

NORTHERN MIDLANDS COUNCIL
HUMAN RESOURCES POLICIES & PROCEDURES



Policy Name:	Employee Code of Conduct Policy
Policy Owner:	People & Culture Business Partner
Originated Date:	August 2015
Amended Date/s:	June 2017; May 2019; August 2023
Review Date:	This Policy should be reviewed as required and/or as legislation changes
Replaced Policy:	Policy 56 – Employee Code of Conduct
Applicable Legislation:	<i>Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Cth)</i> <i>Anti-Discrimination Act 1998 (TAS)</i> <i>Anti-Discrimination and Human Rights Legislation Amendment (Respect at Work) Act 2022 (Cth)</i> <i>Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cth)</i> <i>Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)</i> <i>Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)</i> <i>Local Government Act 1993 (TAS)</i> <i>Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)</i> <i>Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)</i> <i>Work Health & Safety Act 2012 (TAS)</i> <i>Workers Rehabilitation & Compensation Act 1988 (TAS)</i>
Publication Sources:	ECM - 15/013 - Human Resources Policies & Procedures LivePro / HR / HR Policies Works Depot, Childcare Facility and Pool Locations

1. AUTHORITY & APPLICATION:

This Policy should be considered in conjunction with the following policies and procedures:

- Alcohol & Other Drugs (AOD)
- Business Dress
- Communications & Social Media
- Disciplinary
- Diversity
- Equal Employment Opportunity
- Fitness for Work
- Gifts, Benefits & Donations
- Issue Resolution
- Motor Vehicle
- Overtime

- Performance Management
- Recruitment & Selection
- Smoke Free Workplace
- Sun Protection
- Training & Development
- Work Health & Safety
- Working in Remote & Isolated Areas
- Workplace Behaviour Policy

Definitions

Confidential Information - any information, with the exception of information in the public domain other than as a result of a breach by the worker disclosed, or communicated to the worker by, or on behalf of, Council that:

- is marked or designated as 'confidential'
- would at law be considered secret or 'confidential' information of Council
- that the worker might reasonably expect Council to regard as confidential, or
- which comes into the worker's possession, or is learnt, accessed or generated by the worker, in the course of the worker's employment or engagement, whether or not the information was originally supplied by the Council; and
 - relates to Council dealings, customer or client lists, financial position and arrangements, funding, transaction, general affairs, contracts entered into, program planning and consultant's advice, promotional information, planning information, equipment and techniques used or any of the above matters for Council's business
 - without limiting the generality of the above relates to internal Council management, the structure of Council, information about workers, policies, marketing programs, strategies, plans, investments or aspects of its future operations; or
 - relates to internal Council management, the structure of the business of Council, Council personnel, marketing programs, strategies, plans, investments or aspects of its future operations

Conflict of Interest - an actual, potential or perceived conflict between duties or work or services provided to Council and private interests of a worker, in which the worker has private 'interests' which could improperly influence the performance of work, duties or services provided to Council by that worker.

Council - Northern Midlands Council.

Council Property - any real or tangible property (e.g. cash, motor vehicles, plant and equipment); and any intangible property (e.g. intellectual property and goodwill) owned by Council or in Council's possession or control.

Councillor - an elected member of Council known as a Councillor or Alderman or otherwise meeting the definition of a Councillor as defined under section 3 of the *Local Government Act 1993 (TAS)*.

Employee - a person who carries out work for Council as an employee of Council.

General Manager - the General Manager of Council as appointed under section 61 of the *Local Government Act 1993 (TAS)*.

Infringing Workplace Behaviour - any act or omission, which amounts to a breach of any Council policy, contractual obligation or misconduct at common law.

Manager/Supervisor - a person at the workplace who is appointed to a position that has management/supervisory responsibilities for others or their appropriately nominated or authorised delegate.

Other Persons at the Workplace - any person at the workplace who is not a worker including visitors and ratepayers.

Policy - this Policy including the Authority and Application.

Privileged Information - any information which is subject to legal professional privilege.

Sensitive Information - personal information or an opinion relating to personal information about individuals:

- racial or ethnic origin or
- political opinions or
- membership of a political association or
- religious beliefs or affiliations or
- philosophical beliefs or
- membership of a professional or trade association or
- membership of a trade union or
- sexual preferences or practices or
- criminal record and
- health information about an individual

Worker - a person who carries out work in any capacity for Council, including work as:

- an employee
- a contractor or subcontractor
- an employee of a contractor or subcontractor
- an employee of a labour hire company who has been assigned to work at Council

- an outworker
- an apprentice or trainee
- a student gaining work experience
- a volunteer
- Councillor

Workplace - a place where work is carried out for Council.

Training

Council will provide all persons covered by this Policy with the appropriate training, so they are made aware of their responsibilities and obligations under the Policy.

Amendment

Council retains the sole discretion to reasonably vary, terminate or replace this Policy from time to time. Council will consult before amendments are made and will notify and train those the amendments apply to.

Interpretation of Policy

The singular includes the plural and vice versa.

A reference to any legislation includes all delegated legislation made under it and amendments, consolidations, replacement or re-enactments of any of them.

A reference to a policy or procedure means any approved policies or procedures of Council unless otherwise stated.

‘Including’ and similar expressions are not words of limitation.

A reference to a document (including this document) is to that document as amended, novated or replaced unless otherwise stated.

Where a word or expression is given a particular meaning, other parts of speech and grammatical forms of that word or expression have a corresponding meaning.

Examples used in this Policy are for illustrative purposes only and are not intended to be exhaustive.

Unless expressly provided for, this Policy is not in any way incorporated as part of any enterprise agreement and does not form part of any employee’s contract of employment and any applicable enterprise agreement or contract of employment will prevail over this Policy to the extent of any inconsistency.

It is not intended that this Policy impose any obligations on the Council or those covered by it that are unreasonable or contrary to the operation of applicable laws. Any obligation, direction, instruction or responsibility imposed by this Policy must be carried out in a manner that an objective third party would consider to be fair and reasonable taking into account and in the context of all the relevant applicable laws, operational and personal circumstances.

Questions relating to the interpretation, application or enforcement of this Policy should be directed to the person's manager/supervisor or the People & Culture Business Partner.

Reporting of Breaches

Persons covered under the paragraph 'Coverage' must reasonably report breaches of infringing workplace behaviour as follows:

For breaches by:

- an employee (other than the General Manager or other workers) the report must go to the reporting person's applicable manager/supervisor
- the General Manager the report must go to the Mayor (or if unavailable to the next appropriately delegated Councillor) and

as otherwise required or permitted by applicable laws.

Breach of this Policy

Persons covered under the paragraph 'Coverage' who engage in infringing workplace behaviour may (as is appropriate) be subject to appropriate disciplinary action in accordance with the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure or removal from the workplace or termination of services (workers, other than employees and other persons at the workplace). Infringing workplace behaviour may also amount to breaches of applicable laws:

- exposing individuals to legal proceedings and
- making Council vicariously liable for the conduct of others

2. PURPOSE:

The aims of this Employee Code of Conduct Policy are to:

- ensure that employees understand their obligations and do not engage in infringing workplace behaviour
- provide a framework for employees to make decisions and engage in behaviours that are ethical and appropriate for Council and workers
- reflect Council's commitment to the highest standards of honesty and integrity in meeting the needs of Council and the community that we serve

- outline the standards of conduct or behavior expected at all times relevant to work and responsibilities
- operate within applicable laws and related Council documents and
- recognise that employees are ultimately responsible for their own behavior

3. COVERAGE:

This Policy covers and applies to employees in relation to their behavior in the workplace; the performance of work for or in connection with Council and conduct outside the workplace or working hours if the acts or omissions:

- are likely to cause serious damage to the relationship between Council and workers or other persons at the workplace or
- are incompatible with an employees or other person at the workplace's duty to Council or
- damage or are likely to damage Council's interests or reputation

For the avoidance of doubt this Policy does not cover or apply to a Councillor.

4. REQUIREMENTS:

Employees must comply with this Policy. If employees are unsure with regards to compliance, consideration should be given to:

- discussions with other workers or managers/supervisors at the workplace to get an objective viewpoint
- what you would do if it was your money, time or equipment
- being on the receiving end of your decision or action
- whether you could adequately defend your actions to your immediate manager/supervisor
- the potential consequences of your behaviors or decisions for other workers, your family, Council ratepayers and wider community including whether you would feel comfortable with it reported in the media and
- who will benefit? Will it be fair to Council, the parties involved and yourself? If workers still have doubts about the correct thing to do, refer the matter to the General Manager for advice

Managers/Supervisors are required to reasonably promote this Policy within their area of responsibility and take reasonable steps to ensure that any potential breaches of this Policy are identified, taken seriously and acted upon appropriately.

5. GENERAL PRINCIPLES:

Acting with honesty and integrity

Acting with honesty and integrity will maintain the respect and confidence in Council. Employee's will:

- treat workers and other persons within the workplace with honesty, respect and courtesy
- not take improper advantage of their positions in order to obtain a benefit for others or themselves
- report dishonest, unethical, fraudulent or corrupt behavior or maladministration by workers or other persons at the workplace
- not seek or accept any type of unauthorised compensation, fee/payment (i.e. monetary or non-monetary), commission or gratuity from a third party in connection with the operation of Council
- not offer or accept any, hospitality, or other financial/non-financial benefit without the prior written approval of the General Manager
- not make or take any bribes, kickbacks, inducements or other illegal payments of any kind for the benefit of any person or party in connection with obtaining orders or favourable treatment or for any other purpose in connection with the operations of Council
- report in writing to the General Manager with full details of any gifts, hospitality, or other financial/non-financial benefit received by employees and
- encourage and support good faith reporting of breaches of this Policy without retribution

Acting with professionalism

Professionalism is conduct that fosters and preserves reputations as individuals and that of Council. To demonstrate professionalism, employees will:

- not engage in or tolerate infringing workplace behavior
- with the exception of comments made not in contravention of the *Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)* support and not publicly criticise decisions of Council
- not undermine or bring Council's integrity or reputation into disrepute
- work cooperatively as a team and treat workers and other persons at the workplace with respect and dignity
- exercise diligence, best endeavours and sound judgement when carrying out their duties or providing services
- maintain a professional relationship with third parties when engaged as a worker
- provide levels of service that they are competent and authorised to provide
- not make unauthorised statements or commitments on behalf of the Council

Acting in accordance with the law and policies and procedures

Employees should be familiar with and comply with all relevant laws and policies and procedures. Employees will:

- respect and abide by all applicable laws, policies and procedures
- comply with all lawful and reasonable directions from authorised persons
- only act within their authority
- protect Council property, in particular, take care to avoid or minimise the possibility of theft or misuse of Council property

- only use Council property for Council purposes and in accordance with the appropriate authorisations
- not use Council property for private purposes unless authorised by their manager/supervisor and
- comply with delegations and other authorisations as directed

Declaring and avoiding conflicts of interest

Conflict of interests can jeopardise confidence in Council. Employees will:

- not take on personal business or financial or private interests that compete or conflict with Council's interests
- disclose to their manager/supervisor situations that may create a conflict of interest before conflict arises, or if one does occur, immediately on becoming aware
- seek approval before taking up other employment or engagements outside of their position with Council, where they may create a conflict of interest
- declare any conflict of interest that could occur through shareholdings, ownership of real estate or being the trustee or beneficiary of a trust
- not use or take advantage of any Council property or information belonging to Council for personal benefit or for the benefit of any other person
- not engage directly or indirectly in any outside business activity involving commercial contact with Council or work for the benefit of Council commercial customers, suppliers or competitors without the prior written consent of the General Manager and
- disclose ownership of shares in a listed entity which deals with or competes with Council to the General Manager

Respect privacy and do not misuse information

Employees will:

- not disclose confidential information to any person or entity without the prior written consent of the General Manager
- not disclose to any person or entity without the prior written consent of the General Manager or improperly use specific information that is part of a 'closed' Council or

committee meeting or derived from Council business referred to in s338A and 339 of the *Local Government Act 1993 (TAS)*

- disclose confidential information if required by applicable laws, (e.g. court or tribunal order etc.) that before such disclosures are made, the nominated Council delegate is advised of the pending disclosure
- not use confidential information for the purpose of directly or indirectly obtaining personal gain or another benefit
- only access confidential information for authorised work related tasks
- not encourage others to disclose confidential information or sensitive information or privileged information
- ensure the secure collection, storage and disposal of confidential information and sensitive information regardless of its medium and
- comply with applicable laws regarding declaration of any financial interest they or a close associate of theirs may have regarding any matter in which they provide advice to Council, make a decision or determination or make a recommendation to Council about

Corporate and personal responsibility

Council is committed to service excellence and aims to maintain public confidence and respect. Employees will:

- commit to taking reasonable care to avoid acts and omissions that may adversely affect themselves, workers and other persons at the workplace
- aim to be socially, financially and environmentally responsible in the use of Council resources and
- report any corrupt or fraudulent conduct or any maladministration