

Code of Conduct for Staff



PURPOSE

To provide a safe, tolerant and disciplined environment within which staff can work effectively and efficiently.

WHO DOES THIS APPLY TO?

All employees of SCISCO CAREER PATHWAYS

The Code of Conduct

Introduction

SCISCO CAREER PATHWAYS is responsible for providing a number of services to the Community as outlined in the funding contracts in which it holds. For SCISCO CAREER PATHWAYS to meet its goals successfully, staff and the Management Committee are accountable for how these funds are spent.

We will be most successful if all employees fulfil their roles in an exemplary manner by adhering to the highest possible standards of professional competence and conduct.

Who must comply with the Code?

The Code applies to and binds all employees of SCISCO Career Pathways, including people engaged by SCISCO Career Pathways on a traineeship, work experience.

While the Code is not binding for volunteers, the continued association with the organisation depends upon them observing and complying with the Code.

When Does the Code Apply?

The requirements of the Code apply at all times, including while you are on leave. While the code focuses primarily on how you are to perform your work duties, it is important to note that misconduct for the purposes of determining liability for disciplinary action includes disgraceful or improper conduct in a private capacity that reflects seriously and adversely on SCISCO Career Pathways. For example, an employee's relationship with a student in a private capacity would be subject to the requirements of this Code. School based employees should note that the code and the Education Departments *Student Protection Policy* are to apply while servicing clients on the respective school campuses.

Deciding the right course of action

While this Code of Conduct provides guidance and direction, you may need to exercise judgement when applying weight to competing obligations. In any of these circumstances, it is important to realise that support is available. You can:

- Raise issues with your Team Leader or manager
- Refer to the organisations standard operation procedures manual, policies, and program guidelines
- Raise issues at staff meetings or management committee meetings
- Consider potential outcomes, obligations on you and how other people might view various courses of action

- Consider any issues of benefit or loss to yourself, clients, the organisation or the community
- Raise any unresolved questions or doubts with your team leader, manager or management committee executive members before you make your decision.

Finally, before proceeding, ask yourself:

1. Is the act legal and consistent with the organisations policy?
2. Is it consistent with SCISCO Career Pathways' goals and this Code of conduct?
3. Is it the proper thing to do?
4. What will the outcome be for:
 - SCISCO CAREER PATHWAYS and the public interest
 - Colleagues
 - Our clients and young people
 - Me
5. Can the action be reasonably justified by objective standards?
6. Would the act stand up to public scrutiny?

What happens if I breach the Code?

As employees who hold special positions of trust, we must be accountable for our actions. Consequences of inappropriate behaviour and breaches of the Code can come from common law provisions. A minor or technical breach of the Code may be dealt with through management correction and guidance.

A breach of this Code of Conduct will not incur a disciplinary penalty if there is a reasonable excuse for the breach. A reasonable excuse is not the same as mitigating circumstances, which may still incur liability for discipline.

Disciplinary penalties that may apply to proven breaches of the code without reasonable excuse include:

- An official reprimand
- Forfeiture or deferral of salary increments or increases
- Reduction in employment classification level
- Termination of employment

The disciplinary penalties would be in addition to any penalty issued by a Court for a breach of the general law.

Obtaining advice.

Depending on the nature of particular issues or concerns, advice and support on the *Code of Conduct* and ethical issues may be obtained from your Team Leader or Manager.

If these people do not have immediate access to the specific information you require, they will be able to direct you to other people and agencies for help and support.

Principles

Our code of conduct is underpinned by 5 principles.

1. Respect for the Law
2. Respect for Persons
3. Integrity
4. Diligence
5. Economy and Efficiency

1. Respect for the Law

1.1 Each of us has an obligation to respect the rule of law by upholding:

- Commonwealth, State and Local laws and regulations.
- Applicable professional standards and codes of practice that do not conflict with this Code of Conduct.
- Applicable industrial awards and agreements
- Respect the principle of equality before the law and extend due and fair process to individuals and organisations
- Comply with lawful and reasonable directions from your supervisor, a delegated authority, or your employing authority.
- Make decisions and give reasonable and lawful directions within our delegated authority
- Strive to create and implement high quality services that are consistent with SCISCO Career Pathway's policies and goals
- Be familiar with legislation, regulations, (professional) codes or standards that are relevant to our work role.

1.2 Challenging official decisions or directions

- All employees are encouraged to be receptive to constructive feedback about how they can better achieve SCISCO Career Pathways' mission and objectives.
- Consistent with this approach, an employee may challenge or question a decision or direction if they believe it to be unlawful, unethical, unfair or unreasonable.
- Before challenging or questioning a decision or direction (that does not involve misconduct), an employee should seek to discuss the matter with their supervisor, or if that is not possible, an executive member of the management committee, and attempt to understand the basis for the decision or direction. The employee should only then express the reasons for their concerns or reservations about the decision or direction. Trivial or vexatious objections are unacceptable.

- Wherever possible, the person whose decision or direction is challenged or questions by an employee should listen to the concerns and reservations of the employee, and review their decision or direction in light of this discussion.
- If the concerns remain unresolved after this review, the employee may communicate their objection to the President of SCISCO Career Pathways.
- In the case of serious matters that are unlawful, dangerous or unsafe or where there is evidence of misconduct, employees must notify an appropriate authority that is authorised to receive that type of information.
- Employees are generally obliged to comply with decisions or directions while consideration is given to their objection, except when:
 - a. the matter involves a genuine risk to the health and/or safety of a person;
 - b. the act or omission is reasonably considered to be unlawful;
 - c. The matter involves an “issue of conscience” where there is a conflict between a genuine religious or similar belief and the performance of a specific authorised work activity.
 - If the review finds that the decision or direction is lawful, ethical, fair and reasonable, an employee must comply with the decision or direction.
 - If an objection involves an issue of conscience, the organisation will seek to work co-operatively with the employee to resolve the conflict. Employees and their supervisors should explore the issue in an open and constructive way. The affected employee may make a suggestion on how the conflict could be reasonably resolved.

2. Respect for Persons

We all come into contact with a range of people such as students, young people, work colleagues, parents/guardians and member of the general public while performing our work duties. These people have a diverse range of views, aspirations, expectations and behaviour. It is vitally important that we extend and demonstrate respect for others in all our communications and interactions. In turn, we can expect to be treated with respect and dignity by others. The positive relationships we build with others both internal and external to SCISCO Career Pathways will influence how well we achieve our individual work goals and SCISCO Career Pathways’ mission and goals.

2.1 Our daily interactions with others reflect on SCISCO Career Pathways and on us as individuals. It is therefore important to our individual and collective reputation that we conduct our relationships in a professional and respectful way. Employees whose work involves communicating with students, have a special responsibility in providing an appropriate role model for those students. All staff must comply at all times with the Child Protection Act 1999, and SCISCO’s Child Protection Policy.

- 2.2 Modelling effective leadership in our interactions with students can have a profoundly positive influence on a student's personal and social development.
- 2.3 Demonstrating respect for persons can be achieved by adopting a consultative approach to decision making, informing people of their rights, entitlements and responsibilities, and fulfilling a duty of care to others.
- 2.4 Each of us have an obligation to:
- Treat all people with dignity and respect at all times
 - Respect and be sensitive to an individual's cultural and ethnic background
 - Be responsive, engaging and helpful to the reasonable requests of students, parents/guardians, work colleagues and members of the general public
 - Be familiar with and uphold Education Queensland's *Student Protection Policy*
 - Actively discourage any form of harassment or unlawful discrimination
 - Ensure decisions that adversely affect the rights or interests of others are procedurally fair, reasonable, honest and impartial
 - Ensure our personal appearance and presentation is clean, tidy and appropriate for the work role performed.
- 2.5 Employees must respect the dignity, rights and views of others by:
- Listening to and seeking to understand different points of view (This does not necessarily mean agreeing with the point of view)
 - Respecting cultural, ethnic and religious differences
 - Valuing and acknowledging the genuine contributions of others make in meeting SCISCO Career Pathways' mission and objectives
 - Expressing constructive feedback that is considered moderate in its tone
 - Being courteous, sensitive, and honest in communications, and being considerate to the needs of others
 - Actively managing workplace conflict involving yourself or other colleagues to create positive and constructive outcomes
 - Informing people of their rights and entitlements where appropriate
 - Working co-operatively and collaboratively with others to achieve common goals and a harmonious work environment
 - Supporting the personal and professional development of others

2.6 Workplace and sexual harassment

- All employees, management committee members and anyone else involved with SCISCO Career Pathways have the right to work in an environment that is free from intimidation, threat, humiliation and workplace harassment.
- Sexual harassment is unlawful and will not be condoned within the organisation. Employees and management committee members shall not engage in workplace harassment.
- Offensive, abusive, bullying, belittling or threatening behaviour towards individuals or groups of people, performed in the course of one's work duties does not demonstrate respect for other people and amounts to a breach of this code.

Demonstrated failure to respect the dignity, rights and views of others will amount to a breach of this Code.

3. Integrity

- 3.1 Upholding the ethical principle of integrity is central to maintaining the probity of our conduct in our dealings with others, and in the proper use of public resources (from which we are funded). An employee's integrity is highly valued by the organisation because it reflects positively on them as a person and SCISCO Career Pathways as a whole. Observing the ethical principle of integrity supports the reciprocal relationship of trust that must exist between an employer and an employee.
- 3.2 As custodians of public resources, we must adhere to the highest standards of integrity if we are to enhance public confidence and trust in SCISCO Career Pathways. We must avoid any conduct that would amount to a breach of trust of the position that each of us holds.
- 3.3 School-based employees hold special positions of trust because of the relationships they form with vulnerable students who come into contact with us. Maintaining integrity in all dealings with young people is fundamental if SCISCO Career Pathways' mission is to be attained.
- 3.4 Each of us has an obligation to:
- Ensure that our official powers are not used improperly
 - Ensure that any public comment made as a representative of SCISCO Career Pathways, or where we might reasonably be perceived to be a representative of SCISCO Career Pathways, is authorised by the Management Committee or delegate and accurately reflects SCISCO Career Pathways' position
 - Identify, declare, and avoid any apparent or actual conflict of interests.
 - Manage information and records in a manner consistent with the law, privacy principles, information standards and SCISCO Career Pathways policy.

3.5 Receiving and giving gifts and benefits

- Employees must not ask for or encourage the giving of any form of gift or benefit in connection with the performance of their work duties. Employees may not accept a monetary gift in connection with their work duties under any circumstances.
- Employees must not ask for, obtain or receive any property or benefit on account of anything done, or omitted to be done by the employee, that alters or appears to alter the honest and impartial performance of that employee's work duties.

3.6 Disclosing fraud, corruption, maladministration, official misconduct, misconduct, waste of funds, or risk to public health or safety.

- An employee must report knowledge of fraud, corruption, maladministration, official misconduct, misconduct, and negligent management resulting in substantial waste of funds, or a substantial risk to public health or safety to an appropriate supervisor/Management Committee executive member.
- An employee must not cause, or arrange for detriment to be caused to another person because an employee has properly reported a matter in accordance with the law, SCISCO Career Pathways policy or this Code.
- An employee must not make a knowingly false or misleading statement concerning an allegation of improper conduct to another employee or Management Committee member. An employee must not make a vexatious complaint about another person.
- Employees shall not disclose evidence of fraud, corruption, maladministration, official misconduct, misconduct, negligent management resulting in substantial waste of funds or a substantial risk to public health or safety to the media or anyone else who are not acting in their role as a management committee member, in circumstances that would jeopardise the capacity of SCISCO Career Pathways to properly respond to and correct the matter.
- An employee must co-operate with an investigation being conducted in connection with the administration, management and operation of SCISCO Career Pathways.

4. Diligence

- 4.1 The ethical principle of diligence requires us to perform our work duties to the best of our ability and provide a "fair day's work for a fair day's pay". By accepting employment with SCISCO Career Pathways, we agree to perform our work duties diligently and professionally, and to demonstrate a high standard of stewardship over the responsibilities entrusted to us.

4.2 We are expected to:

- Exercise proper application, care and attention when carrying out our work duties
- Act responsibly and be accountable for our official decisions and actions
- Exercise a duty of care to those we have contact with in the course of our work duties, or who may be reasonably affected by the work we do

4.3 Together, we seek to:

- Deliver a high quality service to our clients
- Instil an ethos that values life long learning
- Be a genuine learning organisation that develops its employees, its products and services, and their systems of delivery

4.4 All of us have an obligation to:

- Ensure that our work duties are performed with care, responsibility, accountability, attention to detail and diligence
- Support or deliver high standards of service and client care while adhering to the strong ideal of excellence in all that we do
- Maintain and enhance our competencies while remaining supportive of our colleague's similar efforts
- Avoid conduct in a private capacity that adversely affects our capacity to effectively perform our work duties

4.5 Secondary Employment

- An employee must ensure that any secondary employment undertaken by them does not constitute a conflict of interest with their work duties, or adversely affect their work performance.

5. Economy and Efficiency

5.1 We must ensure that the public resources entrusted to us are not wasted, abused, or used improperly or extravagantly. These resources include financial, intellectual, information, system and knowledge reserves that underpin the work of SCISCO Career Pathways. Work time is also a valuable resource that must be managed effectively to create productive outcomes.

5.2 The ethical principal of economy and efficiency must be applied in all our strategic planning for the future delivery of our services. We must constantly strive to:

- Develop more effective and innovative ways of delivering our services within the constraints of our contracts
- Find and create ways of using SCISCO Career Pathways' existing resources to add value
- Flexibly adapt to changing prioritise.

5.3 The principal of economy and efficiency does not necessarily mean doing more with less as there are obvious limits to such an approach. Rather, this principle challenges us to consider the question, "How can I add value to the services that I deliver that ultimately benefit the clients of SCISCO Career Pathways?"

5.4 Each of us has an obligation to:

- Ensure that all SCISCO Career Pathways resources are used for work purposes and not wasted or used extravagantly
- Ensure that any claims to expense payments are made in accordance with our policy and procedures, and only for the costs incurred whilst conducting SCISCO Career Pathways business
- Ensure that timesheets are accurate and a true reflection of actual hours worked
- Ensure that all electronic communication systems are used appropriately in accordance with SCISCO Career Pathways internet and email policy.