

Rationale

SDN is committed to being a responsible, professional, ethical and safe organisation every day for children and adults. The Code of Conduct sets the expectations for standards of professional and safe conduct that promote alignment to SDN's Values, Purpose, and the SDN Way. It sets the expectations for our decision-making and for how we interact with each other, with children and young people and with the public.

Scope

This policy, and its associated documents, applies to the entirety of SDN Children's Services and the entirety of its wholly owned subsidiaries. SDN Board members, staff members, trainees, contractors, volunteers and students (from hereon referred to as 'staff') are required to comply with this Policy. It applies to all work-related activities, as well as situations outside the workplace and/or out of hours if SDN itself or other staff are involved or referenced. This includes online activities including social media and electronic communications.

Engaging in unacceptable behaviour is a breach of this Code of Conduct and may result in managerial or disciplinary action.

Policy

All staff will behave in a way that contributes to our purpose, and represents our values and the SDN Way.

When we say 'children' we are including infants prior to birth and young people up to their eighteenth (18th) birthday.

Our purpose

To promote and enhance children's wellbeing, learning and development in inclusive environments.

Our values

Trustworthy, reliable, inclusive, respectful, creative, innovative.

The SDN Way

We put children at the centre of everything we do.

We partner with families.

We value one another's unique strengths, values and perspectives.

We design, use and maintain environments on purpose and for purpose.

1. Uphold children's rights

As a staff member I will:

- keep children safe and promote a child safe culture and nurturing environments that supports and encourages children to be active participants
- be positive role models for children and develop Respectful, Intentional, Predictable, Attuned, and Responsive (RIPAR) relationships with children that enhance their wellbeing, learning and development as valued, competent, and capable contributors
- nurture a sense of belonging, being and becoming by respecting each child's culture, disposition, abilities, feelings, identity, and rights
- provide children with positive experiences, interactions and relationships that support a sense of trust, belonging, inclusion, safety, and autonomy by setting boundaries in consultation with them where appropriate, by supporting them to negotiate their rights in relation to the rights of others, and by providing opportunities for them to be involved in decision-making about the things that might impact on them
- act in the best interests of children and listen to them, including through observation and interpretation of their intention, and take any safety concerns they raise seriously, including reporting to the relevant manager or the SDN Incident Line
- speak up about any concerns about the safety of children by upholding responsibilities as a mandatory reporter (if applicable) and as an employee of SDN (refer to Responding to Risk of Harm procedure) and by contacting the SDN Incident Line on 1300 838 152 if I have any concerns about mistreatment of children, grooming or unacceptable behaviours in SDN services (refer to Reporting an Allegation of Possible RC or Reportable Incident procedure)
- respect the individual needs of children and give each child personal space
- respond sensitively to a child's communication, including non-verbal communication and verbal cues
- indicate verbally an intention to tend to a child's physical needs
- where there is a need to respond to a risk or incident by restraining a child, use the least restrictive option, reassure the child and communicate as clearly as possible the purpose of the restraint
- 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 children and families, including children with disability

As a staff member I will not:

- engage in any form of misconduct against children, including any sexual offence, assault, ill-treatment or neglect of a child or any behaviour that causes emotional or psychological harm to a child
- condone or participate in illegal, unsafe or abusive behaviour towards children, including physical, sexual or psychological abuse, ill-treatment, neglect or grooming

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- be alone with a child unless there is an emergency or extenuating circumstances
- use offensive language, shout or yell when children are present or use hurtful, discriminatory or offensive behaviour with children or criticise or denigrate a child
- use excessive force or force that is hostile, reckless, or significant, including hitting, smacking, kicking, shaking, throwing, punching, biting and force feeding or excessive force or restraint towards a child, including unauthorised restrictive practice
- compromise children's safety, including neglect or psychological harm or by creating a climate of fear or by preventing a child from forming friendships
- exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues or fail to report information if I know or suspect a child has been abused or is at risk of being abused
- engage in unnecessary or inappropriate touching involving a child
- kiss children as a way of demonstrating care or affection to a child
- share details of sexual experiences with a child or use sexual language or gestures in the presence of children
- offer children and young people alcohol, cigarettes or other drugs or show children pornographic material
- show favouritism to one child over others, for example, giving gifts, persuading the child that a special relationship exists, or spending inappropriate special time with the child
- communicate or spend time with children I work with outside of work, for example, babysitting, without notifying relevant manager and following SDN requirements
- have inappropriate interactions with children and young people, families or colleagues which do not reflect professional boundaries and expectations of staff
- take images of children unless using an SDN device and following SDN requirements including regarding consent and storage. I will not take images or recordings of children using any personal devices
- use personal devices when working with children or in spaces where children are present.

2. Be professional and respectful

As a staff member I will:

- treat everyone with respect and courtesy, and behave in a way that reflects SDN's values, promoting a positive, inclusive organisational culture
- take all reasonable steps to prevent and respond to all forms of violence, exploitation, neglect, and abuse
- respect individual rights to freedom of expression, self-determination, decision-making and privacy in accordance with relevant laws and conventions
- promote a collaborative and collegial workplace

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- respect and apply professional boundaries with parents, caregivers and any other clients, staff and interested stakeholders
- act to keep colleagues and visitors safe including reporting hazards and near misses
- not engage in workplace harassment, bullying or discrimination, including sexual harassment, and do everything I can to prevent it.

3. Act according to SDN's values

As a staff member I will:

- at all times behave in a way that upholds SDN's values, and the integrity and good reputation of SDN
- comply with any lawful and reasonable direction given by someone in SDN who has authority to give the direction
- avoid conflicts of interest, report those that cannot be avoided and cooperate in their management
- maintain appropriate confidentiality in all forms of communication, including social media
- not provide false or misleading information
- use SDN resources in a proper manner, minimising wastage
- seek internal resolutions for all organisational issues where possible.

4. Understand and carry out all the requirements of my role

As a staff member I will:

- comply with all SDN policies, procedures, frameworks and directions
- comply with all applicable Australian laws
- complete all mandatory training and ensure certifications are up to date
- keep the safety of myself and others part of every decision and action I take.

Breaches of the Code of Conduct

Failure to comply with the Child Safe Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal, in accordance with applicable SDN procedures or, in the case of contractors, termination of engagement. Further, penalties associated with state and federal laws may apply.

Related SDN Documents

Policies

- GI-HLP-1.01: Policy Framework
- GI-HLP-1.09: Privacy and Protection of Information

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- GI-HLP-1.11: Social Media and Electronic Communications
- GI-HLP-1.25 Procurement
- GI-OP-1.28 Anti-Fraud and Corruption
- GI-HLP-1.33: Child Protection
- GI-HLP-1.34 Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest
- SD-OP-2.23: Code of Conduct for Service Users
- SD-OP-2.24: Interactions with Children
- SD-ADD-2.24-A Guideline – Interactions with Children – Kissing
- HR-HLP-3.02: Equal Employment Opportunity and Good Working Relationships
- HR-OP-3.05 Recruitment Selection and Appointment
- FIN-HLP-5.01 Financial Stewardship and Management
- FIN-HLP-5.03 Fundraising and Charitable Donations
- PROP-OP-7.01 Capital Works Contractors Management

Procedures

- GI-PRO-1.33-01: Reporting an Allegation of Possible RC or Reportable Incident
- GI-PRO-1.33-02: Responding to Concerns of Risk of Harm
- GI-PRO-1.34-01 Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest
- HR-PRO-3.08-01: Managing Performance

Forms/Templates

- GI-FRM-1.34-01: Other Work Form

Other SDN Documents

- Statement of Commitment to Child Safety
- SDN Children’s Services and SDN Child and Family Services Board Charters
- SDN Director’s Conflicts of Interest Register
- SDN Senior Leadership Team (SLT) Register of Interests

Relevant Legislation/Regulations

- Corporations Act 2001 (Cth)
- Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 (Cth)
- Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2013 (Cth)

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- Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Governance Standard 5
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, regulation 168 (2)(i)
- Schedule 1: National Quality Standard, Standards 4.1 and 4.2 and Elements 4.2.1 and 4.2.3
- NDIS Quality and Safeguarding Framework, December 2016
- National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013
- Treasury Laws Amendment (Enhancing Whistleblower Protections) Act 2019
- Child and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1988 (NSW)
- Children and Young People Act 2008 (ACT)
- Children's Guardian Act 2019 (NSW)
- Ombudsman Act 1989 (ACT)

Other References/Related Documents

- Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission's Managing Conflicts of Interest Guide
- Department of Communities and Justice Agreement for Funding of Services ('Human Services Agreement') Standard Terms
- National Disability Insurance Agency's Terms of Business Policies
- SDN Children's Services Board Charter
- SDN Child and Family Services Pty Ltd Board Charter
- Child Safe Standards (NSW)
- The National Principles for Child Safe Organisations
- National Standards for Disability Services

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