



CODE OF ETHICS

At Whittlesea Community Connections (WCC) we aim to identify and break down barriers to accessing information and specialised support services and work towards building individual and community resilience.

As a community-led organisation, WCC works alongside individuals, families and groups to create opportunities to build and strengthen connections, supporting a community that is better able to support itself.

We aim to deliver high quality, flexible services that are person-centred, holistic and integrated and will:

- Improve people’s lives and life chances
- Support the most vulnerable and disadvantaged
- Support access to appropriate and integrated services and resources
- Encourage everyone to participate

Our vision is for a Whittlesea in which people and agencies work together to make a positive difference to their community, ensuring that everyone has equal access to the community’s resources and services.

Each and every one of our services and programs reflect our core values of:

Self determination	We support individuals and communities in making choices and decisions to meet their own needs
Non judgmental	We provide services that are impartial and supportive of diversity
Free services	We provide high quality services that are free at the point of delivery to residents of Whittlesea
Confidentiality	We approach our relationships and provide services in a way that protects clients’ privacy and confidentiality
Diversity	We value the diversity of the community and commit to strengthening inclusiveness in all aspects of our work
Independence	We value and guard our independence including the right to comment and advocate on local, state and federal government policy and to decide and manage our own affairs according to the laws of the land

WCC has a clear model of how we work as outlined below:

<p>We are community centred and led</p>	<p>We are accountable to our community for delivering appropriate and effective services and for advocating strongly for community needs. Whittlesea residents are instrumental in our planning, decision-making, program delivery, partnerships and reviews.</p>
<p>We collaborate for better outcomes</p>	<p>We identify, build and nurture partnerships that help to realise our shared vision for the people of Whittlesea. We acknowledge and value the individuals, families, communities and organisations we work with and are committed to working to create a culture of inclusion built on trust and respect. We work transparently and ethically - meaning what we say and saying what we mean.</p>
<p>Live our values</p>	<p>We have a strong commitment to fulfilling promises and ensuring open, respectful relationships. We strive to ensure that our values are integrated into our work and our services and programs reflect community needs. We are committed, responsive and brave and prepared to take risks to respond to the needs and challenges of our community.</p>
<p>We adapt to changing community needs</p>	<p>Working with community members every day we reflect on our practice and build on our knowledge by undertaking research and gathering local evidence. This evidence informs our priorities, our programs and the focus of our advocacy.</p>
<p>We value volunteering and community participation</p>	<p>We believe that people have a right to be involved in the decisions that impact on their lives. We believe community participation in all aspects of our organisation makes it stronger and more relevant. We are proactive in advocating the benefits of volunteerism and community engagement to other organisations and the community.</p>

1. PURPOSE OF THE CODE OF ETHICS

The purpose of WCC's Code of Ethics is to outline the expectations of WCC staff by prescribing standards of required behaviour. WCC has developed policies, procedures, frameworks and guidelines to support the application of this Code and staff are required to comply with these.

WCC's Code is designed to help staff understand the responsibilities and obligations of working at WCC. The behaviours described in WCC's Code provide a shared understanding and expectation of the way we behave as individuals, towards each other, our clients, their families and carers, partners and other supporters. WCC's Code also provides guidance on how to raise and report breaches of the standards it sets.

2. SCOPE

WCC's Code applies to all employees, volunteers, students and board members of WCC and WCC expects all above mentioned parties to understand and meet the requirements of the Code.

The standards in WCC's Code also apply to social activities that take place outside work premises but under WCC's auspices, and to the making of comments about other staff or clients on social media where the status of the person making the comments as a WCC staff member is indicated or can be inferred.

WCC's Code requires staff to adhere to the standards set out below. WCC's comprehensive suite of policies, procedures, frameworks and guidelines support and guide the application of the Code and all employees, volunteers, students and board members are required to comply with these at all times.

I, _____ agree to abide by the Code of Ethics of Whittlesea Community Connections Inc. as expressed in the following statements.

3. CODE OF ETHICS

3.1 Act Ethically, with Integrity, Honesty and Transparency

Employees, volunteers, students and board members are required to:

- display professionalism while providing services
- maintain appropriate professional boundaries, and act at all times to protect the boundaries of the professional relationship
- perform their duties diligently to the standard reasonably required of them
- not absent themselves from the workplace without proper notification or reason, when meant to be at work
- be in a fit and proper condition to attend work. WCC is committed to a **zero** tolerance alcohol and illicit drugs working environment, and will take all practicable steps to endeavour that all employees, volunteers, students and board members have a **zero** level for alcohol and illicit drugs and are not impaired by prescription drugs.
- dress in a way that is appropriate for the work they do
- continue to satisfy National Police Record Checks and Working with Children Checks during their employment and disclose any criminal charges and/or conviction that may impact their ability to undertake their responsibilities
- never abuse, exploit, bully, harass, neglect or discriminate against a client or another employee, volunteer, student or board member
- take reasonable care to ensure their own safety and that of others in the workplace
- disclose all personal or professional matters that may lead to actual or perceived conflicts of interest as outlined in the *Conflict of Interest Policy*
- comply with all laws, regulations, guidelines, standards, professional codes of conduct and ethics relating to their profession
- report and act on any behavioural complaints, concerns or observed breaches regarding WCC's *Code of Ethics*

3.2 Confidentiality

Employees, volunteers, students and board members are required to:

- respect and safeguard the rights of WCC's clients to confidentiality, as stated in the WCC *Confidentiality and Privacy Policy*, which WCC expects has been read and understood
- not give any information about a client to anyone outside the service unless the permission of the client involved has been obtained and documented
- maintain confidentiality after the termination of any connection with WCC

3.3 Impartiality

Employees, volunteers, students and board members are required to:

- treat people with dignity and respect and uphold their human and legal rights at all times

- collaborate with and treat each other in a way that promotes harmonious and productive working relationships
- relate to clients, volunteers and staff impartially, regardless of factors such as race, creed, political views or lifestyles
- understand that WCC strongly supports multiculturalism and strongly opposes all forms of discrimination and hence will adhere to this standard when employed by WCC
- be responsive to the unique needs, values and beliefs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- actively promote cultural safety and inclusion
- provide information, advice and services impartially
- agree that WCC has a responsibility to collect and store information in an impartial manner

3.4 Self-Determination of the Enquirer

Employees, volunteers, students and board members are required to:

- affirm the right of WCC clients to make their own decisions
- communicate in a language, form, manner and tone that enables people to understand the information provided and to make their preferences and needs known. WCC has developed the *Using Interpreters Practice Guideline* to aid communication barriers which may be utilised for support.

3.5 Protection of Privacy

Employees, volunteers, students and board members are required to:

- operate as a WCC employee, volunteer, student only at times and places officially approved by the Board of Management of WCC and will not give their address or telephone number to any clients.
- accurately record, report, maintain and safeguard WCC information
- respect and protect the physical and intellectual property of WCC

3.6 Gratuities, Personal, Financial/Material Assistance to Enquirers

Employees, volunteers, students and board members are required to:

- not under any circumstances receive payment or gratuities from clients for services rendered
- not engage in fraudulent or criminal behaviour, bribery or the inappropriate or unauthorised use of any WCC resource
- not provide clients with any material or financial assistance from any personal resources but refer them to appropriate agencies
- adhere to the *WCC Financial Assistant Program Guidelines*

3.7 Public Statements

Employees, volunteers, students and board members are required to:

- not make public statements about WCC, its personnel, policies or services without the authority and permission of Whittlesea Community Connections' Board of Management
- avoid conduct that could bring WCC or any of its employees, volunteers, students, board members and clients into disrepute, including when using social media
- adhere to the *WCC Social Media Policy*

3.8 Responsibility - to the Board of Management and from the Board of Management

Employees, volunteers and students will at all times be subject to WCC's *Rules of Incorporation*, the policies and decisions of WCC's Board of Management and any other rules or regulations that the Board may from time to time make current and operative.

Employees, volunteers, students and board members commit to maintaining agency confidentiality and upon cessation of their duties will regard as binding upon them all pledges of trust and confidence appropriate to their previous position as an employee of WCC.

In the event of contravening any of the provisions of this *Code of Ethics* the Board of Management may terminate services of an employee, volunteer or student.

As well as this Code of Conduct, the Board of Management is responsible for adhering to the WCC Board Charter, the WCC Constitution WCC Rules of Incorporation and Governance bodies such as the Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD) and the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC).

3.9 Child Safety Conduct

Employees, volunteers, students and board members are required to:

- maintain a duty of care towards children and young people
- listen and respond to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are disclosing that they or another child has been abused and/or are worried about their safety or the safety of another
- act as a positive role model for children and young people
- comply with the *WCC Child Safe Policy*
- ensure a familiarisation of the *Child Safe Guidelines for Staff and Volunteers*
- report any allegations of child abuse to Supervisor/Manager and Child Safety Officer, and ensure any allegation is reported to the police or child protection
- encourage children to 'have a say' and participate in all relevant organisational activities where possible, especially on issues that are important to them
- not engage in any activity with a child or a young person that is likely to physically or emotionally cause harm, including via social media
- not initiate unnecessary physical contact with a child, or do things of a personal nature for them that they can do for themselves
- not show favouritism through the provision of gifts or inappropriate behaviour
- not arrange contact including online conduct with the children or young people outside of WCC's program activities
- not photograph or video a child or young person without written consent from parent/guardian and the approval of WCC
- not engage in open discussions of a mature nature in the presence of children
- not use inappropriate language in the presence of children
- inform my supervisor if any of the following situations exist:
 - If I spend time with children or young people who are involved in WCC programs outside of work hours because I am part of the same community and come together in the context of family, social or community life
 - If I am in a pre-existing relationship with a child or young person who joins WCC as a participant.

4. CONSEQUENCES OF BREAKING THE CODE OF ETHICS

Possible outcomes for an employee, volunteer, student or board member who has breached WCC's Code of Ethics may be, but is not limited to:

- Counselling

- Coaching
- Performance Improvement Plans
- Disciplinary actions
- Referral to the relevant registration board where the staff member or student is a registered health professional
- Referral to the police or relevant legal authority or Government agency under WCC's legal obligations
- Termination of employment

Certain sections of this Code reflect requirements of legislation and breaches of these conditions may be punishable under law.

5. ACCEPTANCE OF THE CODE OF ETHICS

I will subscribe to this Code of Ethics.

I will upon appointment and prior to the commencement of duties, sign this *Code of Ethics* and copies shall be retained by Whittlesea Community Connections Board of Management and myself.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Witness: _____

Position: _____

Date: _____

Related documents

<p>Related procedures, guidelines, forms etc</p>	<p>WCC Rules of Incorporation</p> <p>WCC Board Charter</p> <p>WCC Contitution</p> <p>Child Safe Guidelines for Staff and Volunteers</p> <p>Using Interpreters Practice Guideline</p> <p>Financial Assistance Guideline</p>
<p>Related frameworks</p>	<p>Advocacy Framework</p>
<p>Related policies</p>	<p>Casework – Best Practice Policy</p> <p>Child Safe Policy</p> <p>Confidentiality and Privacy Policy</p> <p>Social Media Policy</p> <p>Conflict of Interest Policy</p>
<p>Relevant legislation or standards</p>	<p>Fair Work Act (2009)</p> <p>Racial Discrimination Act 1975</p> <p>Sex Discrimination Act 1984</p> <p>Age Discrimination Act 2004</p> <p>Disability Discrimination Act 1992</p> <p>Children Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)</p> <p>Child Safe Standards</p> <p>Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic)</p> <p>Australian Community Workers Association – Australian Community Work Practice Guidelines</p>

Document Change History

<u>Version</u>	<u>Status*</u>	<u>Comments</u>	<u>Author</u>	<u>Ratified by</u>	<u>Date Ratified</u>
V1	Endorsed	Initial Code of Ethics		Board	
V2	Endorsed	Edits	Belinda Leon – Manager Community Support	Board	August 2019
V3	Draft	Edits, format update, introduction of new content	Sandra Natale – Quality Consultant		

** Valid values for this column are: DRAFT, ENDORSED, REVIEWED (no revision)*

