

RTO Code of Conduct (P14)

Introduction

Australian Institute of Flexible Learning's vision, mission and philosophy (values) guide our organisational behaviour. Our code of conduct prescribes specific behaviours relevant to our role at the AIFL. Specifically, AIFL embraces the following ethical principles in all its operations:

- We act with integrity, honesty and with a strong sense of social responsibility, according to the principles of social justice. We provide relevant and timely services and seek to match services to diverse need. Our clients views are valued and used to improve service quality. Our services are administered fairly, professionally and impartially according to the Public Administration Act 2004.
- We support the rights of the individual and the wider community by maintaining privacy and confidentiality, according to the Privacy Principles, and supporting peoples' rights to personal security.
- We uphold the values of excellence, as well as efficient and effective service through adherence to legal and organisational requirements, policies and principles and by being responsive and accountable to the community.
- We demonstrate our commitment to high quality service by behaving according to the Code of Conduct, setting and maintaining standards of excellence of service delivery and setting an example to all with whom we deal.
- We maintain public trust by being honest, open and transparent in all dealings and by acting in the public interest. We avoid real or apparent conflicts of interest and report improper conduct, corruption, fraud and maladministration at work.
- We work to clear objectives in a transparent manner achieving results through the best use of AIFL financial and physical resources and by working effectively with people. We always anticipate and accept the consequences of actions we take our decisions we make.

Outcome

Ethical values, principles and behaviours underpin our organisational culture and processes.

Procedure Standards:

CURRENT STAFF

- Staff are required to familiarise themselves and act in accord with the Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct is binding on AIFL employers and a contravention of it may constitute misconduct. The code is available in the following areas: Staff Intranet, Staff Handbook, Volunteer Manual, Contract Agreements.
- Staff position descriptions will refer to AIFL Code of Ethics and Conduct
- Ethics updates are available to teams on request
- The Victorian Public Sector Standards Commissioner Ethics Resource Kit is available at the Upper Murray Health & Community Services library.

PRE EMPLOYMENT

- AIFL will utilise the remedial counselling procedure to deal with false, incorrect or misleading information provided in relation to applications for employment
- Service coordinators will ensure AIFL's Code of Ethics and Conduct Policy and Procedure is discussed and understood during orientation.

CONTRACTORS AND CONSULTANTS

Contractors or consultants engaged in or by AIFL (including contractors or consultants engaged through an employment agency) are to comply with this Code of Conduct and relevant policies and procedures, where the contractors or consultants:

- Supervise AIFL staff
- Undertake work that is of a similar nature to the work undertaken by AIFL employees, volunteers, students & subcontractors at a premise or location generally regarded as a public sector workplace
- Use or have access to AIFL resources or information that are not normally accessible or available to the public.

PROFESSIONAL CODES OF CONDUCT

Certain professions and professionals have codes of conduct that establish specific behaviours relevant to their profession. This code of conduct should be read in conjunction with any professional code of conduct.

CODE OF CONDUCT

1. DEMONSTRATE RESPONSIVENESS

We will demonstrate responsiveness by:

- Providing frank, impartial and timely advice to the Government
- Providing high quality services to the Australian community
- Identifying and promoting best practice

1.1 Advising Government

AIFL officials will provide government with advice in a frank, impartial and timely manner, and with an understanding of its implications on the broader policy direction of the Government. Relevant information is not withheld from the Government.

1.2 Remaining apolitical

We will conduct ourselves in an apolitical manner. AIFL will implement and administer the policies and programs of the elected government. (We will avoid in the course of our work, any participation in activities which support a political party or independent candidates including attendance at fund raising or similar events). During caretaker periods (which is governed by caretaker conventions relating to the period of the election campaign and sometimes the period immediately after the election) we will maintain the neutrality of the public sector and comply with relevant policies and protocols issued by AIFL. We will not use our position to support particular issues, parties or candidates in an election campaign. (See www.ssa.vic.gov.au for ministerial briefings)

1.3 Services to the community

We will continue to provide services to the community in an equitable, prompt and professional manner acting within the within the level of our authority and in accordance with the relevant policies.

1.4 Contributing to improvement

AIFL is committed to continuous improvement and adopts a best practice approach to the performance of everyday work. We identify and actively promote appropriate strategies, methods and processes that lead to improved performance.

2. DEMONSTRATE INTEGRITY

We will demonstrate integrity by:

- Being honest, open and transparent in our dealings
- Using powers responsibly
- Reporting improper conduct
- Avoiding any real or apparent conflicts of interest
- Striving to earn and sustain public trust of a high level

2.1 Honesty at work

We will act honestly in the performance of our duties. We will be open and transparent when making decisions. We will give honest advice based on available facts and data and ensure the advice is up to date.

2.2 Using powers at work

We will use our power in a responsible way. We will not use our power to provide a private benefit to ourselves, our family, friends or associates. We will exercise power in a way that is fair and reasonable, and family or other personal relationships do not improperly influence our decisions. We respect the rights and dignity of those affected by our decisions and actions.

2.3 Financial probity

We will observe the highest standards of integrity in financial matters and comply with the requirements of relevant financial management legislation, policies and procedures. We will maintain a strict separation between work-related and personal financial matters and only use or authorise the use of public financial resources or facilities for work-related purposes.

2.4 Official information

AIFL staff with access to official information will ensure it is only used for official purposes and in an approved manner. Official and personal information is handled according to relevant legislation and public sector body policies and procedures. We will only disclose official information or documents acquired in the course of public employment when required to do so by law, in the legitimate course of duty, when called to give evidence in court, or when proper authority has been given. In such cases comments are confined to factual information only.

2.5 Public comment

AIFL staff will only make public comment when specifically authorised to do so in relation to our duties, a public sector body, or government policies and programs. Such comment is restricted to factual information and avoids the expression of personal opinion. Public comment includes providing information or comment to any media (electronic and print), the internet and speaking engagements.

When making a comment in a private capacity, AIFL will ensure comments are not related to any government activity that they are involved in or connected with as a public sector employee and make it clear they are expressing their own view. They ensure personal comments do not compromise their capacity to perform their public sector role in an unbiased manner, and that comments are not seen or perceived to be an official comment.

2.6 Reporting unethical behaviour

We will comply with legislation, policies and lawful instructions in the performance of our work. We will report to our service coordinators workplace behaviour that violates any law, rule or regulation or represents corrupt conduct, mismanagement of public resources, or is a danger to public health or safety or to the environment.

2.7 Conflict of interest

AIFL staff declare and avoid conflicts of interest to help maintain community trust and confidence. A conflict of interest can be actual, potential or perceived. This relates to circumstances where the employee is or could be directly influenced or where it is perceived the employee might be influenced. We will ensure personal or financial interests do not influence or interfere with the performance of their role and seek to ensure the interests of family members, friends, or associates do not influence or could be perceived to influence our performance in the job.

If an employee is unsure about a possible conflict of interest they seek advice from their manager.

2.8 Other employment

AIFL staff will only engage in other employment where the activity does not conflict with their role as a public sector employee. Employment includes a second job, conducting a business, trade or profession, or active involvement with other organisations (paid employment or voluntary work). Managers or supervisors can assist public sector employees, to determine if such activities will cause an actual or perceived conflict of interest.

2.9 Public trust

We will seek to build and maintain a high level of trust with the Government, community and other public sector employees, students, and subcontractors and behave in a manner that does not bring ourselves or the public sector into disrepute. We will avoid conduct in our private life that may adversely affect our standing as a public official or which may bring AIFL into disrepute.

2.10 Criminal offences

We will advise our manager if they we are charged with a criminal offence, which is punishable by imprisonment or, if found guilty, could reasonably be seen to affect our ability to meet the inherent requirements of the work we are engaged to perform.

2.11 Drugs and alcohol

We will carry out our work safely and avoid conduct that puts ourselves or others at risk. This includes the misuse of alcohol, drugs or other substances when at work or when engaged in work related activities. The misuse of alcohol, prescribed drugs, illegal drugs and other substances is an issue for everyone at AIFL as it impacts on both work and personal life and in some cases the reputation AIFL. Staff who are on medication that could affect their work performance or the safety of themselves or others inform their manager or supervisor to ensure any necessary precautions or adjustments to work can be put in place.

3. DEMONSTRATE IMPARTIALITY

We will demonstrate impartiality by:

- Making decisions and providing advice on merit and without bias, caprice, favouritism or self interest
- Acting fairly by objectively considering all relevant facts and fair criteria
- Implementing Government policies and programs equitably.

3.1 Decisions and advice

We will make decisions and provide advice that is free of prejudice or favouritism and is based on sound judgement. Before making a decision or providing advice, we will consider relevant information and the impact on the Government, community and other public sector employees, students, & subcontractors. Our decisions are not affected by personal influences.

3.2 Gifts and benefits

We will not - for themselves or others - seek or accept gifts or benefits that could be reasonably perceived as influencing us. Public sector employees, students, & subcontractors comply with any policies of their public sector employer in relation to accepting, declaring and/or recording the receipt of gifts or benefits.

Employees, students & subcontractors who are unsure about accepting a gift or benefit seek advice from their manager.

3.3 Acting fairly

We will deal with issues consistently, fairly and in a timely manner. We will use fair criteria, and consider all relevant information in dealing with issues. Being fair means being just and working within commonly accepted rules.

3.4 Implementing government policies and programs

AIFL will implement government policies and programs fairly and without bias. Our decisions and actions are consistent with relevant policies and are based on merit and careful consideration of the relevant facts. We will seek to achieve equitable outcomes within the extent of our authority

4. DEMONSTRATE ACCOUNTABILITY

We will demonstrate accountability by:

- Working to clear objectives in a transparent manner
- Accepting responsibility for our decisions and actions
- Seeking to achieve best use of resources
- Submitting ourselves to appropriate scrutiny

4.1 Working to clear objectives

We understand the objectives of our role. Managers and service coordinators will provide encouragement, support and a clear sense of direction and purpose. Staff who are unclear about their goals discuss this with their manager or supervisor.

4.2 Being responsible for decisions and actions

We will make decisions and take actions within the scope of our authority that are lawful and consistent with relevant legislation and government policy. We will consider any impact of our decisions or actions on the Government, community and other public sector employees, students, & subcontractors.

4.3 Work resources

We will use work resources and equipment efficiently and only for appropriate purposes as authorised by AIFL. We will seek to achieve value for money and use resources in the most effective way possible. We will identify opportunities for improvement to achieve best possible efficiency and responsiveness. Work resources include physical, financial, technological and intellectual property. Intellectual property includes copyright, trade marks, registered designs, patents (including patented business systems), semiconductors, circuit layout rights, and trade, business or company names, and all other proprietary rights, and any rights to the registration of such rights, including proprietary rights developed or created by employees, students & subcontractors in the course of their employment. AIFL retains ownership of all these work resources.

4.4 Open to scrutiny

We will implement government policy in an open and transparent manner. We will maintain accurate and reliable records as required by relevant legislation, policies and procedures. Records are kept in such a way as to ensure their security and reliability and are made available to appropriate scrutiny when required.

4.5 Ability to meet essential requirements

Staff will notify their service coordinator of any loss, suspension of, or change to, a registration, accreditation, license or other qualification that affects their ability to meet relevant essential requirements or to perform their duties.

4.6 Compliance with legislation

AIFL will ensure staff are aware of and comply with all legislation relevant to the performance of their duties.

5. DEMONSTRATE RESPECT

We will demonstrate respect for colleagues, other public officials and members of the community by:

- Treating them fairly and objectively
- Ensuring freedom from discrimination, harassment and bullying
- Using their views to improve outcomes on an ongoing basis

5.1 Fair and objective treatment

We will promote an environment that encourages respect. AIFL staff will be fair, objective and courteous in their dealings with the Government, community and other public sector employees, students, & subcontractors.

5.2 Privacy and confidentiality

We understand the importance of privacy and confidentiality. Confidential information requires special treatment and protection. Those people who provide confidential information to public sector employees, students, & subcontractors have the right to expect this information will be treated as confidential. Employees, students, & subcontractors with access to confidential information ensure it remains confidential, and at all times act in accordance with legislation and policies relating to dealing with private information.

5.3 Maintaining confidentiality

We will receive and manage information in such a manner that its confidentiality will be maintained and that it will not be used to advantage a prospective employer or business, or disadvantage the Victorian Government.

5.4 Equity and diversity

We will follow the spirit as well as the letter of the law relating to discrimination, harassment, bullying and victimisation. We will create an environment that is free of discrimination, harassment and bullying. Valuing and promoting diversity is an important element of demonstrating respect.

5.5 Improving outcomes

We will be conscientious and efficient in their work. We will use our knowledge and expertise to deliver a high quality service, as well as identifying opportunities to improve service outcomes. We will contribute both individually and as part of a team and engage constructively with our colleagues on work related matters. We will share information with team members to support delivery of the best and most appropriate service outcomes

6. DEMONSTRATE LEADERSHIP

We will demonstrate leadership by actively implementing, promoting and supporting these values.

6.1 Leading by example

We will model the behaviours based on the public sector values and at all times act in an ethical manner. Leadership is about positive influence, inspiring and empowering others. Providing sound advice, delivering high quality services and encouraging best practice demonstrates responsiveness. Being honest, using powers correctly, identifying and dealing with inappropriate conduct, avoiding conflicts of interest and developing and maintaining public trust demonstrates integrity.

Making decisions that are free of bias, considering all relevant facts and ensuring policies and programs are implemented fairly demonstrates impartiality. Being transparent, responsible, using resources efficiently and inviting scrutiny demonstrates accountability. Treating others fairly, eliminating discrimination, harassment and bullying, and focusing on improving outcomes demonstrates respect.

6.2 Managing staff

AIFL managers and service coordinators will apply the public sector employment principles. We will provide a safe, encouraging and supportive work environment that recognises and values diversity, abilities and contributions. We will give employees, students, & subcontractors a clear sense of direction and purpose.

We will set realistic goals, timelines and workloads, and provide adequate resources and appropriate information to complete work. We trust people to manage their work autonomously but also provide them with support when needed.

We will address any performance issues promptly, directly and confidentially with the staff member concerned. We will treat staff fairly and consistently when making selection decisions and allocating work. We will assess performance and provide constructive feedback and development opportunities. We will consult genuinely with staff, and adhere to industrial and legal obligations. We will understand and respond to legitimate concerns, and encourage work arrangements that enable staff to achieve a worklife balance.

6.3 Supporting others

We will work co-operatively with colleagues and other public sector body employees, students, & subcontractors. We will support and learn from them and accept differences in personal style. We will respect, and seek when necessary, the professional opinions of colleagues in their area of competence, and acknowledge their contribution. We will provide other public sector employees, students, & subcontractors with support and guidance.

7. DEMONSTRATE A COMMITMENT TO HUMAN RIGHTS

We will respect and promote the human rights set out in the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities by:

- Making decisions and providing consistent with human rights
- Actively implementing, promoting and supporting human rights

7.1 Understanding human rights

We will understand human rights as these apply to our work

7.2 Making decisions and providing advice consistent with human rights

We will ensure our own decisions, advice and policy development properly considers the human rights set out in the charter, and respects the human rights of others

7.3 Implementing human rights

We will deliver services and programs and act in a manner that is consistent with the Charter.

7.4 Protecting human rights

We will seek to protect the human rights of colleagues, other public officials and members of the Victorian community by raising concerns regarding circumstances that could breach those rights, and reporting any suspected breaches in accordance with procedures established by AIFL.

REFERENCES

State Services Authority Commissioner of Public Employment Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees, volunteers, students, BOM & subcontractors 2007

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Author:	Date Reviewed:	Approved By:
Sandi Collins	10/12/2009	General Manager
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Manager, Quality & Administration	10/12/2011	Data/RTO/Policies & Procedures (current)
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