

CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY & PROCEDURE

POLICY STATEMENT

Centacare exists as an expression of the social mission of the Catholic Diocese of Cairns. As representatives of the Catholic Diocese of Cairns, Centacare staff and volunteers have a unique responsibility to uphold the highest standards of conduct while practicing 'social justice through service.'

The Centacare Code of Conduct Policy establishes the five key standards of conduct expected by staff and volunteers:

- Respect for Lawful Behaviour
- Respect for Persons
- Professional and Personal Behaviour and Development
- Conflict of Interest
- Care and Diligence in Employment

Each standard is underpinned by statements that reflect and support the Vision, Purpose, Values, and Principles of Catholic Social Teaching incorporated in The Centacare Way.

Centacare FNQ staff and volunteers are guided by this Code of Conduct when performing official duties, including representing Centacare FNQ at conferences, training events, work trips and attending out of hours work related social events.

The Code of Conduct does not attempt to address all possible situations that may arise through an individual's employment or contact with Centacare. It does not exclude or replace any rights and obligations of staff under common and statute law but supplements our legal obligations.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework to guide and assist staff to identify, support and apply appropriate work behaviours, integrity and ethical conduct in order to perform their diverse roles at Centacare FNQ in accordance with [The Centacare Way](#). The Code of Conduct has been framed to support staff to integrate The Centacare Way in their everyday work.

SCOPE

This policy applies to "all members of staff" which is the common term used throughout the policy. This policy also applies to:

- All members of staff
- Volunteers
- Individuals who enter into specific relationships with Centacare FNQ for any period of time, for example, student placements and work experience.

AWARENESS OF POLICY

Centacare FNQ supports staff to meet the obligations set out in this policy through the following mechanisms:

- Clear and explicit policies and work instructions
- Training and education
- Staff Development Meetings
- IQBM II
- Other forms of internal staff communication

Staff requiring further explanation, information or assistance in understanding aspects of this policy, throughout their employment, shall seek clarification from their Line Supervisor.

DEFINITIONS

Client refers to individuals, couples, families, groups, and communities i.e. anyone who comes to Centacare FNQ seeking services.

Colleagues refers to all other Staff members and those people in other services with whom we work.

Reasonable direction is an instruction, which must fall within the ambit of the job, given by a staff member to a staff member both having the necessary knowledge, skill, capability and ability to carry out the direction and it is considered fair and reasonable to do so.

Values professional values within the professional context of Centacare FNQ, which focus on human functioning, capabilities and development.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Executive Director, Centacare FNQ is responsible for the overall development and continuous improvement of this policy. Staff in supervisory roles are responsible for the appropriate and consistent implementation of this policy. All staff are responsible for complying with this policy.

PROCEDURE

Centacare is committed to a workplace where all people; including clients, staff and other stakeholders are treated with dignity and respect at all times; where diversity is embraced; and staff uphold the highest principles of integrity.

Clients are at the centre of our organisation and meeting their needs and expectations is our purpose and is critical to enhancing the quality of wellbeing in our communities.

All staff and volunteers are expected to form a full understanding of the Code of Conduct during induction. All staff and volunteers are required to sign their commitment to the Code of Conduct upon commencement of employment. The Code of Conduct may be reviewed during line support and supervision or within the Annual Performance Appraisal discussion to ensure such understanding.

Supervisory Staff

Staff that have supervisory responsibilities are expected to be well informed and actively utilise and refer to organisational policies in the first instance to inform their decision-making. As decision-makers, they are to reflect not only on whether they are able to make an objective decision, but also on how others might perceive the process of that decision-making.

Staff with supervisory responsibilities are to:

- Take a leadership role in promoting and modelling ethical and appropriate conduct and in creating working conditions that support our values and standards.
- Recognise and acknowledge appropriate and excellent conduct.
- Provide timely and appropriate support and guidance to staff on standards of behaviour in the performance of their duties and when necessary address conduct concerns as soon as reasonably practicable.
- Ensure principles of equity, honesty and transparency are adhered to in their supervisory duties. All supervisors are to ensure performance expectations are clearly articulated, well understood and shared as common goals.
- Utilise the Code of Conduct as a reflective tool within supervision or annual performance appraisal where necessary.

All Members of Staff

All members of staff have a responsibility to follow this Code of Conduct Policy and to report activities by other staff that appear to violate laws, regulations, policies, and this Code.

Staff may ask for confidential advice, or raise a conduct concern for discussion with their supervisor or if necessary, then with any of the following people:

- Team Leader, or Manager
- Diocesan Equity Officer for conduct in relation to sexual harassment, bullying or discrimination; (see [Workplace Anti-discrimination and Harassment Policy and Procedure](#)).
- Human Resource Advisor
- Executive Director

Breaches to this Code

This policy is not intended to be punitive; however; failure to respect the Code of Conduct will be taken seriously and may result in disciplinary action. Breaches to the Code of Conduct and departures from approved policies and work instructions will be managed in accordance with the [Disciplinary Action Policy](#).

There are various ways for staff and volunteers to raise a breach. If you believe a breach of the Code has occurred, you are encouraged to raise your concerns in the first instance with the person involved, if unsuccessful then with your supervisor or manager, or with the Human Resource Advisor (in the case of the breach involving your supervisor or manager). Consult the [Staff Grievance Policy and Procedure](#) as a guide for raising a breach.

This Code does not affect your right to approach an external agency in relation to any complaint including the Fair Work Commission or Australian Human Rights Commission.

The Centacare Cairns Code of Conduct

Five Key Standards of Conduct

Staff responsibilities under the Code of Conduct fall under five key standards:

- Respect for Lawful Behaviour
- Respect for Persons
- Professional and Personal Behaviour and Development
- Conflict of Interest
- Care and Diligence in Employment

1. Respect for Lawful Behaviour

Fundamental Standard: All members of staff are to uphold the good reputation of Centacare as the social services arm of the Catholic Diocese of Cairns, and exercise judgment that serves the best interests of the organisation. Staff must act in accordance with the law.

This is demonstrated by:

- Rendering faithful service to the interests of Centacare.
- Performing agreed work in order to earn wages.
- Accepting a duty of confidentiality in all its facets across the organisation.
- Not misappropriating the property of Centacare.
- Not dishonestly securing benefits at the expense of Centacare.

All members of staff have an obligation to:

- Respect the law. Observe and comply with relevant State and Federal law and to conduct themselves in accordance with Centacare's policies and work instructions. Criminal actions risk police intervention.

- Act in a way that demonstrates respect for the reputation, viability and sustainability of Centacare FNQ;
- Respond positively to any lawful and reasonable directions given by persons who are authorised to give such a direction unless the instruction is a health and safety risk, a conflict of interest, unlawful or criminal, or does not comply with Centacare policy.
- Observe and comply with their position descriptions.
- Not misappropriate organisational funds.
- Be familiar with and comply with the relevant legislation, policies, work instructions and measures distributed by staff members with supervisory responsibilities, in order to carry out their work.
- Not cause risk to the health and safety of any person and comply with workplace health and safety requirements. For more details, refer to the Integrated [Work Health & Safety Policy](#).
- Exercise duty of care, and notify their Manager of any circumstances, charge or conviction that may conflict with standards set down under the 'Working with Children Check' issued by the Public Safety Business Agency and the National Police Certificate requirements.
- Recognise that discrimination, harassment or abuse of any kind will absolutely not be tolerated and be directed by the [Work Health & Safety](#) and [Anti-Discrimination and Harassment](#) Policies.
- Ensure capacity to perform duties is not impaired by the use of alcohol or drugs, and that the use of such substances does not put at risk you or any other person. Staff may not be intoxicated at work and may not distribute any form of medication (prescription or otherwise) to clients or staff. Staff must notify a supervisor if they are aware that work performance or conduct could be adversely affected as a result of the effect of a prescribed drug.
- Report suspected or known fraud or potential corrupt conduct.
- Be aware that criminal actions may result in termination of employment.

2. Respect for Persons

Fundamental Standard: *The Centacare Way* holds values based upon Catholic Social Teaching that underpin our work. This includes respect for the special claim of people, human dignity, association, participation, solidarity, stewardship, subsidiarity, and the common good of people. This fundamental standard informs the conduct of staff in their interactions with clients, work colleagues, visitors, groups or communities in the course of their work and extends to respect in all communication. Refer to Centacare FNQ's Practice Principles in the [Centacare Way](#), which guides staff behaviour at work.

This is demonstrated by:

- Respect for people – clients and colleagues and seeking to preserve and promote their dignity, rights and responsibilities;
- Respect for others beliefs, religious or spiritual world views, values, culture, goals, needs and desires as well as kinship and communal bonds;
- Valuing the unique cultural knowledge and skills, different knowledge systems, history, lived experience and community relationships of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander or CALD peoples, and take these into account in the making of decisions;
- Valuing in every respect, children and young people and include the welfare of children and young people as paramount in any decision-making;
- Working collaboratively with relevant people and other services;
- Effective and respectful communication.

All members of staff have an obligation to:

- Be informed by the policies that promote the safety and well-being of all people, especially children accessing its services, and be particularly mindful of children's vulnerability to the risk of abuse;
- Respect confidences shared by people in the course of their professional relationships;
- Avoid behaviour that may be reasonably perceived as harassing, intimidating, bullying or physically or emotionally threatening;

- Refrain from acting in a way that would unfairly harm the reputation and career prospects of other staff members;
- Be responsive, thoughtful and prompt in any interactions with clients, other colleagues and members of the community;
- Conduct themselves in ways that do not denigrate other agencies or their staff, or make false or misleading public statements regarding other agencies and their staff;
- Be aware of and refrain from using derogatory, outdated and unacceptable words or language that might reasonably offend someone.

3. Professional and Personal Behaviour and Development

Fundamental Standard: By virtue of becoming a staff member of Centacare, an expectation of trust and integrity is placed upon each person. All staff are expected to demonstrate professional integrity in carrying out their duties with honesty, transparency, reliability, accountability, reflective self-awareness, discernment, competence and commitment. Centacare FNQ staff will recognise opportunities for professional development and take responsibility for continually updating their skills in line with their role requirements.

This is demonstrated by:

- Behaving with dignity and responsibility and refraining from behaviour which damages their professional integrity or good standing or that of Centacare FNQ;
- Complying with organisational policies and making an active contribution of their professional expertise to policy development and implementation;
- Applying knowledge and skills in ways that prioritise the needs of others over personal gain;
- Maintaining motivation, confidence and self-esteem, and showing sensitivity, acceptance and support towards clients, colleagues and other stakeholders;
- Managing interpersonal relationships at work in such a way as to promote and maintain group harmony and well-being, as well as an inclusive and positive workplace culture;
- Making considered and ethically accountable evidence-based decisions;
- Maintaining appropriate professional/personal boundaries;
- Applying skills in work relevant to existing knowledge and seeking to gain ongoing competence through support, supervision, learning and development;
- Accepting valid and constructive feedback and recognising opportunities for improvement;
- Accountability and responsibility for information collected and kept in the course of work;
- Effective time management.

All members of staff have an obligation to:

- Encourage self-help and self-reliance to avoid creating dependency on a staff member or service;
- Relate to colleagues with respect, integrity and courtesy, seeking to understand differences in viewpoints and practice;
- Practice positive, constructive, respectful and professional communications skills employing appropriate body language, empathy and listening skills;
- Give feedback to colleagues in a constructive manner;
- Approach conflict with colleagues or supervisors in a cooperative manner that prefers a win-win approach to conflict resolution;
- Use positive and non-judgmental or non-labelling language;
- Ensure dress standards project the professional business image that is in keeping with the respect and trust of our clients and stakeholders, maintaining credibility and upholding Centacare's reputation.
- Be mindful to quality assure correspondence for completeness and accuracy prior to distribution;
- Acknowledge errors and learn from them.

4. Conflict of Interest

Fundamental Standard: Staff are expected to consciously avoid instances where a conflict, or reasonable perception of conflict, may or will occur between one's private and professional interests. Trust and integrity can be placed at risk if staff members fail to recognise and avoid:

- Conflicts between their private interests and professional responsibilities; and
- Situations where there is a reasonable basis for the perception of such a conflict.

This is demonstrated by:

- Recognising and declaring conflicts of interest when they arise; - Recognising that acceptance of a gift or benefit can create a sense of obligation that may compromise impartial and honest decision making; refer to [Conflict of Interest Policy](#).
- Recognising professional and personal boundaries within the workplace;
- Removing one-self from responsibilities or duties to which the conflict relates.

All staff have an obligation to:

- Disclose any potential, perceived or real conflict of interest to their Manager.
- Refer to [Conflict of Interest Policy](#) for further information and utilise the [Disclosure of Conflict of Interest form](#) – FGEN040 as required.

5. Care and Diligence in Employment

Fundamental Standard: In order to provide the best possible services to clients in need, Centacare aims to achieve the highest standards of excellence in all aspects of its operations. Staff contribute to the achievement of this aim through carrying out their duties efficiently and with proper consideration, care and attention demonstrating accountability for use of Centacare FNQ resources.

This is demonstrated by:

- Acting with care and diligence in the course of your work;
- The use of reasonable skill and diligence in ethical communications that are accurate; evidence-based and may be relied upon;
- Accepting responsibility for decisions and actions;
- Contributing to an environmentally responsible workplace;
- Maintaining accurate, clear and confidential records;
- Legal, ethical, sustainable, and accountable use of resources.

All members of staff have an obligation to:

- Record and manage data and information appropriately and securely including electronic and paper records;
- Do not divulge ICT passwords, login's to other people.
- Undertake responsible and accurate data collection for the purposes of ensuring positive client outcomes and organisational development;
- Seek consent from their Manager for any work-related documentation to be taken home for reading or other purposes;
- Not divulge building security code information to anyone other than those who are authorised (i.e. staff, volunteers, security personnel, cleaners);
- Not give keys provided for building access to anyone else without the express consent of the Executive Director or his/her delegated authority;
- Not access any work site outside of normal working hours without the express consent of the Manager or Executive Director or his/her delegated authority;
- Maintain appropriate security and care over the property, facilities, resources and information of the organisation;
- Be accountable for their own personal property, including taking responsibility to lock away their personal valuables. Personal property is not the responsibility of Centacare;

- Be accountable and transparent in the use of public funds – Centacare staff are responsible for keeping costs incurred to a minimum.
- Only use the organisation’s vehicles for official purposes, unless otherwise permitted by the Executive Director or delegate.
- Ensure that Centacare stationery is not utilised for personal use;
- Ensure that technology such as the Internet, mobile, facsimile or email is not used to receive, access or send pornographic, suggestive, racist, sexist or offensive material. This type of activity is strictly prohibited. Refer to [Information Technology Policy](#);
- Make ethical and responsible use of organisational and personal social media which will not result in vilification, discrimination, libel or slander, defamation of character, or adversely affect Centacare’s reputation;
- Not breach copyright and protect Centacare FNQ intellectual property through the use of branding standards when sharing resources, refer to the [Branding Standards Policy & Procedure](#).

RESOURCES

Legislation [Privacy Act 1988](#)
[National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013](#)
 Other legislation as listed in relevant policies per position

Related Documents [All Policies](#)
[All Work Instructions](#)
[Code of Conduct Commitment Form](#)
[Code of Conduct Commitment Booklet](#)

Useful Website: <http://www.aasw.asn.au/practitioner-resources/code-of-ethics>
<http://www.theaca.net.au/documents/ACA%20Code%20of%20Ethics%20v8.pdf>
<http://www.ethics.org.au/about/what-is-ethics>
[NDIS-Terms of Business for Registered Providers](#)

Useful Other:

REFERENCES:

Adopted from a range of organisational policy guidelines –per research papers.

Public Sector Ethics Act, 1994: What would you do? – An ethical case workbook, Patricia Kenyon 1999

VERSION CONTROL-IQBMII

Version No	Version Date	Status	Approval Date	Details
2.3	19/12/2017	Released	25/05/2018	Added resource links for NDIS Terms of Business for Registered Providers & NDIS legislation. Reviewed & endorsed by Management Team.
2.2	23/10/2017	Superseded	23/10/2017	Review period changed from two years to 12 months. Endorsed by Executive Director and Manager, Corporate Services.
2.1	11/09/2017	Superseded	18/10/2017	Reviewed & endorsed by Management Team. Legislation added, reformatted & saved to New 'Centacare FNQ' Policy Template IQBMII.

REVIEW FREQUENCY CYCLE Annually

Review Due Date: May 2019