

1.1 CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

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| **Contact Person** | **CEO** |
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**OUR VISION**

All people are empowered and valued within the community.

**OUR MISSION**

EPIC will build strong relationships with individuals and communities that lead to inclusion.

Epic will set the standard of excellence in the way we deliver services.

**OUR VALUES**

EPIC will be **proactive** in our engagement with individuals and families, stakeholders, community and others.

EPIC will promote and value **inclusion.**

EPIC will build relationships based on **trust** with individuals, families, staff, partners and the broader community.

EPIC will be **reliable**, enabling families and individuals to plan and feel secure.

EPIC will be **consistent** in delivering quality services.

EPIC will be **respectful** in our interactions with all people.

**Standards**

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| **Relates to National Standards for Disability Services**   * Standard 1 – Rights * Standard 6 – Service Management |
| **Relates to Better Care, Better Services Standards**   * Standard 7 – Accountability and Governance |

# Definitions

**Employee:** The term ‘employee’ refers to any person who is employed by EPIC.

**Family and Friend/s:** The terms ‘family’ and ‘friend/s’ recognise the importance of connection with family and friends for individuals who have a disability and highlights the caring/support role they provide. Family includes partners and significant others including parents and children. Broad kinship systems are included in the description of family for Aboriginal people and each individual will guide EPIC regarding who they consider to be in their family.

**Individual:** The term ‘individual’ is used to describe a person who uses EPIC services or support. This definition is consistent with the National Standards for Disability Services and includes people with or without a disability.

**Volunteer:** The term ‘volunteer’ refers to a person who willingly performs a service or provides support to EPIC without pay.

# Scope

This policy applies to all EPIC Board members, employees and volunteers.

# Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish a foundation for Board member, employee and volunteer behaviour that enables people to undertake work with EPIC in accordance with EPIC’s values and philosophy.

The Code of Conduct describes standards of behaviour that everyone involved with EPIC will uphold.

# Policy Statement

EPIC is committed to reaching its goals through honourable conduct and achieving the highest standards of service delivery to the community. EPIC and its Board members, employees and volunteers will behave in ways that are open and honest and willing to be accountable for their decisions and actions.

EPIC’s core values – reliability, trust, inclusion, consistency and being proactive – are at the heart of all decisions that are made by all Board members, employees and volunteers. These values are implemented at EPIC with care and diligence and the decisions that are made are honest, fair and timely, and consider all the relevant information.

## Ethical Conduct

1. A code of conduct is important for a human service organisation like EPIC because of the broad community that we serve and the vulnerable nature of many individuals with a disability that are served.
2. EPIC expects all Board members, employees and volunteers to uphold the rights of individuals and demonstrate respect for them at all times. EPIC will empower individuals to be active citizens who contribute to their communities and exercise choice and control in their lives.
3. Any behaviour that devalues, harms or exploits individuals in any way, takes advantage of them, controls them or prevents them from having a voice in the decisions that affect their lives and infringes their human rights is considered to be unethical.
4. All Board members, employees and volunteers will act honestly and be accountable for their decisions and actions.
5. Board members, employees and volunteers are to be familiar with EPIC’s policies and procedures and refer to them for guidance.

The Board has a collective responsibility for upholding the Code of Conduct at all times and for leading by example in this regard. They do this by:

1. Developing a strategic vision that enables operational plans to be delivered consistent with the Code of Conduct;
2. Identifying and managing risks to organisational sustainability;
3. Monitoring the integrity of financial performance and behaviour to safeguard organisational reputation and resources;
4. Monitoring the performance of the CEO against agreed performance indicators; and
5. Identifying and managing any declared interests in a transparent and accountable way. Interests may be real, potential or perceived.

The CEO and employees have a responsibility to demonstrate, through their actions, the importance of this Code. The CEO and Line Managers have a responsibility to create an open and supportive environment where people feel comfortable raising issues relating to conduct.

Individuals, family members and carers are encouraged to raise concerns they may have about the conduct of a Board member, employee or volunteer with the CEO or a Manager.

The CEO will appoint a Manager to investigate all reported incidents of behaviour that breach the Code of Conduct and take appropriate action that may include disciplinary action resulting in termination of employment.

EPIC will not tolerate retaliation against any person who raises genuine concerns in good faith.

# Procedure for Dealing with Alleged Misconduct

Misconduct refers to decisions, actions or behaviours that contravene this Code of Conduct and/or are deemed to be significant breaches of the trust that underpins effective employee/EPIC relationships (as opposed to poor performance issues). This section sets out the general procedures for dealing with allegations or suspicions of misconduct.

Misconduct may include, but is not limited to:

1. Dishonest decisions or actions related to EPIC property;
2. Being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs while working;
3. Possessing or having control of illegal drugs or drug-taking implements;
4. Wilful, harmful or negligent behaviour that breaches the employee’s employment contract and/or EPIC’s Code of Conduct;
5. Harmful, abusive or offensive behaviour towards another employee, individual, family member or other stakeholder or visitor;
6. The disclosure of EPIC-related confidential and/or privileged information without prior permission;
7. Disparaging comments regarding EPIC as an organisation, the EPIC Board, work colleagues, individuals, families and other stakeholders; and
8. Any other conduct, which in the opinion of the CEO is likely to bring EPIC, EPIC’s related entities, individuals or other stakeholders into disrepute.

The standard for concluding that there has been misconduct is the balance of probability. This means that the CEO needs to be convinced that it is more likely than not that the employee has committed misconduct.

If the CEO suspects that an employee may have committed misconduct, the CEO or their delegate will meet with the employee. The employee will be invited to present their case regarding the situation.

Having heard from the employee the CEO or their delegate will consider all the available information, including evidence or submissions from the employee. The CEO will consider all evidence provided then draw a conclusion on:

1. Whether the facts of the matter can be established;
2. Whether the established facts support a conclusion of misconduct; and
3. If there has been misconduct, how serious is it, and what penalty could apply?

Where the facts cannot be established, or where the established facts do not support a conclusion of misconduct, the employee will be advised as soon as possible by the CEO.

In some cases, misconduct may not be established but the mere possibility of certain facts being true might require the CEO to take some precautionary action on EPIC’s behalf. This will particularly be the case where a duty of care is owed to other employees, individuals, other stakeholders, and/or EPIC’s public reputation.

Where the established facts support a conclusion of misconduct the employee will be advised of this finding. The employee will be provided with an opportunity to make a statement to the CEO on the seriousness of the misconduct and the question of penalty. The employee will be invited to explain any mitigating factors that they would like considered.

The CEO will consider the employee’s statement before drawing a final conclusion on the action to be taken over the misconduct.

In situations in which misconduct has been established, the CEO will present the employee with either:

1. A letter of formal warning of wrongdoing; or
2. A letter of termination of employment.

# Failure to Comply with Policy

Failure to abide by EPIC’s Code of Conduct will be considered misconduct and will invoke disciplinary procedures in most situations. In extreme circumstances, serious breaches may result in instant dismissal.

**My Notes**

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