



Code of Conduct Policy

1. Statement of Intent

The purpose of the Code of Conduct is to provide a framework for the decisions and actions in relation to the behaviour of employees, volunteers, partners and stakeholders. It underpins the commitment to a duty of care for all employees, volunteers, partners and stakeholders. The Code of Conduct explains the principles covering appropriate conduct in a variety of contexts and outlines the standard of behaviour expected. Further, this document also outlines Operation Blue’s expectations in relation to conflicts of interest, corrupt conduct and confidentiality.

2. Policy Guidelines

Operation Blue is an equal employment opportunity organisation, committed to promoting an environment that is free from discrimination, bullying and harassment on the basis of sex, marital status, pregnancy, family responsibility, sexual preference, race, disability, political or religious belief, and age.

It is our expectation that all individuals are to be treated with dignity, courtesy and respect. Therefore, Operation Blue will not condone any behaviour or actions that may offend, insult, humiliate, or result in the risk of violence to another person or group of people.

Finally, employees, volunteers, partners and stakeholders are expected to behave in a professional manner and not allow themselves to be placed in situations where they are exposed to potential conflicts of interest, breach confidentiality or conduct themselves in a way where their action could be viewed as being corrupt to a reasonable person.

3. Definitions

Overriding principle	In relation to bullying, harassment and discrimination, this includes a wide range of unwelcome and/or unsolicited behaviours that are largely defined by the <u>offended</u> person.
<i>Discrimination</i>	Defined as a means of treating someone unfairly because they



	happen to belong to a particular ‘group’ of people.
<i>Harassment</i>	Uninvited, unwelcome behaviour involving a written, verbal, visual or physical affront against another person including sexual or other unwarranted advances.
<i>Bullying</i>	<p>Repeated, less favourable treatment of a person by another, which may be regarded as unreasonable or inappropriate behaviour. It may include, but is broader than, discrimination and sexual harassment. It does not include an argument or one-off violent outburst, although each of these acts may be inappropriate.</p> <p>Bullying may constitute any behaviour that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ belittles the opinions of others; ○ provides unconstructive and unjustified criticism of others; ○ involves teasing or regularly making an individual the brunt of practical jokes and pranks; ○ Involves the displaying of written or pictorial material or sending emails which degrade or offend; ○ involves yelling, screaming, abuse, offensive language, insults, using language designed to degrade and or offend, inappropriate comments about a person’s appearance, lifestyle, slandering an employee’s family; ○ puts down, scares or offends someone; ○ could put their health, safety or welfare at risk; or ○ represents a series of ongoing events (not usually an isolated incident) using inappropriate language designed to degrade others.
<i>Vilification</i>	<p>Generally an act:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ that happens publicly as opposed to privately; ○ that could incite others to hate, have serious contempt



	for, or severely ridicule you or a group of people, because of your race, nationality, descent, ethnic or ethno-religious background, homosexuality, transgender status, having HIV/AIDS, whether actual or presumed.
<i>Violent Acts</i>	Includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Verbal abuse either personally or by telephone; ○ Threats of a sexual nature; ○ Threats of violence; or ○ Ganging up over an individual by a group.
<i>Corrupt Conduct</i>	Commonly involves the dishonest or partial use of power or position which results in one person being advantaged over another. Corruption can take many forms including (but not limited to) official misconduct, bribery and blackmail, unauthorised use of confidential information, fraud and theft.
<i>Fraud</i>	Fraud is dishonest and usually takes the form of giving a false impression through a statement or conduct in order to gain a material advantage.
<i>Maladministration</i>	Conduct that involves action or inaction of a serious nature that is contrary to law; unreasonable, unjust, oppressive or based wholly or partly on improper motives.

4. Protocol

- Operation Blue will promote and uphold this *Code of Conduct*.
- Operation Blue will also promote and uphold equal opportunity policies and practices and will instigate or participate in relevant training.
- Education and training will be provided for all employees and volunteers to raise awareness of their rights and responsibilities in relation to the *Code of Conduct*.
- All documents prepared by Operation Blue will be developed using non-sexist language.
- Employees and volunteers will refrain from:
 - Offensive jokes, taunting or name calling;
 - Teasing or regularly playing practical jokes or pranks;



- Displaying or sending by email or written mail racist/sexist posters and pictures that degrades or offends;
 - Distributing racist or sexual material;
 - Physical contact such as kissing, patting or touching in a sexual way;
 - Requesting sexual favours;
 - Foul or offensive language;
 - Sexually explicit conversation;
 - Inappropriate and/or suggestions/comments about a person's appearance, lifestyle, or family;
 - Belittling opinions or unconstructive criticism;
 - Isolation from normal interactions, training and development.
 - Undermining team performance by deliberately countermanding or contradicting an employee's or volunteer's decisions or actions without consultation with that employee or volunteer in order to belittle or degrade the person's contribution to the organisation;
- Employees and volunteers who are concerned about possible instances of discrimination, harassment or bullying should follow the procedures outlined in the *Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Policy*.
 - Instances of corrupt conduct or maladministration should be reported to the Board of Directors. Employees and volunteers who do not believe that issues raised are resolved to their satisfaction are entitled to take their concerns to:

CONFIDENTIAL
Founding Director
Jack Wilson
jack@opblue.org
www.opblue.org

Anti-Discrimination Board
Level 4, 175 Castlereagh Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000
Phone: (02) 9268 5544



Email: complaintsadb@agd.nsw.gov.au

Website: <http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/adb>

Australian Human Rights Commission

Level 3, 175 Pitt Street

SYDNEY NSW 2000

Complaints info line: 1300 656 419

Email: complaintsinfo@humanrights.gov.au

Website: <http://www.hreoc.gov.au/about/index.html>

5. Personal and Professional Behaviour

Employees and volunteers should not behave in a way which has the intent of offending or embarrassing the organisation, other people or our Partners.

When carrying out duties, employees and volunteers will:

- Behave honestly and with integrity. This includes a duty to report other employees and volunteers who are behaving dishonestly;
- Make sure that work is performed as efficiently, economically and effectively as possible and that the standard of work reflects favourably on the organisation;
- Follow the policies of Operation Blue, whether or not employees or volunteers agree with these policies. Should a situation arise where a policy presents a real personal conflict for an employee, volunteer or visiting service provider, because of personal views or beliefs, then the employee, volunteer or visiting service provider should discuss the matter with the Ministry Leader to have the matter resolved;
- Obey any lawful direction from a person who has the authority to give the direction. If there is a dispute about carrying out a direction, employees and volunteers may appeal through the Ministry Leader.

Employees and volunteers should be aware of the potential power imbalance and unconscious processes within any Partner relationship. Employees and volunteers must remain aware of the particular vulnerability of many Partner organisations who may for example have experienced abuse or exploitation in the past.

Personal relationships with Partner organisations as referred to in this section may be social, sexual or other types such as financial. Any of these kinds of relationships may result in some form of exploitation or involve some form of obligation.

6. Conflicts of Interest

Conflicts of interest exist when it is likely that employees or volunteers could be influenced, or it could be perceived that they are influenced, by a personal interest when carrying out a public duty. Conflicts of interest that lead to biased decision making may constitute corrupt conduct which will not be tolerated by Operation Blue.

Some situations that may give rise to a conflict of interest include the following:

- financial interests in a matter Operation Blue deals with or employees or volunteers are aware that friends or relative have a financial interest in the matter;
- directorships/management outside organisations, membership of Boards of outside organisations, such as non-government organisations where those organisations have some form of dealings with Operation Blue.
- personal beliefs or attitudes that influence the impartiality of advice given, personal relationships with the people Operation Blue is dealing with or investigating which go beyond the level of a professional working relationship;
- access to information that can be used for personal gain;
- subsidised or free travel, accommodation, conference attendance or the like being provided by companies which do or could supply goods or services.

Employees and volunteers may often be the only person aware of the potential for conflict. It is the employee's or volunteer's responsibility to avoid any situation that could compromise their ability to perform duties impartially. It is the employee's and/or volunteer's responsibility to report any potential or actual conflict of interest to the Ministry Leader.

To resolve any conflicts of interest that occur, or should occur, a range of options are available depending on the significance of the conflict. These options include:

- declaring the conflict (or possible conflict) and continuing involvement;

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- declaring the conflict (or possible conflict) and not participating in any decision making or discussion of the matter;
- giving up or ending the personal interest.