benefits Policy*, but gifts of a greater nominal value must be reported to their manager and recorded in the *Gifts and Benefits Register*. For further guidance see the Gifts and Benefits Policy.

In any instance where an individual is uncertain about the appropriateness of a gift they should refuse the gift or benefit and advise their manager or contact the Company Secretary or Director, People and Culture for advice.

7.3 Discrimination, harassment, bullying, and victimisation

All Employees are responsible for creating a safe, respectful and inclusive environment that is free of discrimination, harassment and bullying. Employees must not discriminate against, harass, bully, victimise or treat less favourably any colleague or members of the public in the workplace during workplace activities or work-related events.

Employees must not subject someone to any detriment because they have, or are believed to have:

- asserted their rights under this Code or relevant Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO), Anti-discrimination, or related legislation
- raised a complaint, grievance or made an allegation that another person has breached this Code, other YWCA policy, or relevant law
- assisted someone in raising a complaint or grievance under this Code, other YWCA policy, or relevant legislation

7.4 Secondary employment

Permanent Employees of YWCA who wish to engage in paid employment or other business activities outside their duties with this organisation must seek approval from the Director People and Culture. Additional employment or business activities must not present a conflict of interests. Any outside activities must be performed wholly in the employee's private time and should not affect safety, efficiency, or performance of their duties with YWCA.

7.5 Use of the organisation's resources

Through the course of their engagement with YWCA, Employees will have access to organisational equipment and resources to enable them to fulfil the requirements and duties of their role. All such resources, including IT resources, are to be used efficiently and economically for work related purposes. Limited personal use of IT resources is permitted but must be consistent with applicable policies. It is the responsibility of each individual to ensure the appropriate use of organisational resources, including any approved use by a third party.

7.6 Work Health and Safety (WHS)

Employees have a responsibility to carry out their duties with regard for the health, safety and wellbeing of fellow Employees and external parties (volunteers, clients, contractors and visitors). This includes complying with any health and safety directives and policies, cooperating with any local initiatives, and reporting any health and safety concerns.

7.7 Public comment and media

Unless required by law or otherwise authorised to do so, Employees must not make public comment on matters related to YWCA. Employees may not release unpublished documents or privileged information without authority.

The Chief Executive Officer is the national media spokesperson for the organisation, and only other individuals specifically authorised to do so may provide comment to the media.

All Employees have the right, in their private capacity as members of the community, to make public comment and enter into debate on political and social issues. In any public comments, including those made on social media, staff members must ensure that their personal views are not presented or interpreted as being those of YWCA. See the Media Policy for further guidance.

7.8 Alcohol and other drugs

Employees are expected to act responsibly during business, social and recreational events associated with YWCA. While at work Employees are required to be fit to perform their assigned duties and must not be impaired by the use of alcohol, medication or illicit drugs.

Any Employee who believes they might have a problem related to alcohol or substance abuse, and is not seeking treatment, is encouraged to make use of the Employee Assistance Program.

7.9 Dress and appearance

Employees should maintain a neat, clean, tidy and professional appearance suited to their role and environment, and any meetings with external stakeholders or events they might attend. Appropriate clothing is to be worn in order to establish and maintain professional boundaries with clients, stakeholders and other organisations.

7.10 Professional boundaries

Employees who provide direct services to clients should not seek or offer further contact with a client outside of work or for matters not related to work.

Employees must not develop a relationship with a client that could be interpreted as a breach of professional boundaries. Particular care must be taken in relation to clients who may be vulnerable due to having experienced abuse or exploitation in the past.

Employees are warned against sharing their private information, including phone number or address, with clients or their families.

7.11 Confidentiality

YWCA requires all Employees to respect and maintain the confidentiality of the organisation's business, and the personal and professional information of all individuals with whom the organisation has a relationship. Employees are required to ensure confidential and sensitive documents are securely stored, discussions concerning personal details or circumstances are not overheard, and the appropriate organisational processes are used to raise internal issues.

7.12 Intellectual property

All tangible and non-tangible work that Employees produce for YWCA is owned by the organisation. YWCA also owns all associated intellectual property rights including the rights relating to trademarks, service marks, commercial names and designations, inventions in all fields of human endeavour and all rights resulting from activity in the industrial, fundraising, scientific, literary, community services or artistic fields.

Individuals may not personally reproduce, publish, or otherwise use any material owned by YWCA without written permission.

8. Reporting inappropriate behaviour

Employees are able to raise questions or concerns related to this Code of Conduct with their supervisor, manager, senior manager or Director or the People and Culture Department as detailed in grievance procedure.

9. Breach of the Code

Behaviour contrary to this Code can bring the reputation of the organisation and staff into disrepute. Such behaviour can also undermine productive working relationships, hinder client service delivery, and damage public trust in the organisation.

Intentional breaches of this Code or other YWCA policies and procedures constitutes misconduct and may lead to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment, contract, or engagement with YWCA. Where inappropriate behaviour under this or other YWCA policy constitutes a possible breach of any law, the matter will be referred to the appropriate authorities.

10. Definitions

Benefit is a non-tangible item that has value to the person receiving the benefit, such as a promotion, access to a private box at a sporting event, or access to confidential information.

Bullying is repeated and unreasonable behaviour directed towards a worker or a group of workers that creates a risk to health and safety. Workplace bullying may be intentional or unintentional, as the person may not be aware they are engaging in bullying behaviour.

Confidentiality means not disclosing to persons, either inside or outside the organisation and who have no proper or lawful right to it, information or material related to clients or other Employees or the business of the YWCA of which you are aware of because of your role with the organisation.

Conflict of interests occurs when a person's private interests conflict with the interests of the organisation. A conflict of interests makes it difficult for an Employee to make unbiased

decisions and can influence, or appear to influence, the performance of their duties or responsibilities toward the organisation. Potential conflicts of interests occur when the conflict does not yet exist, but it is possible there may be a conflict in the future arising from foreseeable circumstances.

Discrimination means treating someone unfairly or harassing them directly or indirectly because of a personal attribute. While there are some minor differences between the states and territories, in general it is illegal to discriminate against someone because of the following attributes: age; parental or carer status; disability, illness or impairment; industrial or employment activity; sex, gender, or transgender status; sexual orientation or preference; marital or relationship status; physical features; irrelevant criminal history; political belief or activity; trade union activity; pregnancy or breastfeeding; race or nationality; religious belief or activity. This also applies when the unfair treatment occurs because of the person's relationship or association with a person who has, or is believed to have, any of these attributes.

Engagement for the purposes of this Code refers to the employment of paid employees; contracting of contractors, consultants, and labour hire staff; and the assignment of volunteers with YWCA.

Ethical conduct is the set of standards of behaviour that govern the way we deal with others. Ethical conduct is underpinned by the principles of integrity, impartiality, accountability, and honesty.

Gift is an item of value which one person or organisation voluntarily presents to another without expectation of compensation or reciprocity. Gifts are generally given in thanks.

Harassment is a type of discrimination that occurs when the person receives any unwanted behaviour that offends, humiliates, or intimidates someone and targets them because of their real or perceived attributes.

Maladministration is the inefficient or dishonest management of the affairs of an organisation. It is conduct that results in an irregular, ineffective, and unauthorised use of the organisation's money, or substantial mismanagement of the organisation's resources.

Official information is information and knowledge obtained in the course of employment or engagement with the YWCA. It includes documents that are obtained or created and is information that is not available to the public.

Public comment includes speaking engagements, interviews, written and oral statements, and expressing views either in a public forum, or where it is reasonably foreseeable that the stated information will enter the public domain.

Reasonable personal use means the use of work-related property in a manner a reasonable person would consider appropriate in the circumstances. Examples might include dealing with minor personal issues or urgent and emergency personal situations.

Victimise is to punish or single out anyone because they have acted on their lawful rights or in accordance with this Code of Conduct, or because they have supported another person to act on their rights

Appendices

Nil

Responsible Body	Director, Organisation Capability and People
Accountable Officer	Executive Team within own departments
Application	As per the document scope
Supersedes	All state and territory YWCA Codes of Conduct whether approved or in draft
Associated documents	Nil
Legislation	Refer to the <i>People and Culture Policy Legislation Register</i> for a complete list of associated Acts and Regulations

Approval and Amendment history				
Review period – 2 years				
Approval date	Effective date	Version	Amendments	Next review
	8/5/2019	1.0	N/A	2 years
	18/11/21	2.0	N/A	2 years
	12/1/22	3.0	N/A	2 years
	23/01/24	4.0	Title changes	2 years