



Code of Conduct

Document number: PO2025-021

Version 2

Approval

Policy owner	Executive Director, People, Culture and Safety		
Approved by	Board and State Council		
Date approved	Board: 10.12.2025 State Council: 10.12.2025	Review date	10.12.2028

Purpose

1. The Society of St Vincent de Paul (NSW) and the company titled the St Vincent de Paul Society NSW (together the Society) is committed to building a constructive culture that is consistent with our vision, mission, aspiration and values.
2. This Code of Conduct specifies expected behaviours for Society Personnel that:
 - reflect our key values of Commitment, Compassion, Respect, Integrity, Empathy, Advocacy, Courage.¹
 - are consistent with the Society's ethical and legal obligations.
 - promote child safety in line with the NSW child safe standards.
3. Consistent implementation of the Code of Conduct is intended to help maintain a safe, respectful and inclusive place of work for all members, volunteers and employees.

Scope

4. This Code of Conduct applies to all Society Personnel (including members, volunteers, and employees).
5. It should be read in conjunction with other Society policies, procedures and guidelines and any relevant professional codes.
6. This Code of Conduct applies:
 - at all work sites owned and managed by the Society, including any activities undertaken offsite as part of Society operations, such as home visitations or outreach activities
 - in connection with work, even if it occurs outside normal working hours
 - during work activities, for example when engaging with the people we assist (clients)
 - at work-related events, for example at conferences, Society supported training, events and work-related social functions
 - when Society Personnel are identifiable as a representative of the Society, including when wearing a Vinnies uniform or logo.
7. This Code of Conduct also applies to professional and personal use of all social media channels.

Related policies and procedures

8. All members, volunteers, and employees are expected to understand and follow all The Society's policies, procedures, guidelines, mission and codes; these provide further detail on expected behaviours, responsibilities, and standards of conduct and contribute to a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment. Adhering to our policies and procedures also helps ensure the Society continues to meet its legal, ethical, and professional responsibilities with integrity and care and manages risk, where relevant to the policies and procedures.

Expected Behaviours

9. All members, volunteers, and employees of the Society are expected to:

¹ The Rule, 7th Edition 2012, Australia (amended May 2014)

Society values

- acknowledge and respect the Society's faith-based heritage and Catholic social teaching principles
- promote and model the Society's values and the spirit of the Society in all interactions with the people we work with, members, volunteers, employees and the broader community
- uphold the integrity and good reputation of the Society

Respect

- treat everyone with respect, fairness, compassion, and empathy, regardless of sex, gender identity, age, race, ethnicity, language, religion, ability, sexual orientation, intersex status, or any other attribute status protected by law
- never bully, harass (including sexual harassment and sex-based harassment), victimize, discriminate against any other person
- support culturally safe and inclusive practices, including acknowledging and respecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, perspectives and protocols

Empower people we assist

- treat the people we assist with compassion and respond respectfully to each person's circumstances, including their cultural or religious background, sexual identity and age
- empower people to make informed decisions by ensuring they are aware of their rights, and are provided with information and options in a format accessible to them
- respect the privacy and individual rights to freedom of expression, self-determination, and decision-making in accordance with applicable laws and conventions
- always seek consent before taking photos or sharing someone's story publicly
- respect the belongings of the people we assist
- maintain clear professional boundaries and appropriate behaviours with the people we assist
- discuss any concerns or potential concerns regarding boundaries or conflict of interests with my Manager or Conference / Council President

Safeguard children, young people and adults at risk

- take all reasonable steps to protect children, young people and adults at risk from any form of harm or abuse
- promote the safety, participation, and empowerment of all children and young people
- respect all children and young people, value their ideas and opinions, and treat them equally and without favoritism
- immediately report any concerns about abuse or risk of harm according to the Society's Safeguarding policies

Performance of duties

- fulfil the duties, responsibilities, and performance expectations of my role
- follow any reasonable management direction
- complete required training
- carry out my work efficiently and effectively, and strive to achieve the highest standards
- immediately report any loss of license, or loss of certification or registration required for my

role to my supervisor/manager/President

- contribute to an inclusive, collaborative and productive workplace, respectful of diversity and each person's contribution
- comply with external reporting requirements in accordance with legislative requirements.

Work health and safety

- take reasonable care for their own health and safety and the safety of others who may be impacted by their actions (or failure to act)
- carry out duties consistently with the Society's Work Health and Safety policy, procedures, guidelines and relevant legislation
- be free from the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs or the misuse of prescription medication whilst working
- discuss the use of prescription medication *that may impact their ability to perform their duties safely with their Manager or Conference/Council President.*

Use of resources

- use resources responsibly, effectively, economically and sustainably
- ensure I have the required delegation to authorize expenditure or use of Society resources

Privacy and confidentiality

- respect and protect the confidentiality of all personal and sensitive information
- use client and organizational data for authorised purposes only
- maintain the integrity and security of Society intellectual property, organisational, commercial and other information.

Conflict of interest

- avoid conflicts of interest, declare them where they arise, and ensure they are appropriately managed
- declare any work (paid or unpaid) outside my Society role, which may present a conflict of interest, to my supervisor/manager/President
- use their position, authority or information responsibly, in the best interests of the Society and the people we assist
- adhere to the Society's Gifts and Hospitality Policy when accepting gifts or other benefits.

Integrity

- behave ethically, responsibly and with integrity at all times
- respectfully challenge behaviours that may be in breach of the Code of Conduct
- report dishonest, fraudulent or unlawful behaviour through the appropriate channels (see Managing Fraud and Dishonest Behaviour Policy and Whistleblower Policy).

Unacceptable Behaviours

10. The Society works with people experiencing poverty and other forms of disadvantage including children, young people and adults at risk. In this work, the following behaviours are considered breaches of our Code of Conduct:

- any form of abuse, neglect, exploitation or discrimination
- forming intimate or inappropriate relationships with a person we assist while they are engaged with the Society
- contacting any person we assist using technology or social media, unless related to official Society business
- supplying, using or sharing alcohol, drugs, or tobacco with the people we assist or interacting with people we assist while under the influence
- giving advice that is outside of one's position description
- allowing my values, cultures, gender identities, sexualities, or beliefs to negatively impact the quality of support provided
- sharing or requesting unnecessary personal information from people we assist including children and young people
- engaging in business relationships with the people we assist

In addition, when interacting with children and young people, Society Personnel should not:

- engage in any activity or behaviour likely to physically, sexually, or emotionally harm a child or young person
- be alone with a child or young person, unnecessarily
- engage in any physical contact including kissing, cuddling, lap sitting
- do things of a personal nature that a child or young person can do for themselves including toileting, dressing and personal care
- engage in favoritism, singling out, or creating "special" relationships
- show or provide children or young people with access to inappropriate images or materials
- engage in rough play, humiliation, or behaviour management practices that are degrading or inappropriate
- use physical discipline, intimidation, or threats
- take photos, video, or audio of children or young people without consent and organisational approval
- use inappropriate language in the presence of children or young people
- ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse or risk of harm

Breaches of the Code of Conduct

11. Breaches of the Code of Conduct can be serious and will be addressed. Consequences may include counselling, formal warnings, performance management, suspension, or termination,

depending on the seriousness of the breach.

Reporting a breach of the Code

12. If you believe a breach of the Code of Conduct may have arisen, you are encouraged to raise the matter with the person concerned (where you feel you can) or with the person to whom you report or someone you feel comfortable with.
13. If the breach involves your manager or the person to whom you report, you should raise the matter with an Executive Director, Regional Director or relevant Central Council President.

Review

14. This Code of Conduct and its implementation will be reviewed every three years, or on a needs basis as required to align with legislative, regulatory or practice changes.

Further assistance

15. Members and volunteers can access Society policies and procedures on the Members and Volunteers Support (MAVS) website (www.mavs.vinnies.org.au). Login to the MAVS website by clicking the logon button and navigate to the Policies page.
16. Employees can access Society policies and procedures via the Policy Hub on the Staff Portal.
17. Society Personnel should speak with their manager, supervisor or President regarding any questions about the implementation of the Code of Conduct.
18. Feedback regarding the implementation of the Code of Conduct can be provided to the Executive Director, People, Culture and Safety.

References

19. Legislation, regulations or other instruments relevant to the Code of Conduct include:
 - *Age Discrimination Act 2004* (Cth)
 - *Aged Care Act 2024* (Cth)
 - Aged Care Code of Conduct – Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission
 - Aged Care Quality Standards
 - *Anti-Discrimination Act 1977* (NSW)
 - *Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986* (Cth)
 - Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission Governance Standards
 - *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998* (NSW)
 - *Corporations Act 2001* (Cth)
 - Charter of Aged Care Rights
 - *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth)
 - *Fair Work Act 2009* (Cth)
 - *National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013* (Cth)
 - National Disability Insurance Scheme Code of Conduct 2018
 - *Children’s Guardian Act 2019* (NSW)
 - NDIS Code of Conduct 2018 – NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission
 - Vinnies NDIS Code of Conduct

- *Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)* including the Australian Privacy Principles
- *Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)*
- *Racial Hatred Act 1995 (Cth)*
- *Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)*
- *State Insurance and Care Governance Act 2015 (NSW)*
- *Treasury Laws Amendment (Enhancing Whistleblower Protection) Act 2018 (Cth)*
- *Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (NSW)*
- *Work Health and Safety Regulation 2017 (NSW)*
- *Workers Compensation Act 1987 No 70 (NSW)*
- Work Health and Safety Codes of Practice
- *Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 (NSW)* and Regulation 2013

Approval and amendment history

Version	Approval authority	Date	Amendment summary
Doc # NA	State Council	13.08.2013	NA
Doc # PO2020-021	Board & State Council	08.04.2020 & 22.04.2020	New Code of Conduct developed. Previous Code of Conduct rescinded.
Doc # PO2020-021 Version 2	Executive Director, Corporate Services	27.07.2020	Policy ownership updated to align to organisational structure changes.
Doc # PO2022-021	Board & State Council	04.08.2022 17.08.2022	Desktop review conducted – nomenclature updated and additional text on Safeguarding vulnerable people and safeguarding vulnerable children and young people.
Doc # 2025-021	Executive Leadership Team Board and State Council	03.12.2025 10.12.2025	Restructure of the content to make it easier to read, reduce repetition and follow a logical structure highlighting expected behaviours and unacceptable behaviours. Integrate sections on vulnerable adults and children into sections on expected behaviours and unacceptable behaviours. Inclusion of a new section on Work, Health and Safety.
Doc # 2025-021 Version 2	Executive Director, People Culture and Safety	28.01.2026	Text inserted informing members, volunteers and paid staff where to access Society policies and procedures.

Appendix 1: Definitions

Bullying	Workplace bullying is <i>repeated</i> and <i>unreasonable</i> behaviour directed towards a person or a group of people that <i>creates a risk to health and safety</i> . (<i>WHS Act 2011 and Fair Work Act 2009</i>).
Child and Young Person	In this document ‘child’ means persons between the ages 0-15, a ‘young person’ is any person between the ages 16-17.
Child abuse	Any non-accidental act or acts that endangers a child’s health, wellbeing or development. This includes behaviour by parents, caregivers, other adults or older adolescents that entails a substantial risk of causing physical or emotional harm to a child or young person. Child abuse can be physical, emotional, sexual, or through exposure to domestic or family violence. Child abuse can be intentional or unintentional and can include acts of omission (i.e. neglect) and commission (i.e. abuse).
Child Safe/Child Safe Culture	Child Safe means: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adopting strategies and taking action to promote child wellbeing and prevent harm to children and young people • placing children’s participation, safety and wellbeing at the centre of practice by building a culture in alignment with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and NSW Child Safe Standards.
Safeguarding children, young people, and vulnerable adults	Actions, policies and procedures that create and maintain protective environments for children, young people and vulnerable adults, including to protect them from exploitation and abuse of all kinds.
Child Safe Organisation	An organisation in NSW that is captured by the definition in Schedule 6 of the Children’s Guardian Act child safe organisation means 1 of the following— <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) an entity mentioned in Schedule 1 (b) a religious body— <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (i) that provides services to children, or (ii) in which adults have contact with children, (c) a local government authority, (d) a club or other body providing programs or services of a recreational or sporting nature for children and in which workers are required to hold a working with children check clearance under the Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012, (e) an entity, or part of an entity, prescribed by the regulations for this definition.
Conflict of interest	
<i>Actual</i>	Where there is a direct conflict of interest between the private interests of an individual and the performance of their official duties and responsibilities.
<i>Potential</i>	Where a person has private interests that could interfere with the performance of their official duties and responsibilities in the future.
<i>Perceived</i>	Where it might appear to others that a person’s private interest could inappropriately influence the performance of official duties and responsibilities, whether or not this is in fact the case.

Discrimination	<p>Discrimination is treating, or proposing to treat, someone unfavourably because they have, or are assumed to have, a particular characteristic protected by law.</p> <p>Personal characteristics or attributes protected under federal and state law include: race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, descent, ethnic or ethno-religious or national origin, social origin, age, medical record, criminal record, marital or relationship status, pregnancy or potential pregnancy, breastfeeding, family or carer responsibilities, impairment, mental, intellectual or psychiatric disability, physical disability, nationality, sexual orientation, gender identity, transgender or intersex status, trade union membership or activity, or association with someone who has, or is assumed to have, one of these characteristics.</p>
Harassment	<p>Workplace harassment is any behaviour that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is unwelcome and unsolicited • the person considers offensive, intimidating, humiliating or threatening • a reasonable person would consider offensive, humiliating, intimidating or threatening.
Member	The term Member includes Conference, Associate and Volunteer members as per The Rule.
Person we assist	People we assist 18 years of age and older, receiving Society services, whether those services are financial or non-financial, and whether those services are delivered in the person's home, in a formal setting or elsewhere.
Reportable conduct	<p>Defined by Children's Guardian Act 2019, as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reportable conduct means the following conduct, whether or not a criminal proceeding in relation to the conduct has been commenced or concluded—a sexual offence, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sexual misconduct, including grooming, • ill-treatment of a child, • neglect of a child, • an assault against a child, • an offence under section 43B or 316A of the Crimes Act 1900, behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child.
Sex-based harassment	Sex-based harassment is unwelcome conduct based on a person's sex (but not sexual in nature) that a reasonable person would see as offensive, humiliating, or intimidating. It can include sexist remarks, insults, intrusive questions, inappropriate jokes, displaying sexist materials, or pressuring someone to engage in degrading behaviour.
Sexual harassment	Sexual harassment is unwelcome sexual behaviour—such as advances, requests to go out, suggestive comments or jokes or conduct—that a reasonable person would see as offensive, humiliating, or intimidating. It can be physical, verbal or written, and includes unwanted touching, sexual jokes or comments, displaying sexual material, intrusive questions, or criminal acts like assault or stalking. A single incident is enough to constitute sexual harassment. It is prohibited in the workplace, at work events, and between colleagues in work-related contexts.
Society Personnel	All Society Personnel including members, volunteers, employees, office holders and Directors. This policy does not distinguish between the roles and responsibilities of paid and unpaid Society Personnel unless specifically prescribed by relevant legislation.
Volunteer	A volunteer is any person who performs unpaid work for the Society.

Vulnerable adults	<p>People who may be considered vulnerable adults:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • people we assist 18 years of age and older, receiving Society services, whether those services are financial or non-financial, and whether those services are delivered in the person’s home, a formal setting or elsewhere • people experiencing situations or circumstances of vulnerability, including but not limited to homelessness or domestic violence people with mental health conditions, impaired intellectual or physical functioning • people from a low socioeconomic background • people who are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders • English as a second language • people with low levels of literacy or education • people subject to modern slavery, which involves human exploitation and control, such as forced labour, debt bondage, human trafficking, and child labour.
Work	<p>Work includes any Society-related activities engaged in by Society Personnel, wherever they occur. Work is not limited to the confines of a physical workplace, but includes offsite activities, such as home visitations, remote work, and attendance at conferences, functions, and work-related events, including retreats and Society social events.</p>
Workplace (also ‘at work’)	<p>Workplace applies to all sites owned and managed by the Society, including any activities undertaken offsite as part of Society operations, such as home visitations, it is not limited to the confines of a physical workplace.</p> <p>The workplace also includes remote work, attendance at work-related conferences or functions, and attendance at client or other work-related events, including retreats and social events.</p>



CODE OF CONDUCT AGREEMENT

As a member, volunteer, or employee of the **St Vincent de Paul Society NSW**, I agree to abide by the Society’s **Code of Conduct**. I understand that this Code of Conduct supplements my legal and policy obligations as a member, volunteer, or employee of the Society. If I am between **14 and 18 years of age**, I confirm that a parent, guardian, or responsible adult has reviewed the Code of Conduct with me and has signed below.

Name (Capital letters)

.....

Signature.....

Position title

Position location

Date

Name of Parent, Guardian or Responsible Adult

.....

Signature of Parent, Guardian or Responsible Adult

.....

(If applicable)

I confirm I have explained the Code of Conduct to the named individual above.

Date