Code of Conduct

Our Mission

The Society is a lay Catholic organisation that aspires to live the gospel message by serving Christ in the poor with love, respect, justice, hope, and joy; to shape a more just and compassionate society.

Fundamental Principle

Our Conference Members, Volunteer Members & Staff are bonded together by the seven key values of the St Vincent de Paul Society Northern Territory in striving to achieve our vision and mission.

We work together in an environment where our people have a shared understanding of how we behave towards each other, the individuals, and communities we serve, our supporters and all those we are in contact with through our good works.

Key Values

The Code of Conduct is supported by the key values of the St Vincent de Paul Society as contained in "The Rule", a publication written for Society Conference Members to articulate the Vincentian vision. These values underpin our role as a caring Catholic charity offering a "hand up" to people in need.

This Code reflects our commitment to working in a just, ethical and responsible manner with all those we engage with day to day, including each other. It establishes guidelines for behaviour and supplements the various legal responsibilities which the Society must meet.

All Society members, volunteers and staff including contractors, business partners, third parties and Board members are required to act in accordance with this Code of Conduct. The Code applies to all engagement with the Society and interactions in person and online environments with children, clients, members of the public and other members, volunteers and staff.

Commitment

Be loyal in service to our mission, vision and values.

We show our Commitment by

- working together to provide a hand up to people in need
- believing we all have a role to play in making a difference to the lives of those who are disadvantaged
- supporting the Society with taking a caring Catholic approach to delivering the Church's message of love
- embracing the key values in all we do while facilitating the good works of the Society
- doing what we can to build a solid sense of community amongst our people
- preserving the spirit of youth characterized by our enthusiasm, adaptability and creativity.
- Continually safeguarding children and vulnerable adults
- Participating effectively in training and information programs offered by the Society

We do not

- behave in a manner that detracts from the Society's vision and mission
- ignore or undermine the Society's key values as we perform our roles
- act in a way that harms the reputation of the Society.

Compassion

Serving all with understanding, without judgement.

We show Compassion by

- supporting those in need, no matter how distressed or disadvantaged they may be
- sharing our hope and encouraging people to take control of their own destiny
- listening to the stories of those seeking help so as to discern the best way of meeting their needs
- treating people as we would like to be treated
- recognising the value and dignity of the people we assist by acknowledging the presence of Christ in each person
- creating an environment in which the person seeking help is at ease and feels safe in relating their stories
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of clients who are children and vulnerable adults particularly if they communicate (verbally or non- verbally) that they do not feel safe or well
- accepting people as they are, treating them with respect and courtesy, and without discrimination.

We do not

- ignore people when they ask for help
- insult or belittle others
- unfairly judge or criticise others including allowing our own values or beliefs to negatively impact the quality of support provided.

Respect

Serve all regardless of creed, ethnic or social background, health, gender, or political opinions.

We show Respect by

- treating everyone fairly, courteously and with dignity
- respecting cultural, ethnic, religious and other differences
- promoting equality, inclusion and culturally safe practices in all we do
- being honest in our communications
- valuing each other's contributions and giving support and encouragement
- working to resolve conflicts and disagreements that arise
- doing what we can to achieve a harmonious work environment
- accepting that all those who seek help are worthy of our time and assistance and responding to requests for support in a timely and respectful manner
- respecting the privacy of people and their right to freedom of expression, self-determination and decision-making in line with applicable laws and conventions
- maintaining clear personal and professional boundaries
- understanding that there is an inherent power imbalance between clients/ companions seeking assistance and members, volunteers and staff and taking reasonable steps to protect clients (children and adults) particularly those who may be at higher risk of abuse or harm
- immediately reporting incidents and any concerns about abuse or harm to clients (children or adults).

We do not

- behave in an aggressive or intimidating manner
- behave in a way or engage in any activity that may cause physical, sexual, or emotional harm to a client (child or adult) including:
    - being alone with a client
    - using inappropriate language
    - showing favouritism

- providing access to or showing inappropriate images
- interacting with a client while under the influence of alcohol or prohibited drugs
- doing things of a personal nature that a client can do for themselves e.g. personal care
- contacting any client using technology or social media, unless related to official Society business
- having unnecessary physical contact or engaging in any form of sexual act including kissing, cuddling, lap sitting]
- engage the client in any sexual act or inappropriate personal or business relationship dismiss someone's ideas or beliefs.

- disrespect someone's privacy
- spread gossip
- discriminate based on nationality, race, culture, health, gender, age, social background, sexual orientation, religious beliefs or political opinions
- engage in other forms of unacceptable or unlawful behaviour including harassment, bullying or victimisation.

Integrity

Promote and follow our mission, vision and values.

We act with Integrity by

- taking a positive and proactive approach to the work we do
- being honest and transparent in our decision-making
- disclosing any actual or potential conflict of interest
- complying with laws and Society policies at all times, including record keeping and confidentiality
- respecting the privacy of others
- using the Society's resources, including IT, properly, appropriately and in line with the Code of Conduct
- acting in the best interests of the Society
- managing the physical and online risks involved in our services, operations and engagement with clients (children and adults) and Society members, volunteers and staff
- reporting any observed non-compliance with this Code
- being aware of the position of trust we hold and the obligations
- wearing appropriate attire when representing the Society ensuring our appearance reflects our respect for clients and ensures they feel safe and valued in our presence

We do not

- behave in a way that could cause abuse or harm to clients (children or adults) or their families
- engage in fraudulent or criminal behaviour such as stealing or other unlawful conduct
- make false or misleading statements or give advice beyond our knowledge and responsibilities
- disclose any information that is confidential to the Society
- seek or accept gifts which might compromise the manner in which we fulfil our roles
- ignore wrongdoing

- take images of clients without their and/or as appropriate their guardians informed written consent
- supply, use or share alcohol, drugs or tobacco with clients
- undertake work for the Society or interact with clients while under the influence of alcohol or prohibited drugs
- contact clients using technology or social media, unless related to official Society business
- share or request unnecessary personal information from clients or their families
- ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed abuse or harm to children or vulnerable adult
- victimise anyone raising a breach of this Code or reporting an incident or concern in good faith.

Empathy

Foster relationships based on respect, trust and friendship.

We show Empathy by

- recognizing each person is unique and has value in God's eyes
- establishing relationships based on trust and friendship
- seeking to understand those who we serve and each other
- seeing things from the perspectives of others
- acknowledging you have heard and understood the story you have been told and responding respectfully.

We do not

- take advantage of vulnerable people
- allow our beliefs and personal experiences to cloud our relationships with those seeking help
- exclude those who have a genuine desire or need to be part of our community.

Advocacy

Work to transform the causes of poverty and challenge the causes of human injustice.

We demonstrate Advocacy by

- exchanging knowledge and information, inline with the privacy act, that will assist with serving the poor
- seeking to strengthen our relationships with government and other charitable organisations
- speaking up for those of us who are unable or not comfortable with doing so themselves
- supporting those excluded from society by rejecting attitudes that impact on their dignity
- promoting the human rights, safety and well-being of clients
- encouraging feedback and participation of clients (including children, their families and adults) in decisions that affect them, their care and the Society's programs, policies and services
- encourage feedback on the Society's policies, services and processes.

We do not

- agree that poverty is inevitable
- support organisations whose values contradict with our own ethos and mission
- act in a manner that undermines the Society's commitment to social justice.

Courage

Encourage spiritual growth, welcome innovation and give hope for the future.

We show Courage by

- personal reflection and spiritual growth as we perform our work in serving the poor
- learning from the opportunities we are given so we can develop our capabilities
- learning from and reviewing incidents and complaints to identify systemic issues and areas for improvement collaborating with others to achieve goals
- generating and supporting innovation to improve the Society's good works
- actively supporting the safety, health and well−being of our people and others we interact with
- taking pride in what we do
- creating an environment which encourages change and a better future
- recognising the importance of enjoying what we do for the Society.

We do not

- refuse to improve our performance where there is a genuine reason to do so
- undermine the contributions of others
- ignore safety requirements in the workplace
- lose sight of all that has been achieved through the Society's good works and the need to continue serving in hope.

Feedback on the Code of Conduct and implementation can be provided to a manager, supervisor or Conference President or directly to the Northern Territory Chief Executive Officer (NT CEO).

As a member, volunteer or staff member of the St Vincent de Paul Society Northern Territory or SVDP Housing, I agree to behave and act in a way that is in line with this Code of Conduct.

I will report breaches of the Code of Conduct NT to the Chief Operating Officer and NT Chief Executive Officer.

I understand that breaching the Code of Conduct may lead to disciplinary action or termination of my role in the Society. I understand that this Code of Conduct supplements the various legal and policy obligations I have as a member, volunteer or staff member of the Society.

Full name……

Position Title ……

Service/ Program or Location……

Signature……..

Date……..

Contact us

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