
Greenacres Code of Conduct Policy

Legislation

1. NDIS Code of Conduct for Workers
2. National Standards for Disability Services – Standard 6 (Service Management)
3. NDIS Practice Standards
4. ISO 9001 – 7.2 Competence
5. Office of the Children's Guardian Child Safe Standards

What is the Code of Conduct? How does it apply to me?

The purpose of Greenacres Code of Conduct is to provide employees, volunteers and contractors with a clear understanding of what is expected of them. This relates to actions both within worktime, and outside of worktime where actions could be deemed employment related, for instance, comments about your workplace on social media.

This code provides you with a measure of what is appropriate and inappropriate behaviour. Our code of conduct policy provides a framework for your own conduct, and a framework for you to determine when you need to act on the inappropriate behavior of co-workers.

Who should abide by the Code of Conduct?

This code should be adhered to by all of those who work for, act on behalf of, or represent Greenacres. Behaviour must always reflect the Vision, Purpose and Values of the organisation.

OUR VISION

We Imagine: Every person with a disability creating their own positive future.

OUR PURPOSE

We Will: Support people with a disability to transform their ideas and goals into experiences and achievements.

OUR VALUES

We Believe In:

- Fairness
- Integrity
- Respect
- Empathy

What happens if I breach a policy?

All Greenacres Policies and Procedures must be followed. Any breaches of this policy may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- ✓ Ensure all your behaviours demonstrate the values of Fairness, Integrity, Respect and Empathy.
- ✓ Comply with the NDIS Code of Conduct for Workers and follow both the National Standards for Disability Services and the Office of the Children's Guardian Child Safe Standards.
- ✓ Understand and respect the values, culture and heritage of all people.
- ✓ Maintain privacy and confidentiality obligations to participants and Greenacres at all times.
- ✓ Balance duty of care with dignity of risk.. That is, balance duty of care with an individual's right to make their own choices.
- ✓ Promote the ability of our participants and supported employees to fulfil valued roles in the community.
- ✓ Support participants and supported employees, including those under the age of eighteen, to exercise their legal and human rights as detailed in [Greenacres Rights, Prevention and Response to Abuse Policy](#).
- ✓ Maintain professional boundaries (appendix 1) between yourself and participants by clearly understanding the limits and responsibilities of your role.
- ✓ Work effectively as part of a caring and professional team.
- ✓ Ensure you renew, on time, all licences, certificates and qualifications that are required for your job roles. Do not rely on Greenacres to advise you when your renewals are needed.
- ✓ Contribute within your capacity to Greenacres continuous improvement, philosophy and practice.
- ✓ Act on any breaches of this Code of Conduct either by yourself or others.

BEHAVIOUR

- ✓ Ensure participants and supported employees, including those under the age of eighteen, are always given prompt and dignified attention.
- ✓ Refrain from any practices, either direct or implied, which may be viewed as sexual in nature including sexual harassment, sexual abuse, or grooming. Grooming includes using treats, gifts or special attention to build trust with a child, encouraging secrecy, shaping perceptions and testing the waters through privacy/boundary violations.
- ✓ Refrain from any sexually based contact with participants or supported employees.
- ✓ Discrimination, bullying, harassment, assault or neglect of a participant or supported is never acceptable.

- ✓ Refrain from using disrespectful language and swearing, either directed at or in the presence of participants, supported employees and others. This also includes expressions of anger such as raising your voice and intimidating body language.
- ✓ Refrain from soliciting gifts or gratitude's from participants, supported employees or any other Greenacres' related parties as set out in [Greenacres Gifts and Benefits Policy](#).
- ✓ Employees are to be suitably dressed in discrete, neat casual clothing or clothing that is appropriate for the program (activewear for sport and recreational activities for example). Longline tops/tshirts should be teamed with bike pants or tights for sport or fitness activities. Shoes should also have enclosed toe and heel areas and be appropriate for the activities to be carried out.
- ✓ Refrain from bribing or attempting to bribe, directly or indirectly, any person, whether a Public Official or a private individual.
- ✓ Refraining from making or attempting to make, directly or indirectly, a facilitation payment.
- ✓ Refraining from accepting, directly or indirectly, a bribe or facilitation payment.
- ✓ Except where specifically authorized by company procedure, refraining from providing gifts or hospitality to Public Officials.
- ✓ Prior to entering into a commercial relationship of any kind, refraining from undertaking due diligence, including questionnaire to confirm that our prospective partner operates honestly, fairly and transparently. We will not enter into a commercial relationship or otherwise do business with any organization or individual that does not share our commitment to reject corruption.
- ✓ All contracts and other agreements will include anti-corruption language and a commitment on the part of the signatories to reject corruption in the non-governmental organisation sector and marketplace generally.
- ✓ Immediately reporting any potentially corrupt activity, including the offering of (or requesting of) a bribe or the making of (or requesting of) a facilitation payment, to Greenacres' management.
- ✓ Using Greenacres' Whistleblower procedure to escalate the matter if you believe that your report of a potentially corrupt activity has not been satisfactorily addressed.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- ✓ Comply with the requirements of mandatory health and safety laws, policies, procedures and standards.
- ✓ Maintain a smoke free workplace by complying with the [Greenacres Smoke Free Workplace Policy](#).
- ✓ Any employee or volunteer who has been charged or convicted with any offence which may impact on his/her ability to undertake any part or all of their job duties must notify his/her General Manager immediately.
- ✓ Any employee or volunteer charged or convicted with a serious criminal offence, whether or not it is related to work must notify his/her General Manager immediately. That person may be suspended from the workplace pending the outcome of disciplinary or legal proceedings.

- ✓ If there is sound evidence that a criminal offence has been committed at work or is related to work, Greenacres may take disciplinary action and notify the police and/or other relevant external parties.
- ✓ Abstain from consuming alcohol or illicit drugs during working hours and arriving at work under the influence of alcohol or illicit drugs. This includes prescribed and over the counter medications which may negatively affect your ability to perform your duties or pose as a risk to the health and safety of participants, supported employees and others.
- ✓ Refrain from sleeping at work during paid work hours.

Please sign that you have read and understood the Greenacres Code of Conduct; and that you understand that any Code of Conduct and/or Policy breaches may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment or volunteering.

Name	
Signature	
Date	

A. WHAT ARE PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES BETWEEN EMPLOYEES AND PARTICIPANTS/SUPPORTED EMPLOYEES?

- clearly established limits that allow for safe connections between the employee and their participant
- being **friendly**, not friends
 - the ability to know where you end and the participant begins
 - a very clear understanding of the limits and responsibilities of your role

Why are boundaries so important?

- they role model to the participant healthy communication and relationships
- they circumvent the “rescuer” role
- they attend to the issues of power, vulnerability and reliability
- the employee can stay focused on their responsibilities and provide healthy and appropriate services for the participant.
- they avoid “burnout” (compassion fatigue)
- they maintain the employee and participant’s physical and emotional safety

Consequences of not having defined boundaries

- compassion fatigue – the employee’s role may not be sustainable
- participant may not be given appropriate or optimum service which could affect his/her willingness to accept future services
- participant may feel betrayed, abandoned and/or poorly treated
- employee may act unethically
- the employee and/or participant may be emotionally traumatised and/or placed in physical danger
- the employee actions may be viewed as ‘grooming’ to a participant, their family or staff of Greenacres.
- the reputation of Greenacres may be compromised

Why it can be difficult to establish and maintain professional boundaries

- **Dual relationships** – the employee and participant know each other in a personal context from another setting

To avoid any real or perceived conflict of interest employees are to advise their Supervisor where a close personal relationship, outside the work situation, exists with a Participant/Supported employee and/or their family

Supervisors are to pass on any notifications to HR who will record that notification in the Conflicts of Interest register.

- **Values conflict** – the participants choices, history, relationships, feelings, lifestyle and/or life circumstances conflict with the employees values and/or knowledge about best practices
- **Vicarious trauma** – the employee experiences trauma symptoms from hearing about the participants experiences.
- **Playing the “hero”** – the employee feels they need to save the participant
- **Poor teamwork** – The employee does not trust that other team members are fulfilling their responsibilities to the participant. They believe they can provide services better and that the participant relates to and works best with them.

Signs that the boundary issue is present between an employee and a participant

- the employee and participant begin referring to each other as friends
- the participant becomes overly reliant on the employee
- the employee receives gifts from or gives gifts to the participant
- the participant has asked for the employees phone number or other significant personal information such as their address and it has been provided
- the participant asks /expects the employee to socialise with him/her outside of the professional setting
- the employee reveals personal information to the participant
- the employee is experiencing anxiety related to the participant (e.g. loss of sleep)
- discussion with regard to work and the participant dominates the employee’s conversations with friends and family
- the employee offers to provide assistance to the participant outside of his/her role (e.g. transport etc.)

B. PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES BETWEEN EMPLOYEES AND BETWEEN EMPLOYEES AND THEIR SUPERVISORS

- These boundaries are clearly established limits that allow for safe and healthy working relationships between employees and between employees and their Supervisors.
- To avoid any real or perceived conflict of interest any Leader who has a close personal relationship with an employee who reports to them should report this to their Supervisor.

Supervisors are to pass on any notifications to HR who will record that notification in the Conflicts of Interest register.

- In the work setting judgements are to be objective and unbiased. Difficulties, both real and perceived, can arise when those in a close personal relationship are in a position to make or influence decisions concerning the other.

To further manage these difficulties the following principles will apply:

- Employees cannot be involved in the recruitment process when a relative or friend is considered for the position.
- Employees, who are related or close friends or in a relationship, should not be involved in a supervisory/reporting relationship with one another. Where this scenario exists the conflict of interest should be declared to the relevant General Manager or CEO.
- Ideally employees, who are relatives or close friends or in a relationship, will not work at the same site. Where this does occur there are to be clear delineations around potential conflicts of interest and these delineations should be approved by the relevant General Manager or CEO.

We ask you to act professionally when working with a relative or friend or someone you are in a relationship with. We also ask that you declare that potential conflict of interest to your Supervisors and seek counsel from them, or HR, if there are any perceived conflicts of interest or problems.

Where conflicts of interest, real or perceived, are causing ongoing issues at the workplace Greenacres reserves the right to transfer one, or both employees involved.

More information can be found in [Greenacres Conflict of Interest Policy](#).

Strategies for maintaining healthy professional boundaries include:

- As early as possible in the relationship (ideally at your initial meeting), establish clear agreement with the participant with regard to your role as an employee and service provider; your availability, and the best way to communicate with you.
- If boundary issues appear, address these with the participant quickly. At all times be sensitive to their feelings when doing this; emphasise the importance of your commitment to maintaining professional boundaries.

- If you receive an invitation from a supported employee, or participant, to a significant group celebratory event- such as a wedding, engagement, birthday party, you can accept if;
 - you have email permission from your Manager and
 - you agree to act professionally in all your behaviour at the event –particularly being aware that all those present perceive you as a Greenacres staff member.

If you receive an invitation from a supported employee, or participant to a 1:1 event it is not considered appropriate for you to accept.

If you believe there are circumstances that make your attendance appropriate you are to seek the permission of the CEO.

- if requested by a participant or supported employee, you can be a Facebook friend. You must ensure any comments or interactions are appropriate to your professional relationship. If, at any time, you feel uncomfortable with a Facebook friendship seek advice from your Supervisor. You cannot post photos, videos or information about participants or supported employees on your personal Facebook page.

You must be prepared to provide Greenacres with access to any alleged unprofessional posts. Greenacres also reserves the right to request staff to remove Facebook friendships.

- If you do decide to tell a participant something personal about yourself, ensure that the information is related to the participant's goals. Self-disclosure shifts the focus from the participant to the employee and can confuse the participant in terms of roles and expectations of the relationship.
- Understand that how a participant interprets your words and actions might not match what you are trying to communicate. With these sensitive relationships you may need to frequently clarify your role and boundaries and ask the participant to repeat back what you have said to ensure he/she understands. This also gives the participant an opportunity to ask clarifying questions.
- Use your supervisor/manager and team colleagues as a sounding board when you have questions or concerns with regard to boundaries; especially when boundary issues are impacting on your ability to provide objective, empathetic care. Communicate with your supervisor, manager and team colleagues if you are feeling uncomfortable about talking with your participants about boundaries.
- If you have had a personal relationship with a participant before becoming their service provider, realise that you must use your professional judgement when interacting with the participant in social settings. Pay particular attention to the participant's confidentiality as well as his/her physical and emotional security. Situations in which one person is in a position to hold power over the other person must be avoided.
- Focus on empathising rather than sympathising; that is, focus on being aware of the emotions of participants without sensing them as if they were your own. Empathy gives you clarity, sympathy obscures.