



Department of
Education

Shaping the future

Code of conduct



Acknowledgement

We acknowledge and respect the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waters on which our students live and are educated throughout Western Australia.

We acknowledge and understand that Elders, parents, families and communities are the first educators of their children and we recognise and value the cultures and strengths that Aboriginal children bring to the classroom. Aboriginal people have a long tradition of teaching and learning through sharing their connections with Country, community, language and culture, and through their oral histories, stories and lived experiences that are passed from generation to generation.

We recognise and value the learning that Aboriginal children bring with them from their homes and communities into the classroom.

The word Aboriginal is taken to mean Aboriginal, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, and Indigenous. When referring to individuals, use the term Aboriginal person.

Review

This Code of conduct is current as at October 2023. The Executive Director, Professional Standards and Conduct is responsible for reviewing the code on an annual basis and making any necessary changes to meet the needs of the Department of Education and oversight agencies.

For more information

If you have any queries or require further guidance on any aspect of the code and standards, contact:

Professional Standards and Conduct

Department of Education
151 Royal Street
East Perth WA 6004

Advice line

1800 655 985

Residential colleges reporting line

1800 011 114

TRIM Ref: D23/1540377
SCIS: 5357025

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This material is available on request in appropriate alternative formats.



Message from the Director General

Students are at the heart of everything we do.

Being entrusted with their education and care is not only a privilege but a great responsibility. We work together to shape the future of education in this state, each with our part to play in enabling meaningful pathways for all students.

To achieve this, we seek to create a culture within our teaching, learning and working environments that enable us to meet the needs and ambitions of our students, and where all individuals are treated with respect and dignity.

I expect all employees and representatives of the Department to operate with the highest level of integrity and model appropriate standards of conduct and behaviour at all times. By doing so, we build and maintain the trust of the community we serve.

Our Code of conduct is underpinned by and builds on the principles of conduct and minimum standards of conduct and integrity set out in the Public Sector Code of Ethics and Commissioner's Instruction 40: Ethical Foundations.

I am committed to ensuring that all employees and Department representatives adhere to the Public Sector Commission's minimum standards of conduct and integrity: integrity, impartiality, respect for others and, trust and accountability, and that these are demonstrated by everyone, across all sites, at all times.

Our shared values (integrity, equity, voice, truth-telling, teamwork, care, and learning) and our workplace behaviours (purposeful, connected, high performing, and ethical leadership) are at the core of every action we take and every decision we make. The day-to-day operations of the Department should embody these values and behaviours at all times. To demonstrate this in practice, a set of standards has been included in our Code of conduct to guide employees when making both professional and personal decisions.

I have also implemented an Integrity framework to further guide how we practice, manage and account for integrity. This is a valuable tool to support individuals and line managers in embedding our values and the standards in their behaviours.

We all have an individual responsibility to understand and comply with the code, the standards and all relevant policy and legal obligations.

I encourage you to hold yourself, and others to the highest level of integrity each and every day. By doing so, we collectively contribute to a safe and supportive environment for the students of Western Australia, today and into the future.



Lisa Rodgers
Director General



Embodying our Code of conduct

In working for the Department, we agree to embrace the values, practice the behaviours and meet the standards of this code of conduct.

It is important that, as public officials, we conduct ourselves in a way that meets community expectations and maintains public confidence in the Department.

This code applies to all employees and Department representatives, including all contractors, school council and board members, university and TAFE students undertaking practicum placement and volunteers.

Everyone is responsible for their own integrity and for embracing the values, practising the behaviours and meeting the standards, both professionally and personally. Further to this, everyone has an obligation to report suspected misconduct or breaches of the code.

As leaders in the agency, principals and line managers are also expected to use the code to build integrity and accountability and drive an ethical and values-based culture with their staff.

Integrity is everyone's responsibility

We all need to model and embody a culture of integrity, learn and develop integrity knowledge and skills, and be accountable.

As a Department, we are accountable for integrity through legislation and standards, internal controls, audit and governance, fraud and corruption detection systems, self-analysis and review, and responses to integrity breaches.

We maintain and develop integrity through defined roles and responsibilities, integrity education and capacity, leadership, management and organisational culture.

A comprehensive Integrity framework has been developed and implemented based on a thorough assessment of our integrity risks, and whilst it names specific roles, we are all responsible for maintaining the integrity of our Department.

Legislative and regulatory environment

As a Department, we operate within an environment that is defined by legislation, regulations and policy requirements that set the foundation for how we work and what we can and cannot do. This includes the Public Sector Management Act 1994, Corruption Crime and Misconduct Act and Commissioner's Instruction 40: Ethical Foundations.

We operationalise these obligations and requirements through our Code of conduct, policies and procedures, and the management of key enterprise risks, to ensure a consistent understanding of the expectations of all employees and Department representatives. These are available in the Department of Education Policy library.





It is important that we conduct ourselves in a way that meets community expectations and maintains public confidence in the Department.



Our values

The actions of staff are to be guided by our values which reflect the social responsibilities owed to students, parents and carers, communities, stakeholders and each other.

These values should be given practical expression in the day-to-day operations of the Department.



Integrity

We believe a good education is the bedrock upon which everything else stands. We do not take this responsibility lightly and feel privileged to be part of it.

We act in the best interest of students and the community at all times.

We are accountable and honest and have strong ethical and moral principles.

Equity

We recognise the different circumstances, needs and aspirations of students and staff.

We strive for learning and work environments that are free from racism, discrimination, bullying, abuse or exploitation.

We believe in more than one path to success and our purpose is to help every child find theirs.

Voice

We attentively listen to each other and our students, families, communities and stakeholders.

We encourage honest and respectful expression of ideas and diversity of thought.

We empower the voice of children and young people to be partners in their education.

Truth-telling

We commit to learning about the diverse histories, experiences and worldviews of Aboriginal people.

We create culturally safe learning and work environments, and culturally responsive services, free from racism and discrimination.

Teamwork

We support, encourage and inspire each other and value the contribution of all.

We champion trust and inclusivity.

We recognise the importance of collaboration to help students achieve their best.

Care

We practise mutual respect and accept our responsibility to develop and maintain appropriate relationships.

We are attentive and considerate.

We strive to keep ourselves, others and our resources safe.

Learning

We have a positive approach to learning and encourage it in others.

We advance student learning based on our belief that all students have the capacity to learn.

Our workplace behaviours

Purposeful

We put the needs and ambitions of every student at the heart of our decisions and actions.

Connected

We connect our expertise to deliver responsive services.

High performing

We work collectively to get the whole job done and to achieve the best outcome.

Ethical leadership

We hold each other to account to create solutions that make a difference.



Our standards

The code provides a set of standards to guide us in our conduct as employees when making professional and personal decisions. Decisions made in the context of our private lives may also impact our professional standing.

It is our responsibility to understand and adhere to the standards and they should be read in conjunction with all relevant legislation, policies and procedures. In addition, we should exercise fairness, impartiality and timeliness in our decision-making.

Behave professionally and with integrity

We are honest and trustworthy in our relationships, and demonstrate dignity and integrity at all times, both at work and in the community.

Create cultural safety

We create and sustain culturally safe and responsive work and learning environments.

Embrace equity, diversity and inclusion

We celebrate and embrace people from all backgrounds and value every person as an individual.

Maintain safety and wellbeing

We maintain the safety and wellbeing of ourselves, our students, our colleagues and our stakeholders.

Maintain accurate records

We are rigorous in recording, managing and maintaining information.

Protect official and confidential information

We access and use official and confidential information only for authorised purposes.

Behave honestly

We are honest and truthful in our behaviours and we call out instances of fraudulent and corrupt conduct.

Use public resources responsibly

We use the resources of the State in a responsible and accountable manner.

Manage gifts and benefits

We observe integrity and ethics when receiving or offering gifts and benefits.

Declare and manage conflicts of interest

We ensure that our personal or private interests and affiliations do not conflict, or appear to conflict, with our public duties.

Recruit equitably

We follow the Public Sector Commissioner's Employment Standards and the Department's human resources policies, procedures and guidelines.

Make accountable procurements

We conduct ethical, honest and fair procurement activities, and manage contracts appropriately.

Reporting suspected breaches of the code or other conduct

As employees, we must follow the Department's Code of conduct and embody the behaviours of the standards

Behaviour that fails to comply with the code can bring the Department into disrepute, affect the credibility of individuals at work or in the community, and have detrimental impacts on the safety and wellbeing of our colleagues and the students in our care.

Any suspected breaches of the code, or inappropriate, unprofessional or unlawful behaviour needs to be reported. There may also be circumstances in which a suspected breach also constitutes a mandatory report and this action is also required.

There are many ways to make a report:

- Report through your line manager (this should be the first option, except in the case of mandatory reports by a teacher, the mandatory report should occur first).
- Report through another manager or senior officer, where it is not appropriate or you are unable to raise your concerns with your line manager.
- Contact the Standards and Integrity directorate on 1800 655 985 or complaints@education.wa.edu.au.
- Complete a [Staff conduct notification form](#).
- Submit a [Public Interest Disclosure \(PID\)](#).
- Report to:
 - WA Police Force
 - Corruption and Crime Commission
 - Public Sector Commission
 - Ombudsman WA.

The action taken will vary depending on the nature and severity of the behaviour. However, the important thing is that the suspected breach is reported. Depending on the nature of the suspected breach, the individual receiving the report is required to refer the matter to the Standards and Integrity directorate.

Breaches of the code or acts of misconduct may be subject to a formal disciplinary process and action, which can include a fine, reprimand or dismissal from employment.

A breach of the code may also, in certain circumstances, give rise to concerns that a serious criminal offence may have been committed.

Parents, students and community members can also make reports to the Department. To find out how to make a report, refer to the Department of Education website information on [Complaints](#).