



## **Servants Community Housing Limited**

ABN: 86 623 370 034

### **1.5 Code of Conduct**

## Servants Values

Beginning as a ministry of Hawthorn West Baptist Church, Servants is sustained by the inspiration of Jesus Christ to care for the less fortunate in the community and to work towards a more just and compassionate society.

### **PURPOSE STATEMENT:**

We exist to create communities where respect, dignity, hope and opportunity are nurtured.

**RELATIONSHIP.** We invest wholeheartedly in people, value their stories and work to create genuine, sustainable communities.

**DIGNITY.** We honour every person by respecting their privacy, desires, independence, religion, physical and mental needs.

**OPPORTUNITY.** In our commitment to provide safe, caring homes we look for opportunities where residents can grow, emotionally, relationally, spiritually and personally.

## Purpose

Our Code of Conduct outlines clear guidelines for professional conduct that is consistent with Servants' purpose and values.

This Code of Conduct should be read in conjunction with other referenced documents and policies and procedures relevant to individual roles. If there is an inconsistency between this Code of Conduct and an applicable policy or procedure, then this Code of Conduct will prevail.

## Scope

This policy applies to all employees, including contractors, casual employees and volunteers across Servants

This Code of Conduct also applies to all non-executive Directors of the HCA entities and all Member Directors of the Member Companies. Particular duties of Directors are set out in the Director's Duty Statement.

In this document, 'employees' and 'Servants people' refers to all persons described above.

## Policy

Servants Community Housing is passionate about housing vulnerable individuals with dignity and respect. Creating an environment of mutual respect and harmony in each house can only be achieved if both staff and residents hold themselves and one another to a high standard.

We are committed to our Code of Conduct being aligned with the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities.

Servants has developed this policy to ensure that people are offered a safe environment in which to live, with a strong sense of community and belonging. We recognise the inherent value of each person, regardless of their background, country of origin, living situation, appearance, thinking styles and belief system.

Servants supports that the principles of dignity, equality and mutual respect are shared across cultures, religions and philosophies.

The Code of Conduct outlines the expected professional and respectful standards of conduct and behaviour for all Servants people to assist them in performing their duties in any circumstance and or situation.

The Code of Conduct also outlines the way all Servants people are expected to treat and relate to staff, residents, contractors, volunteers, visitors and all Servants stakeholders.

## **How Servants people will behave**

- Provide information that is clear and easy to understand
- Protect your personal privacy
- Make you feel welcome
- Talk to you politely
- Listen respectfully
- Treat you fairly
- Act safely
- Be mindful of your cultural needs
- Act in accordance with our values
- Comply with our own policies.

Policy references: Discrimination, bullying and harassment Policy, Whistleblower Policy, OHS Policy

## **Pre-employment and employment checks and qualifications**

All Servants staff and volunteers must obtain and maintain a current Working With Children's Check. Servants will pay for staff WWC checks. Volunteers must list Servants on their accreditation.

Servants employees that have access to bank accounts, bank debit or credit cards or handle rents or cash must have a police check. This will be paid for by Servants.

All licenses and accreditations must be maintained. Employees must notify the Head of Finance and administration of any change, loss or suspension.

Policy references: Vehicle Policy, Recruitment Policy

## **Leadership and management**

Servant leadership is the core of the Servants model and all staff are expected to lead by example across all areas of our organisation. We consider the needs of others and care for others as we maintain high standards of professional conduct.

Managers must:

- Enable and maintain an inclusive, positive and connected workplace
- Provide clear performance expectations to teams and individuals and provide ongoing support and feedback to help everyone perform at their best
- Be open and responsive to feedback, questions and concerns
- Take appropriate action if a breach of code of conduct or any other policy or procedure occurs.
- Take appropriate steps to resolve conflict that arises in the workplace to ensure a healthy and harmonious work environment

## **Conflict of interest**

A conflict of interest may arise if a Servants person has a personal interest in a matter that could improperly influence, or appear to improperly influence, the way they perform their duties. Therefore, Servants people are required to disclose these relationships immediately where it may affect or be seen to affect Servants' integrity, efficiency or reputation. The following are circumstances where conflicts may arise but are not restricted to:

- Employing or terminating employees
- Making development decisions
- When selecting consultants, contractors or suppliers
- When allocating rooms and making other decisions regarding residents' residencies
- When giving some residents preferential treatment due to a personal interest

Staff people must aim to avoid these situations. If they are unavoidable, they will declare the interest to their manager or the Board to make sure that their duties are carried out properly.

Offers of gifts, benefits, travel or hospitality (meals, accommodation or entertainment) will be declined from residents or people involved with particular residents which benefit or could benefit from the services provided. If there is no opportunity to decline, or if it is rude to decline, the gift or benefit will be disclosed to the CEO or the Board.

Policy References: Conflict of Interest Policy and Gift Policy.

## **Privacy and Confidentiality**

Servants people have a responsibility to ensure we comply with our obligations under privacy legislation by following the Australian Privacy Principles which set out the standards, rights and obligations we have in relation to collecting, storing, accessing and correcting personal information. All Servants people will also ensure they comply with the Health Records Act for information we collect and hold on health matters. Our residents often provide personal information to Servants based on trust and it is critical that we protect their in accordance with our legal obligations. Personal information provided can include addresses, contact details, support needs, identity documents,

government identifiers (like Centrelink Reference Numbers), financial and health information.

Further information is provided in our Privacy Policy, but as a minimum

- Only collect and record personal information that is relevant to the work we do
- Only disclose or share personal information with third parties where Servants has been given explicit authority to do so
- Keep the information we hold accurate and up to date

Policy references: Privacy Policy

## **Assets and Intellectual Property**

Servants' property, including vehicles, laptops and mobile phones, must be treated with respect, used responsibly in accordance with the relevant policies. Any damage, loss or misuse must be reported immediately.

Any IP developed by employees in the course of their employment must be protected and remain the property of Servants.

## **Communications and social media**

Servants employees must maintain high standards of behaviour when using social media and electronic forms of communication for work or personal purposes. This includes but is not limited to: Facebook, WhatsApp, emails, Microsoft teams.

Use of this technology must not be used in any way that could cause offence or harm to others or create reputational risk for Servants.

Only authorised Servants employees can engage in external communications or social media on behalf of Servants and must abide by relevant policies.

Policy references: Communications Policy

## **Child Safety**

All people involved in keeping children safe on behalf of Servants will:

1. contact the police if a child is at immediate risk of abuse (telephone '000')
2. adhere to the child safety Policy and uphold Servants' commitment to child safety at all times
3. take all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse, recognising your duty of care
4. conduct themselves in a manner consistent with their position as an employee, volunteer, leader or contractor of Servants and as a positive role model to children and young people
5. work towards the achievement of the aims and purposes of Servants
6. be responsible for relevant administration of programs and activities in their area
7. establish and maintain a child-safe environment in the course of their work
8. be fair, considerate and honest with others

9. treat children and young people with respect. Value their ideas, opinions and consider their age, background and abilities;
10. promote the cultural safety and participation of:
  - a. **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island** children (for example, by never questioning an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island child's self-identification);
  - b. children with **culturally and/or linguistically diverse** backgrounds (for example, by having a zero tolerance of discrimination)
  - c. **children with a disability**
  - d. **children who identify** as same-sex attracted or as a gender different from their birth sex, or who are gender dysphoric
11. listen and respond to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are telling you that they are or another child has been abused or that they are worried about their safety/the safety of another child;
12. ensure (as far as practicable) that adults are not alone with a child, or, at least, observable by another adult.
13. raise concerns about suspected abuse with the Working with children risk management Officer or a leader as soon as possible;
14. comply with all reporting obligations as they relate to reporting under legislation;
15. record and act upon all allegations or suspicions of abuse, discrimination or harassment;
16. if an allegation of child abuse is made, ensure that, as quickly as possible, the immediate and ongoing safety of the child or children;
17. be professional, consistent and responsible in all your actions;
18. maintain strict impartiality;
19. respect confidentiality when sharing information about children in accordance with the child safety policy and your reporting obligations.

All people involved in the care of children on behalf of Servants must not:

1. ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse;
2. put a child at risk of abuse (for example, by locking doors for an improper reason);
3. speak to a child in a way that is or could be construed by any observer as harsh, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating. Some examples are:
  - a. swearing or using inappropriate language in the presence of a child;
  - b. yelling at a child, except in an emergency situation where the child's safety may be in danger;
  - c. dealing with a child in anger; and
  - d. using hurtful sarcasm.
4. discuss sexual activities with a child, unless it is a specific job requirement and the person is trained or qualified to discuss these matters;
5. have private contact with a child outside of Servants activities without the knowledge and/or consent of Servants' leadership;
6. have any online contact with a child (including by social media, email, instant messaging etc.) or their family (unless necessary and approved by Servants and the child's parents/guardians);
7. use any personal communication channels/devices such as a personal email account or social media to communicate with a child without parental knowledge;
8. exchange personal contact details such as phone number, social networking sites or email addresses with a child (unless necessary and approved by

- Servants and the child's parents/guardians as the agreed form of communication);
9. use, possess, or be under the influence of alcohol while in the presence of or while supervising a child (unless your contact with the child is accidental/incidental and you are not performing your duties as directed by Servants);
  10. use, possess, or be under the influence of illegal drugs while in the presence of or while supervising a child;
  11. provide or allow a child to consume alcohol;
  12. provide or allow a child to consume illegal drugs;
  13. initiate unnecessary physical contact with a child or young person, or do things of a personal nature for them that they can do for themselves;
  14. engage in rough physical games, hold, massage, kiss, cuddle or touch a child in an inappropriate and or/culturally insensitive way;
  15. engage in any sexual contact with a child for any purpose;
  16. take a child to your home or encourage meetings outside program activities (unless necessary and approved by Servants and the child's parents/guardians);
  17. be naked in the presence of a child;
  18. possess sexually explicit printed materials (magazines, cards, videos, films, clothing, etc.) in the presence of children;
  19. sleep in the same bed, sleeping bag, room or tent with a single child;
  20. discriminate against any child, on the basis of age, gender, race, culture, sexuality, or disability;
  21. engage in any activity with a child that is likely to emotionally harm them (e.g. watch a movie that is age or content inappropriate for a child);
  22. be alone with a child unnecessarily and for more than a very short time, unless you are observable by another adult or it is unavoidable;
  23. develop a 'special' relationship with a specific child for their own needs;
  24. show favouritism through the provision of gifts or inappropriate attention;
  25. photograph or video a child without the consent of the child and his/her parents or guardians;
  26. do anything in contravention of Servants' policies, procedures or this Code.

Policy reference: Child Safe policy

## **Complying with the code of conduct**

If a resident deems a staff member or other resident to not have complied with the behaviour outlined in the Code of Conduct, they are within their rights to lodge a complaint. Please see our Complaints and Appeals Policy to find out more.

People who lodge a complaint must not be victimized.

Policy references: Whistleblower policy, Complaints and Appeals Policy

## **Breach of Code of Conduct, Policies or Procedures**

All breaches of the code must be reported and management must address misconduct. Breaches of the conduct or other policies or procedures may lead to disciplinary action.

## **Legislation and standards**

This policy implements the obligations of Servants under:

- Residential Tenancies Act 1997
- Housing Act 1983 (Vic)
- Guidelines for Registered Housing Agencies published by DFFH  
*<https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/guidelines-registered-housing-agencies>*
- Performance Standards for Registered Housing Agencies
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)
- Health Records Act 2001 (Vic)
- Housing Act 1983 (Vic)
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic)
- Privacy Act 1988 (Cwth)
- Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic)
- Child Safe standards (1 July 2022) (Vic)

## **Transparency and accessibility**

This policy will be available on the Servants Community Housing website  
*<https://www.servants.org.au/policies-procedures/>*

## **Review**

This policy is scheduled for review every 3 years.