**Sample Code of Conduct for Employees**

**Introduction**

The most essential resource of any charity is its people. Employees play a particularly important part in executing the work of the charity. The provision of support, supervision and appraisal allows staff to realise their potential in the workplace. Charity trustees are responsible for providing leadership to employees. This includes supporting and valuing the contribution employees make to the aims and objectives of the charity as well as promoting standards of behaviour as outlined in this document.

Charity trustees should support employees in carrying out their duties and always, in terms of their conduct, serve as an example of how everyone in the charity should conduct themselves in order to reflect the values of the charity.

This document is intended to assist the board of charity trustees in developing a code of conduct which provides guidelines on the standards of behaviour expected of employees. It should be read in conjunction with:

* [Sample Code of Conduct for Volunteers;](https://www.charitiesregulator.ie/media/1800/sample-code-of-conduct-for-volunteers.docx)
* [Sample Employee Recruitment Policy.](https://www.charitiesregulator.ie/media/1801/sample-employee-recruitment-policy.docx)

This document does not contain an exhaustive description of matters (legal requirements or otherwise) which need to be addressed in the context of the relationship between a charity and its employees. Many of the expectations of employees set out in the sample code of conduct below will be addressed in more detail in subject matter specific policies of your charity and/or in an employee’s contract of employment (for example, in policies regarding confidentiality, data protection, whistleblowing, health and safety, diversity and inclusion, IT, electronic communications, social media, grievance procedures, disciplinary procedures, and conflicts of interest). This sample code of conduct is not intended to be a substitute for such policies.

**What is a Code of Conduct for Employees?**

A code of conduct for employees defines the **standards of behaviour** expected of employees in order to ensure that:

* the charity is effective, open and accountable;
* employees have productive and supportive relationships with other employees, volunteers, and other persons who interact with the charity.

The Code of Conduct should apply to all employees of the charity and should be shared with new employees as soon as they agree to take up employment in the organisation. The board of charity trustees should review the Code of Conduct for Employees at 3-year intervals or as appropriate.

**SAMPLE Code of Conduct for Employees**

This sample code of conduct for employees should be adapted for your charity by filling in the name of your charity where appropriate and customising as relevant. This sample code of conduct may need to be adapted in order to align with your charity’s other policies and procedures as appropriate. Likewise, your charity’s other policies and procedures may need to be aligned as appropriate with this sample code of conduct.

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| **[CHARITY NAME]**  **Code of Conduct for Employees** |

The purpose of the Code of Conduct for employees is to set out standards of behaviour expected from employees of [insert Charity name]. All employees should read and comply with this Code of Conduct.

All employees should maintain the highest standards of behaviour in the performance of their duties by:

* Fulfilling their role as outlined in their contract of employment and job description to a satisfactory standard;
* Performing their duties to the best of their ability in a safe, efficient and competent way;
* Following the charity’s policies and procedures as well as any instructions and directions reasonably given to them;
* Acting honestly, responsibly and with integrity;
* Treating others with fairness, equality, dignity and respect;
* Acting in a way that is in line with the purpose and values of the charity and that enhances the work of the charity;
* Communicating respectfully and honestly at all times with colleagues and all persons who interact with [insert Charity name];
* Observing safety procedures, including obligations concerning the safety, health and welfare of other people, in line with training provided to them;
* Reporting any health and safety concerns even if it is not within their area of responsibility;
* Raising concerns about possible wrongdoing in the workplace with [insert details/title of appropriate member of charity’s personnel]/ in line with [insert Charity name]’s whistleblowing policy;
* Directing any questions regarding [insert Charity name]’s policies, procedures, support or supervision to their line manager/supervisor;
* Addressing any issues or difficulties about any aspect of their role or how they are managed in line with [insert Charity name]’s grievance procedures;
* Keeping confidential matters confidential;
* Exercising caution and care with any documents, material or devices containing confidential information and, at the end of their employment with [insert Charity name], returning any such documents, material or devices in their possession;
* Seeking authorisation before communicating externally on behalf of [insert Charity name];
* Complying with [insert charity name’s] Information Technology Policy;
* Declaring any interests that may conflict with their work or the work of the charity (e.g. other business interests or employment). If any doubt arises as to what constitutes a conflict of interest, employees may seek guidance from [insert details/title of appropriate member of charity’s personnel];
* Undertaking relevant training to maintain and improve knowledge, skills and work practices;
* Maintaining an appropriate standard of dress and personal hygiene;
* Disclosing the fact that they have been charged with, or convicted of, a criminal offence by prosecuting authorities (or given the benefit of the Probation of Offenders Act 1907 as amended) to [insert details/title of appropriate member of charity’s personnel]. This may have implications for their employment.[[1]](#footnote-1) For the avoidance of doubt, employees are not required to disclose the fact or details of ‘spent convictions’ under the Criminal Justice (Spent Convictions and Certain Disclosures) Act 2016 (as amended) to [insert charity name].

Employees are expected NOT to:

* Bring the charity into disrepute (including through the use of email, social media and other internet sites, engaging with media etc.);
* Engage in any activity which may cause physical or mental harm or distress to another person (such as verbal abuse, physical abuse, assault, bullying, or discrimination or harassment on the grounds of gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race or membership of the Traveller community);
* Be affected by alcohol, drugs, or medication which will affect their ability to carry out their duties and responsibilities during working hours;
* Provide a false or misleading statement, declaration, document, record or claim in respect of [insert charity name], its volunteers, employees or charity trustees;
* Engage in any activity that may damage property;
* Take unauthorised possession of property that does not belong to them;
* Engage in illegal activity in the workplace;
* Improperly disclose, during or after their employment with [insert charity name], confidential information gained in the course of their work;
* Seek or accept gifts, rewards, benefits or hospitality from a third party in the course of their work, which might reasonably be seen to compromise their integrity or personal judgement. (NOTE: Any gift other than a modest token of nominal value should be courteously but firmly declined, and should be reported to [insert details/title of appropriate member of charity’s personnel]. Gifts or hospitality that are generally considered as common business or social courtesies are acceptable only as long as they are reasonable in type, frequency and value. If any doubt arises as to what constitutes a modest token, employees may seek guidance from [insert details/title of appropriate member of charity’s personnel].)

Where an employee is found to be in breach of the standards outlined in this Code of Conduct, this may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal in accordance with [insert charity name]’s disciplinary procedure.

The board of charity trustees will review the Code of Conduct for employees at 3-year intervals or as appropriate. The [insert details/title of appropriate member of charity’s personnel] is responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented effectively. All other staff and volunteers, including charity trustees, are expected to facilitate this process.

Signed . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

Name . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

Date . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

**Legal Disclaimer:**

This document is issued by the Charities Regulator under section 14(1)(i) of the Charities Act 2009, to encourage and facilitate the better administration and management of charitable organisations. It is published as part of a suite of guidance, intended to provide support to charity trustees to meet their legal duties, by putting in place systems, processes and policies which ensure charities are managed in an effective, efficient, accountable and transparent way.

This document is not, nor is it intended to be, a definitive statement of the law and it does not constitute legal advice. This document is not a substitute for professional advice from an appropriately qualified source. The Charities Regulator recommends that charity trustees consult their governing document or obtain their own independent legal advice where necessary. The Charities Regulator accepts no responsibility or liability for any errors, inaccuracies or omissions in this document.

1. In seeking information from employees about criminal convictions (or the fact that they have been charged with an offence or given the benefit of the Probation of Offenders Act 1907 (as amended)) charities should comply with data protection law and be aware of the limitations on the circumstances in which it is possible to process such information (e.g. see section 55 of the Data Protection Act 2018).  It is also important that charities have due regard to the provisions of the Criminal Justice (Spent Convictions and Certain Disclosures) Act 2016 (as amended). If a charity has any doubt about its rights and responsibilities in this regard, it should obtain legal advice. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)