

Code of Conduct Policy

Policy Statement:

Personal And Professional Behaviour

Expectations

- All staff shall follow the Occupational Health and Safety requirements, relevant Government Regulations and Legislation and appropriate professional standards.

Behaviour Outside Hours of Duty

- Staff shall conduct their personal affairs in a manner that does not affect their official duties. Staff shall be aware that their activity or behaviour outside of working hours could bring the integrity of the hospital into disrepute.

Alcohol and Drugs

- Alcoholic beverages shall not be consumed on any campus of Latrobe Regional Hospital, except in special circumstances approved by the Chief Executive. Staff shall not allow the consumption of alcohol or drugs to adversely affect their work performance or official conduct.

Personal Presentation

- In order to promote a professional image that enhances the clinical and technical services and promotes a positive corporate image, all staff members shall maintain a high standard of grooming and personal presentation.
- All staff members shall be required to wear full issue of uniform where one is provided by the hospital
- Staff identification badges shall be worn at all times when the staff member is working at the hospital.
- On special occasions, such as Christmas and Jeans for Genes Day, the Chief Executive may approve non-compliance with the Uniform Protocol. Notification from the Chief Executive shall be via memorandum or e-mail.

Interaction with Colleagues

- Staff shall work cooperatively with colleagues, support and learn from each other and accept differences in personal style.
- Staff shall respect, and seek when necessary, the professional opinions of colleagues in their area of competence, and acknowledge their contribution.
- All nursing staff shall behave in a manner consistent with the Australian Nursing Council Incorporated (ANCI) Competencies (*refer to links below*).

Ethical behaviour

- All staff shall be committed to the Core Values of the hospital: Customer Focus, Integrity, Excellence and Working Together.
- Staff shall comply with all lawful and reasonable directions given. Complaints arising out of such directions shall be discussed, and attempted to be resolved, with your manager. Staff dissatisfied with the outcome can lodge a personal grievance to have the matter resolved. Staff must continue to carry out any lawful and reasonable directions that may be given until the matter is resolved (*Refer to Grievance/Disciplinary Policy*).
- Staff are encouraged to report to a manager any behaviour by another employee they consider to be unethical. This may include behaviour that you believe violates any law, rule or regulation or represents corrupt conduct, substantial mismanagement of public resources, or is a danger to public health or safety or to the environment. Reports of such shall be protected against reprisals providing the claim is based on a reasonable belief, is reported to an appropriate person and is not vexatious (*Refer to Equal Employment Opportunity Policy, Whistleblowers Policy*).

Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO)

- Staff decision making and professional conduct shall be consistent with the provisions of Equal Opportunity legislation. Staff shall ensure they observe the EEO principles, exhibit appropriate behaviours and provide a work environment free from harassment (including sexual), bullying and discrimination.
- Material that is fraudulent, harassing, embarrassing, sexually explicit, profane, obscene, intimidating, defamatory or otherwise unlawful or inappropriate must not

be sent by e-mail or other forms of electronic communication or displayed or stored on computer (*Refer to Information Technology Policy regarding Internet usage*).

Use of Official Resources

- Staff shall ensure that all resources within their area of responsibility are used effectively and economically in the course of their duties.
- Staff shall use facilities and equipment including computers, e-mail, Internet access and mobile phones for official purposes only, unless your manager has given you permission for limited private use. This private use may have been granted to enable you to better manage the balance between your work and private commitments.
- The hospital retains the copyright of work produced by staff during their employment. Staff may retain the copyright of work produced only if approved by the employer, or if it can be demonstrated that the employer's time, name, information or resources were not used in producing the work.

Use and Release Of Information

Public comment

- Whilst it is recognised that staff have the right as an individual to make public comment, staff shall not reveal confidential information in public. Information of a confidential nature shall not be used by any staff member in any public comment without the prior approval of the Chief Executive.
- Approval from the Chief Executive or relevant Care Program Director shall be required before staff approach the media, or respond to media approaches on any issues. (*Refer to Policies relating to Release of Information*).

Security of Information

- Patient and staff-related information is confidential. Any information regarding patients and/or a service shall not be conveyed to another person, without appropriate authorisation. All staff shall comply with legislative requirements in respect to policies relating to Confidentiality and Privacy.
- Confidentiality with respect to Business / Finance information and security of Systems Information (Information Technology) shall be adhered to by all staff.
- Staff may disclose official information that is normally given to members of the public seeking that information. If releasing information under the Victorian Freedom of Information Act 1982, staff are protected against legal action under Section 62 and 63 of the Act.

Personal Information

- Staff may collect, use and disclose any personal information that is necessary for the performance of their work or required by law. Consent shall be obtained from individuals concerned to use sensitive information such as racial or ethnic origin, political views, religious beliefs, sexual preferences or criminal record. Staff must ensure that the information is accurate, complete and up to date (*Refer to Privacy Principles Policy*).
- Staff shall take reasonable steps to protect personal information from misuse and loss, and from unauthorised access, modification or disclosure. People shall be advised that they have a right to access their personal information and seek corrections to it.

Attending Court

- Staff may be summonsed, subpoenaed or called as a witness or juror at a court of law or any legally constituted inquiry. If this occurs, staff shall immediately advise their Manager and, unless otherwise exempted, attend the court or inquiry as specified.
- Staff attending court in an official capacity, under a subpoena or order, to give evidence or to produce papers, shall pay any fees received to the hospital. Staff are entitled to provide an account and vouchers of all the necessary expenses, if any, incurred in the performance of such duty and shall be reimbursed if approved/appropriate.

Participation in Seminars and Related Activities

- Staff shall obtain the prior approval of their Manager before addressing or chairing seminars (in their official capacity) organised by professional conference organisers (*Refer to Policy relating to Education and Professional Development*).

- Staff shall pay any fee received for any seminar participation in their professional capacity (and in paid hours) to the hospital, unless specifically exempted in writing by the Chief Executive.

Conflict Of Interest

- Staff shall act in the public interest and not any manner designed to gain unfair advantage for themselves or for other individuals, family, friends or business acquaintances. This particularly applies with respect to obtaining contracts or purchasing of goods and services.
- A declaration of private interests is required of chief executives, their immediate deputies, heads of divisions and any employee holding a financial delegation in excess of \$20,000. It is also required of part-time non-executive directors and members of statutory authorities, advisory committees and the boards of Government Business Enterprises. The chief executive may also require a declaration of any other employee engaged in a role where there is potential for a conflict of interest to arise such as where they are involved in the selection of major tenders. These declarations should be made upon appointment, annually and whenever circumstances change.
- Staff shall disclose in writing to the Chief Executive, any pecuniary or other personal interest held by them, which could lead to a potential conflict of interest between private activities and official duties.

Gifts and Benefits

- Staff shall not seek to accept favours or gifts for services performed in connection with official duties. Staff shall not use their position to encourage or obtain a private benefit (*Refer to policies relating to gifts and donations*).

Financial Probity And Accountability

- Staff shall ensure that in financial matters, including the handling of monies, there is full accountability in relation to any advice or transaction in which they may be involved. Staff with responsibilities of a financial nature shall act in accordance with the financial policies of the hospital and shall observe the relevant legislative and regulatory requirements.

Criminal Offences

- Staff shall immediately inform their manager if charged with a criminal offence punishable by imprisonment or, if found guilty, would significantly affect his/her ability to perform normal duties; eg a charge of drink driving where the employee is required to drive a vehicle in the normal course of work. Staff shall inform their manager of any criminal offence of which they have been found guilty before or during their public employment, except where the offence is covered by a prescribed spent convictions scheme.

Outside Employment

- Staff shall not engage in outside employment, or conduct a business, trade or profession, outside the hospital, while employed by the hospital, where it might interfere with their work in the hospital or generate a conflict of interest, without written authority from the Care Program Director or Chief Executive. If approval is granted, it is the staff member's responsibility to ensure that at all times the additional employment does not interfere with work performance and that there is no conflict of interest.
- Consideration of requests to engage in outside employment would be concerned to establish whether the outside employment would interfere with the proper performance of official duties and whether it would give rise to a conflict of interest.

Employment After Leaving The Hospital

- Confidential information obtained in the course of duty shall not be relayed to anyone else. Once staff have left the hospital, confidential information obtained during employment shall not be used to advantage the prospective employer or disadvantage the hospital.

Staff shall be required to be familiar with the Code of Conduct and ensure adherence to the guidelines. All staff shall appreciate that departure from the provisions of this Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action.

Outcome:

- All staff conduct themselves in a professional manner
- All staff understand their responsibilities and obligations, and have guidance when faced with an ethical dilemma or conflict of interest.
- All staff respect the rights, beliefs and property of others.

Definitions:

- **Code of Conduct:** outlines standards of behaviour expected of staff employed by the hospital.
- **Shall:** Indicates the statement is mandatory
- **May:** Indicates an option.

Standard:

Security for health care facilities. AS 4485.2 - (1997) Clause 4.13 'Need to Know' and Clause 5.17 'Media Visitors'.

References:

- Office of the Public Service Commissioner. (2003). Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector.
- ANCI Competencies <http://www.nursesreg.nsw.gov.au/RNcompet.htm>

Revision History:

Date Issued:	1/3/1998
Date of Last Review:	26/2/2007
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