



Department of
Education

CODE OF CONDUCT

EFFECTIVE: SEPTEMBER 2011

INTRODUCTION

Background

The Department's *Code of Conduct* ("the Code") is part of a framework of documents which include the *Staff Conduct and Discipline* policy and the *How to Comply with the Code of Conduct* handbook.

These documents build on the relevant provisions of the *Public Sector Management Act 1994* and the *Western Australia Public Sector Commission Code of Ethics*. Collectively, these documents provide a broad framework to guide the ethical and accountable behaviour of all staff of the Department.

Aim of this Code

The Code provides a set of general principles to guide Departmental staff in their conduct as employees. These principles are designed to give guidance to Department employees when making both professional and personal decisions. Decisions of employees made in the context of their private lives might nevertheless impact on their professional standing. These principles are to be read in conjunction with other relevant policy and legal obligations.

For further information about each of the general principles, please see the Department's handbook, *How to Comply with the Code of Conduct*.

Applicability of the Code

The requirements of the Code apply to employees in the daily performance of their work duties. However, employees need to be aware that inappropriate or improper conduct outside of the work environment or outside of normal working hours may still be regarded as misconduct and may bring their professional suitability into question. Employees have the same rights as all other citizens. However, as they are also public officials, they have a responsibility to conduct themselves in a manner that will not negatively impact upon their ability to perform their work, or undermine public confidence in the Department or the Public Sector.

Enforcement of the *Code of Conduct*

If a Department employee engages in conduct which may constitute a breach of this Code, the Department employee may be the subject of formal disciplinary action pursuant to the Department's *Staff Conduct and Discipline* policy and may also, in certain circumstances, commit a criminal offence.

OUR VALUES

The Department promotes ethical practice and appropriate standards of conduct and behaviour, and is committed to work and learning environments where all individuals are treated with respect and dignity. Therefore, the actions of employees are to be guided by the Department's values. These values reflect social responsibilities owed to students, parents, care-givers and other community members, and to each other. These values should be given practical expression in the day-to-day operations of the Department:

Learning:

We have a positive approach to learning and encourage it in others; we advance student learning based on our belief that all students have the capacity to learn.

Excellence:

We have high expectations of our students and ourselves. We set standards of excellence and strive to achieve them. The standards and expectations challenge all of us to give of our best.

Equity:

We recognise the differing circumstances and needs of our students and are dedicated to achieving the best possible outcomes for all. We strive to create workplaces and learning environments that are free of discrimination, abuse or exploitation.

Care:

We treat all individuals with care. Our relationships are based on trust, mutual respect and the acceptance of responsibility. We recognise the value of working in partnership with parents/carers and the wider community in providing a quality education for our students.

PRINCIPLES

The Department of Education expects employees to maintain high standards of behaviour in all activities and environments associated with their employment. To assist employees to meet this expectation, the Department has developed the following principles:

1. Personal Behaviour

As employees of the Department we behave with integrity in all personal conduct and treat all others with due consideration.

Employees are expected at all times to behave ethically and act with integrity. In practice, this means employees:

- treat others with respect, dignity, courtesy, honesty and fairness and with proper regard for their rights, safety and welfare;
- make decisions fairly, impartially and promptly, having regard to all relevant information, legislation, policies and procedures;
- contribute to a workplace that is free of harassment, bullying or discrimination against colleagues, students or members of the public;
- encourage positive work habits, behaviour and personal and professional workplace relationships and boundaries;
- do not engage in behaviour that may bring your own reputation or that of the Department and the Public Sector into disrepute; and
- do not tolerate or participate in behaviour that is inconsistent with these principles.

2. Communication and Official Information

As employees of the Department we only use official information for authorised purposes.

In practice this means employees:

- only disclose official information or documents as required by law or where proper authorisation is given; and
- do not misuse official information or documents for personal or commercial gain for themselves and/or others.

3. Fraudulent and Corrupt Behaviour

As employees of the Department we act ethically and avoid engaging in any behaviour which may be considered fraudulent and/or corrupt.

This means employees:

- do not engage in conduct which is dishonest and that causes actual or potential benefit or detriment to any person or entity; and
- do not misuse their position to the advantage of themselves or others.

4. Use of Public Resources

As employees of the Department we use the resources of the State in a responsible and accountable manner.

In practice this means employees:

- are diligent and efficient in the use of public resources;
- are accountable for the use of public resources; and

- do not use public resources, including work time, for private or commercial gain for themselves and/or others.

5. Record Keeping and Use of Information

As employees of the Department we ensure that Government information is properly recorded, managed and maintained.

In practice this means employees:

- properly record actions and decisions to ensure transparency and accuracy;
- securely store records and confidential information; and
- comply with the relevant Department policies and procedures.

6. Conflicts of Interest

As employees of the Department we ensure that our private interests and affiliations do not conflict, or appear to conflict, with our public and professional duties.

In practice this means employees:

- verify that personal, financial or political interests of themselves or those of their family and/or associates do not conflict with, or influence, their professional obligations;
- make appropriate declarations of all actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest; and
- properly manage any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest.