

CODE OF CONDUCT – Employees and Volunteers

Scope and Purpose

This Code of Conduct applies to all workers of Inclusion Melbourne, including employees, volunteers, third-party contractors and sets out the expected standards of behaviour. It forms part of the employment contract for employees and provides guidance for volunteers. The Code reflects the basic requirements of professionalism, integrity and courtesy needed to ensure that a quality service is provided to the people we support and all other stakeholders.

Its purpose is to help workers understand the minimum standards of behaviour expected of them, ensuring that a pleasant, professional and safe working environment exists for all workers and that Inclusion Melbourne's organisational values are upheld.

Guiding values and Framework

Inclusion Melbourne's values guide the conduct of all workers as they provide support to the people served by the organisation. All volunteers, staff and service users have shared expectations that all parties will uphold the organisation's values and seek to provide exceptional service.

Integrity: Performing responsibilities and duties honestly and efficiently, respecting the rights of the people we support, colleagues and all other stakeholders, including members of the community.

Potential: Ensuring that we provide the people we support with opportunities to build skills and live inclusively and independently.

Individuality: Recognising and understanding the unique attributes and abilities of the people we support to ensure the service provided to them meets their individual wants and needs.

Relationships: Developing and maintaining a mutually positive and professional relationship with the people we support, all staff and volunteers, and the wider community.

Inclusion Melbourne's Code of Conduct is underpinned by the National Disability Insurance Scheme (Code of Conduct) Rules 2018 and aligns with the National Standards for Involving Volunteers.

Shared Expectations

Inclusion Melbourne will function effectively and provide quality services when there is a shared expectation between Inclusion Melbourne and its workers.

Obligations of Inclusion Melbourne to Workers

The organisation has an obligation to behave in a fair and reasonable manner towards all workers, and it is committed to meeting the following worker expectations:

- Equal opportunities for engagement and support
- Impartial and open selection and appointment procedures
- Fair rates of remuneration for skills, responsibilities and performance
- Up-to-date job descriptions that provide clear statements of staff duties and expectations
- Adequate training and equipment to complete staff duties
- Regular and appropriate feedback on staff work performance
- Effective communication of information
- Pleasant and safe working conditions
- Freedom from bullying, harassment or discrimination in the workplace
- Appropriate procedures for feedback, complaints, staff disciplinary and disputes

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Distinction Between Employees and Volunteers

To ensure clarity between employees and volunteers, Inclusion Melbourne recognises the following distinctions:

- Employees are engaged under a contract of employment and are remunerated accordingly
- Volunteers are engaged in an unpaid capacity and contribute their time freely, without expectation of payment.
- The term “role description” will be used to volunteers, rather than “position description”

Additionally, volunteers will sign a volunteer agreement that outlines expectations and confirms their role as an unpaid worker.

Worker Responsibilities:

Inclusion Melbourne expects all workers, including employees and volunteers to:

1. Act with respect for individual rights to freedom of expression, self-determination, and decision-making in accordance with relevant laws and conventions
2. Respect the privacy of all people and maintain confidentiality at all times
3. Provide supports and services in a safe and competent manner with care and skill
4. Act with integrity, honesty, and transparency, including charging appropriate fees for services
5. Promptly take steps to raise and act on concerns about matters that might have an impact on the quality and safety of supports provided to people with a disability
6. Take all reasonable steps to prevent and respond to all forms of violence, exploitation, neglect, and abuse of people with a disability
7. Take all reasonable steps to prevent and respond to sexual misconduct
8. Maintain appropriate relationships with those they work with and support
9. Comply with relevant policies and procedure related to behaviour and conduct

1. Act with respect for individuals’ rights to freedom of expression, self-determination, and decision-making in accordance with relevant laws and conventions.

Workers are expected to:

- Support participants to make choices and exercise control over their own lives
- Engage with participants that enable them to have choice and control over supports and who supports them
- Deliver services in a way that maintains the rights, standards and principles underpinning the NDIS
- Provide appropriate support to participants to enable them to make their own decisions.
- Consult with participants to determine if they require (Legal Guardian or children and young people) or want to involve any one in discussions and decisions about their services and supports and if so who may be appropriate.
- Communicate in a form, language and manner that enables people with a disability to understand the information and make known their will and preferences

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2. Respect the privacy of all, participants, co-workers, stakeholders, both internal and external and maintain confidentiality at all times

Inclusion Melbourne acknowledges and respects the privacy of individuals' and adheres to the Health Records Act 2001; Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic) including the Privacy Principles, the Information Privacy Act 2014; The Privacy Act 1988 (Cth), including the Australian Privacy Principles, and the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Act 2013. These control the way Inclusion Melbourne collects, stores, uses and discloses personal information.

Workers are expected to:

- Sign a confidentiality and privacy agreement upon commencement of employment and as amended from time to time by Inclusion Melbourne.
- Use or disclose personal information only for the purpose for which it is collected.
- Take reasonable steps to protect personal information from; misuse, loss and unauthorised access, modification and disclosure and ensure it is stored securely.
- Take reasonable steps to make sure that the personal information collected, used or disclosed is accurate, terminology remains professional, complete, up-to-date and destroyed or de-identified once it is no longer required for the purpose it was held.
- Explain the following to the participant and or worker should they request it:
 - What information will be held
 - Who will have access to this information
 - How IM will ensure it is secure
 - How the information will be used
 - How to access and amend the information held about them
 - How to make a complaint if they feel IM has breached their privacy obligations.
- Be aware of and adhere to privacy needs and preferences of their participants and deliver services in a way that maintains personal dignity by maintaining confidentiality, explaining and requesting permission to perform procedures that involve physical touch or the invasion of personal space
- Keep accurate, up-to-date and legible records that report relevant details of service history, medication and support needs
- Detail any allegations and incidents that may have occurred, including alleged breaches of the Code, where they were involved in, witnessed or information of these
- Record any other issues that may have arisen while providing services
- Ensure records are created at the time of the event or action, or as soon as possible afterwards.

3. Provide supports and services in a safe and competent manner with care and skill

Workers are expected to:

- Obtain and maintain the expertise and competence necessary for their role and supports and services delivered.
- Adopt the values underpinning the NDIS, including choice and control and person-centred approaches.

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- Participate in ongoing professional development or training sessions to further enhance their skills and experience.
- Follow documented processes to provide feedback to assist in the improvement of workplace safety.
- Support participants in line with Support Plans and seek guidance from appropriate team leaders or managers should further consultation with families, carers, advocates and other supports be required to clarify cultural expectations when these are unclear or not currently being met.
- Respect religious or spiritual beliefs and practices that are different to your own while ensuring the expression of this respect does not result in harm or the contravention of the rights of others.
- Ensure cultures, identities and attributes that are different from your own are acknowledged and respected.

4. Act with integrity, honesty and transparency

All interactions with co-workers, stakeholders and participants should be honest, fair and impartial and not financially exploit any party.

Workers are expected to:

- Treat all the people we support, colleagues, stakeholders and the public with courtesy, respect and professionalism at all times.
- Conduct themselves in a manner that have a positive outcome on Inclusion Melbourne's reputation
- Provide accurate information about themselves to Inclusion Melbourne and the participants in relation to their qualifications, work experience and criminal history.
- Strictly avoid participating in or promoting sharp practices (taking advantage of people, including over-servicing, high pressure sales and inducements etc). This also applies to Key Personnel.
- Communicate in a language, form, manner and tone that is honest and enables people with a disability to understand the information provided and to make their preferences known
- Be accountable to correct any misinformation to maintain honesty and transparency
- Accurately define and document what services and supports are required in line with the participant's goals and choices through timely written feedback, notes, observed progress for applicable roles
- Charge the appropriate prices for services based on care plans and participants needs
- Raise any concerns about over billing participants using the Complaints and Feedback process
- Show respect for an individual's cultural and linguistic background, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage, age, gender identity, sexual orientation and abilities.

5. Promptly take steps to raise and act on concerns about matters that may impact the quality and safety of work, supports and services provided within Inclusion Melbourne

All workers and participants have a right to safe and quality work environment, supports and services. OH&S, Complaints, Incident and reporting frameworks are in place to support workers to do this.

Workers are expected to:

- Take immediate action when an issue is identified or raised

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- Follow Inclusion Melbourne Incident Reporting frameworks at all times to ensure that all issues are addressed and documented
- Contribute to improving supports and services by identifying improvements, potential risks and communicating these before they are a concern
- Contribute to improving the complaints, incident and reporting frameworks and utilise these frameworks when the need arises. This includes reporting incidents that raise concerns about the support provided by another colleague, worker, volunteer, family member, carer, people with a disability or a community member.
- Encourage all participants and stakeholders to raise any concerns through the agreed frameworks to assist with acceptance of the process and reduce concern around providing feedback
- Not take adverse action against anyone who lodges a complaint or incident report concerning them
- Take all allegations of abuse seriously and cooperate with internal/external investigations that need to occur as part of an incident or complaints management process

6. Take all reasonable steps to prevent and respond to all forms of violence, neglect, exploitation and abuse

Workers are expected to:

- Not commit or participate in any form of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation of people with disability. There is zero tolerance for this kind of behaviour at Inclusion Melbourne.
- Support participants in line with Support Plans and provide timely, effective feedback should the Support Plan require review.
- Adhere to Inclusion Melbourne policies and relevant laws and fully cooperate in relation to incidents of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation.
- Identify and respond to situations that could lead to violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation to reduce the probability of this occurring
- Report incidents of violence, exploitation, neglect or abuse using Inclusion Melbourne incident reporting frameworks.
- Identify and report restrictive practices, as well as contributing to their reduction and elimination.
- Always report to your supervisor if you have any reason to believe the person you are supporting has been abused, exploited, harassed or neglected, to ensure they receive appropriate support (for example, medical support, counselling and support to report abuse to the police). This includes reporting illegitimate instances of guardianship and gatekeeping.

7. Take all reasonable steps to prevent and respond to sexual misconduct

Workers must not engage in sexual abuse or misconduct and must report any such conduct by other workers, people with a disability, family members, carers or community members.

Workers are expected to:

- Identify situations or scenarios that may put people at risk of being involved with sexual misconduct and address these with their Manager

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- Report any instance of potential sexual misconduct and abuse
- Recognise the power imbalance between employment roles, and between participants and care staff and adjust your behaviour accordingly to reduce the risk of sexual abuse or misconduct or inappropriate behaviour
- Never engage in any sexual conduct with a person who you work with or support, including actions committed by force, intimidation, coercion or manipulation
- Never engage in any form of sexual activity or behaviour with a person who you work with or support. This includes sexual advances and sexual, personal or erotic comments.

8. Maintain appropriate relationships with those they work with and support.

All workers should recognise the sensitivity of working with vulnerable people and show respect for, and protect, their dignity.

Workers are expected to:

- Have a professional relationship with the people they support. As such, staff must not have a sexual, family or financial relationship with the people they support.
- Inform their supervisor if they begin to work with or for any person to whom they are related or with whom they have previously had a personal or financial relationship.

9. Comply with reasonable and lawful instruction and the policies and procedures of Inclusion Melbourne including but not limited to:

- a. The Conditions of Employment related to alcohol and drugs
- b. Computer and IM Property usage
- c. Health and Safety of those we work with and support
- d. Bullying, Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Assault Policy and Procedures
- e. Utilisation of training opportunities

Disciplinary Action and Volunteer Conduct

If an employee fails to meet the Code of Conduct, disciplinary procedures outlined in the employment contract will apply.

If a volunteer fails to meet the Code of Conduct, Inclusion Melbourne may:

- Provide feedback and support to address the issue.
- Conduct a review of their role and suitability.
- Terminate the relationship between the volunteer and Inclusion Melbourne if the conduct is deemed inappropriate and/or detrimental to high-quality service delivery.

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Declaration

I understand the requirements placed on me by Inclusion Melbourne under the provisions of the Principles contained in the Privacy Act 2001 in relation to all the people we support, staff and volunteers, and information related to business operations and associated third parties.

I understand that any breach of these practices by me will be subject to disciplinary action as outlined in the Inclusion Melbourne disciplinary procedure policy or letter / contract of employment or engagement and that my relationship with Inclusion Melbourne may be terminated.

I acknowledge that I have read and agree to abide by the conditions as set out in this *Code of Conduct for Employees and Volunteers*.

Name of employee/volunteer

**Signature of
employee/volunteer**

Date _____

Please note this document forms part of the contract of employment.