

BH0304



CODE OF CONDUCT

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INTRODUCTION

All public sector agencies in Victoria are bound by the *Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees*, which is published by the Public Sector Standards Commissioner. The *Health Services Act 1988* requires the board of each public health service, including Alfred Health, to adopt a code of conduct for staff.

This Code of Conduct is a public statement of how Alfred Health conducts its business and how it expects its staff and others associated with it to behave in the performance of their duties. It is based on the public sector values contained in the *Public Administration Act 2004* and the *Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees* and is binding on all Alfred Health staff.

Compliance with this Code of Conduct will assist Alfred Health to achieve its Vision, Values and Goals, which are:

Vision, Values and Goals

Alfred Health's Vision

Excellence in health care and service

Alfred Health's Values

Caring and responding to our patients and our community

We design our care around the individual and the community we serve and value feedback and input from patients, consumers, families and staff. We strive to address concerns and improve our care and services as a result.

Encouraging and achieving excellence, continual learning and improvement

We will advance the service and practice in health care to ensure the care provided is of the highest quality. We support a culture of innovation, evidence-based practice, learning from experience through reflection, and continuous learning in order to provide outstanding care.

Working in partnership and cooperation

We work in partnership with patients, staff, volunteers, the community and other health services to improve the quality of life of the people to whom we provide care and services. We communicate openly with all our partners in health care to build supportive and effective working relationships.

Being responsible and accountable for the services we provide

We use resources wisely to get the best value for the people we serve. We take responsibility for the performance of our services.

Achievement through teamwork

Our greatest asset is our people. We value their contribution and recognize and reward this. We work together as a team, valuing each other's views, skills, diversity and knowledge.

Treating people with integrity and in a friendly, trusting and respectful manner and environment

We have a people-centered approach to everything we do. We work with and provide care and services to a diverse multicultural community. We treat everyone with trust, compassion, integrity and respect.

STANDARDS

Compliance

Alfred Health expects all staff to comply with all relevant legislation, regulations, policies and procedures and accepts that it has a responsibility to communicate its expectations to staff and support them appropriately in their work, and to provide them with access to the education and training they require to perform their duties effectively.

All staff members are expected to ensure that they are familiar with the relevant laws and policies that apply to them in their workplace and to seek advice from management if they are uncertain about the implications of laws or policies.

Staff members may face disciplinary action, including dismissal, for a breach of the law or of policy and in some cases the breach may be reported to the police or other relevant authority.

Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S)

Alfred Health is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for all its staff members and to complying with all relevant OH&S requirements.

Alfred Health aims to:

- ensure that safety is a priority in the workplace;
- provide the necessary leadership, information, instruction and training to all staff to ensure that they understand their rights and obligations with respect to safe work practices.

Managers are responsible for ensuring that:

- a safe work environment exists;
- safe work practices are followed;
- staff members receive appropriate training and support to ensure that they are able to perform their work safely and effectively.

Staff members are expected to:

- follow all safe work practices and procedures;
- report unsafe conditions or practices;
- identify and recommend improvements relating to occupational health and safety;
- take responsibility for protecting their own safety and that of others on all Alfred Health sites.

Equal Employment Opportunity, Discrimination & Harassment

Alfred Health is committed to providing a work environment free from harassment, discrimination, bullying or intimidation and in which everyone is treated fairly and with respect.

It is the responsibility of management to ensure that all workplace decisions and activities are free from improper and unlawful discrimination.

Alfred Health expects all employees and applicants for employment to be treated fairly and evaluated according to their job-related skills, qualifications, abilities and aptitudes only. Decisions based on attributes unrelated to job performance such as colour, race, gender, religion, personal associations, national origin, age, disability, political beliefs, marital status, sexual orientation and family responsibilities may constitute discrimination and are prohibited.

Decisions related to a job applicant's engagement or employment at Alfred Health must be made on the basis of merit.

Harassment refers to conduct that is personally offensive, threatening, impairs morale or interferes with the work effectiveness of staff or others. Harassment or bullying of any kind is unacceptable to Alfred Health and will not be tolerated.

Alfred Health management is expected to take reasonable steps to prevent discrimination and harassment and to investigate and respond to all complaints of discrimination, bullying or harassment without delay. Investigations will be confidential and will be conducted promptly, thoroughly and impartially. Reprisals for reporting discrimination or harassment will not be tolerated.

Alfred Health considers unlawful discrimination, bullying, harassment or reprisal for reporting such matters to be serious misconduct which will result in disciplinary action which may include dismissal.

Commitment to Human Rights

As public sector employees, Alfred Health employees must act in a way that is compatible with the human rights protected by the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*.

Use of Alcohol, Tobacco and other Drugs

Every Alfred Health staff member is responsible for taking appropriate steps to prevent workplace injuries and for contributing to a safe and healthy work environment. This obligation includes responsible behaviour with respect to the use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs at work, or when representing or conducting business on behalf of Alfred Health.

The use of drugs or alcohol may impair a person's capacity to perform his or her work safely and efficiently. Staff must not be adversely affected by drugs of any kind, including alcohol, while at work, while representing Alfred Health or while driving an Alfred Health vehicle. You should discuss with your manager the impact on your work performance of any prescribed medication or other substances that may impact on the safe performance of your duties.

Alfred Health prohibits the possession, transfer or use of illegal substances on Alfred Health premises, in Alfred Health vehicles or when working for or representing Alfred Health.

Smoking is prohibited in all Alfred Health buildings, vehicles, car parks and grounds within the boundaries of the Alfred, Caulfield Hospital and Sandringham Hospital.

Failure to comply with this requirement will be regarded as serious misconduct that may lead to dismissal.

Using Alfred Health Resources and Fraud Prevention

Staff must not use or allow Alfred Health funds, property, equipment or other resources to be used for personal benefit or for purposes other than that for which they were provided. All staff members are required to use Alfred Health resources appropriately.

All staff members are responsible for safeguarding Alfred Health resources, including information, and, where required, for maintaining accurate records of the use of these resources. All fraudulent, improper or unauthorised use of resources is unacceptable and must be reported to senior management immediately.

Financial

Expenditure must be recorded accurately and in a timely way. Submission of a misleading or fraudulent report of expenditure is regarded as serious misconduct.

Accurate and auditable records of all financial transactions relating to Alfred Health must be maintained. No entry that distorts or disguises the true nature of any transaction may be made. All staff must strictly abide by Alfred Health's policies and procedures for handling cash purchases or payments and all non-financial records such as personnel files, environmental documentation and safety statistics must also be accurately maintained.

Records

The storage and disposal of records of all kinds must be in accordance with the law and with Alfred Health policy.

Other Resources

Unauthorised use or removal of Alfred Health equipment, supplies or other resources is regarded as theft. All staff members are required to take appropriate precautions to prevent theft, damage or misuse of Alfred Health resources.

Alfred Health resources must not be sold, lent, or donated without the explicit approval of the officer with delegated authority to approve the action.

Staff must not destroy or dispose of Alfred Health equipment, supplies or other resources without the explicit approval of the officer with delegated authority to approve the action.

Information Systems

Alfred Health uses a range of information systems including facsimiles, the internet, the Alfred Health intranet, and e-mail. All staff members are responsible for protecting the information communicated or stored in these systems. All hardware, software and data must be safeguarded against damage, loss, theft, alteration and unauthorised access.

The transfer of confidential information must not be conducted electronically unless security can be guaranteed. If authentication is important, the transaction should be confirmed using non-electronic means.

Alfred Health's electronic communication systems are the property of Alfred Health and all electronic communications are regarded as Alfred Health records. Offensive material such as pornography is not permitted on Alfred Health systems in any form. The display, transmission or storage of material likely to cause offence to staff, visitors or patients is prohibited on Alfred Health premises or equipment.

Alfred Health reserves the right to monitor the use of its information systems by staff and may access and disclose the contents of electronic messages and files.

Staff have access to Alfred Health information systems to assist them in the performance of their jobs. Personal use must be approved by management. Modest personal use may be permitted provided that it is unrelated to outside business activities and does not interfere with Alfred Health's business or the staff member's work. All staff members are required to comply with Alfred Health's policies on the use of e-mail and the Internet.

Breaching the conditions of use for Alfred Health's Information Systems is regarded as serious misconduct which will result in appropriate disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Outside Work and Other Activities

Staff members should not engage in outside employment or conduct a business, trade or profession which interferes with their work performance or creates a real or perceived conflict of interest. Outside work that may impact on work performance must be discussed with the staff member's manager.

In responding to requests to engage in outside work, consideration should be given to the potential impact of that work on the performance of the staff member's duties at Alfred Health and the possibility of the outside work giving rise to an actual or perceived conflict of interest.

Staff members require prior approval from their manager before addressing or chairing a professional conference or other public event in an official capacity. Unless the Alfred Health Chief Executive has given a specific exemption in writing, any fee received by the staff member must be paid to Alfred Health.

Any staff member who is appointed to a Commonwealth position or a Board position as an extension of their role at Alfred Health must pay any fee received to Alfred Health. Check with the Executive Director of your campus or Division if uncertain of your obligation.

Except where providing factual information in a CV or resume, Alfred Health staff members and former staff members must not refer to their Alfred Health positions when seeking to attract work from, or when performing work for, an external organisation, in order to avoid any implication that the person is performing the work on behalf of Alfred Health or that Alfred Health is in any way responsible for the performance of the work or the quality of the work. Although it is entirely appropriate for a staff member to provide factual information about the positions held at Alfred Health in a CV or resume, it is unacceptable to refer to any association with Alfred Health or its hospitals in an advertisement for private consulting or other services.

Confidentiality

Alfred Health staff may have access to confidential information of various kinds, including information about patients, other staff or business matters. All staff members have an obligation to maintain confidentiality and this obligation extends beyond the staff member's employment with Alfred Health.

It is a criminal offence for Alfred Health staff to disclose patient information in breach of section 141 of the *Health Services Act 1988* or section 120A of the *Mental Health Act 1986*.

Confidential information must only be used for authorised purposes. Confidentiality provisions should be included in contracts with other parties who provide services to Alfred Health.

Alfred Health has detailed policies on privacy and confidentiality, breaches of which are regarded as serious misconduct that will result in appropriate disciplinary action which may include dismissal.

Intellectual Property

Staff who participate in the development of intellectual property in the course of their employment are bound by the Alfred Health policy on intellectual property both during their employment and after their employment by Alfred Health ends.

Staff must not reproduce, distribute or alter copyright materials owned by Alfred Health or by others without valid permission from the copyright owner or its authorised agent. This includes various trademarks, logos and business names, which are valuable assets that may only be used in accordance with Alfred Health policy and the law.

Conflicts of Interest

Staff members must not engage in activities that involve or could appear to involve a conflict between their personal interests and the interests of Alfred Health. Such circumstances may compromise the staff members' ability to make impartial decisions. Staff members must not place themselves in situations that might force them to choose between their personal or financial interests and those of Alfred Health. If there is any doubt about whether a conflict of interest exists, the staff member must disclose the issue to senior management.

Examples of conflicts of interest:

- when a staff member or their immediate family members have interests or investments in, or employment with a competitor, customer, partner or supplier of goods or services to Alfred Health;
- when a staff member holds a position in or has a relationship with an outside organisation that has business dealings with Alfred Health and their position with either party may allow them to influence these transactions;
- when a staff member is in a position of influence regarding the employment, employment conditions, access to services or performance appraisal of a family member.

In some circumstances, such as in the case of directors and certain office holders, specific disclosure or approval requirements arise under law.

Acceptance of Gifts and Benefits

Staff members must exercise great care when giving or accepting business-related gifts including direct payments and payment in kind e.g. the provision of goods or services, personal favours and entertainment such as travel, tickets to sporting events, meals etc.

Gifts of nominal value from patients or carers as a token of personal appreciation may generally be accepted on one occasion but if the value of the gift is more than a token gesture, or if a second or subsequent gift is offered, the matter should be referred to senior

management for decision in accordance with the Gifts & Benefits Policy available on the intranet.

Gifts from those with whom Alfred Health is engaged in tender processes may not be accepted and personal sponsorship and offers of money in any form must never be accepted.

Under no circumstances should a staff member request a gift of any kind from a patient, carer or supplier of goods or services for themselves or any other person.

Any offer of a gift or benefit that you believe to be an attempt to induce favoured treatment for those offering the gift must not be accepted and must be reported to the relevant Executive Director or Chief Executive immediately.

Failure to comply with these requirements will be regarded as misconduct that will result in appropriate disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Public and Political Comment

All contacts with the media are to be managed through the Public Affairs Unit and only those staff expressly authorised to do so, may comment to the media.

Alfred Health is a public sector organisation and maintains a position of strict impartiality with respect to party politics.

Only authorised staff members may comment publicly on behalf of Alfred Health or any of its hospitals in any medium, including advertising. Such comment is restricted to factual information and should not include an expression of personal opinion.

When making comment in a private capacity employees must ensure that their comments are not related to any government activity that they are connected to within their employment and make it clear they are expressing their own view and that their comments are not Alfred Health comments.

Political Fundraising and Functions

Alfred Health is a public sector agency and in the course of their employment, all public sector employees are required to act impartially and with integrity. Participation in party political fundraising activities is inappropriate.

Alfred Health staff must not:

- provide Alfred Health or campus monies to political parties or independent candidates. This includes direct or indirect donations, purchase of tables at political fundraising events and contributions in kind;
- attend party political functions, including fundraising events, in their capacity as public sector employees, or in cases where it is reasonable to assume that they are attending in that capacity; or
- accept gifts or favours in the form of invitations to functions, including political fundraising events, in their capacity as public sector employees, or in cases where it is reasonable to assume that they are attending in that capacity.

Disclosure of Criminal Offences

All Alfred Health staff must notify Alfred Health as soon as practicable if they:

- have ever been imprisoned or found guilty of a violent or sex offence;
- have been found guilty of any criminal offence (other than a minor traffic offence) in the past 10 years; or
- are currently under investigation or have been charged with a criminal offence.

The disclosure of findings of guilt, charges or impending charges to the Executive Director of Human Resources or the relevant Executive Director will be treated as sensitively and discreetly as is possible in the particular circumstances. The matter will only be pursued further where, in the reasonable opinion of Alfred Health, the offence or alleged offence affects the staff member's employment.

A staff member who fails to report a serious criminal conviction or serious current or impending charges against them may be the subject of disciplinary action, which may include dismissal.

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