

HousingFirst

Code of Conduct *Employees*

CODE OF CONDUCT

Chief Executive's foreword

HousingFirst is entrusted by the government, the community and its tenants to manage its services and assets efficiently, fairly, impartially and with integrity. We hold an important position in the community that requires transparency, honesty, respect and fairness for all people we support and serve. As a non-profit housing association, we make decisions each day that affect the lives of others. In everything we do, we are expected to act and be seen to act in the interest of our tenants, staff, and partners.

The Code of Conduct (the Code) explains the minimum standards of conduct and behaviour expected of HousingFirst employees.

All employees, contractors and consultants are expected to adhere to the Code in the course of their duties and when representing the company at any external meeting or event.

Employees are encouraged to discuss the Code with each other, at team meetings, during one on one's, and refer to it when making important decisions.

Active and open discussion of ethical dilemmas and conflicts of interest helps to foster a healthy and professional organisational culture and one that can withstand the highest scrutiny.

If there is anything in this Code that you do not understand, please speak with a member of the management team.



Haleh Homaei
Chief Executive Officer

HousingFirst Corporate Values

Our Corporate Values express to our staff, tenants and partners how we achieve our Mission and realise our Vision. They are an expression of HousingFirst's ethos and are expressed through our interaction with our colleagues, applicants and tenants, suppliers and all other HousingFirst stakeholders including the wider community. We use our Corporate Values to make decisions that will align with our mission: *Building Affordable Homes and Local Communities*

We will sustain these values as our business expands and our culture evolves.

Integrity

We will have a shared commitment to openness, honesty and fairness.

Respect

We will treat all people equitably and well, without judgement or prejudice.

Inclusiveness

We will build communities and facilitate participation.

Collaboration

We will engage with colleagues, tenants and business partners in a team-based approach.

Accountability

We will be responsible for our actions and act professionally.

Purpose and scope

HousingFirst employees are responsible for upholding the integrity of the organisation and complying with the Code of Conduct. One person's misconduct can tarnish the credibility of all of us and make it more difficult to achieve our organisational objectives.

All employees (full time, part time, temporary casual, in house contractors/consultants) are expected to adhere to the Code in the course of their duties and allow it to guide their behaviour, decision making and development whilst employed at HousingFirst.

The Code should be read in conjunction with other policies that are referred to in this document and within the context of our Corporate Values.

This Code of Conduct is for HousingFirst employees. Along with responsibilities set out in this document, HousingFirst Directors and Officers should refer to the Code of Conduct (Directors and Officers). Maintenance contractors will be provided with the Code of Conduct (Contractor) when they commence work with HousingFirst.

Leadership responsibilities

Directors and Managers have an important role in demonstrating ethical leadership, and role modelling the standards of behaviour outlined in this Code.

Directors and Managers must demonstrate accountability for their own performance and behaviour as well as that of their direct reports.

Directors and Managers are responsible for the health and safety and performance of their direct reports. They are accountable for addressing continued unsatisfactory performance and errors, misconduct and breaches of this Code and other company policies and procedures.

Directors and Managers are responsible for ensuring that their direct reports:

- Understand and follow the Code
- Understand and adhere to relevant legislation, policies, procedures and corporate values
- Understand their jobs, how they are expected to do their job and the results for which they are accountable
- Have equitable access to learning and development opportunities

Directors and Managers are also responsible for ensuring:

- They set a good example of ethical behaviour, accountability and open honest communication
- They acknowledge and encourage ethical and professional work practices
- The systems of work and the work premises and environment are safe and free from inappropriate behaviour such as discrimination, harassment, bullying and fraud and any other unlawful conduct
- They encourage compliance with the Code and ensure that its principles are discussed regularly through team meetings, one on ones and during the performance review process
- They take appropriate action on breaches of the Code and report major breaches to senior management
- That any breach or potential breach is treated seriously and professionally and managed

promptly and confidentially.

Elements of the Code

The Code sets out an overarching set of standards of behaviour and conduct but should be read in conjunction with other policies of the organisation. Key elements of the Code are described below.

Professional conduct

Employees should behave professionally in all situations and with all stakeholders including, but not limited to, each other, Managers and Board members, suppliers, contractors, clients and other agencies.

Professional conduct is defined as exhibiting a courteous, conscientious and generally business-like manner.

At HousingFirst this is demonstrated in your verbal language and communication, your personal appearance and how you conduct and present yourself at work, in meetings, and at external events, training and seminars.

The following are examples of acts which HousingFirst considers unprofessional and unacceptable:

- Offensive language including swearing and racial slurs
- Showing aggression through yelling or making emotional gestures
- Refusing to follow or failing to carry out a reasonable instruction from your manager
- Ignoring work duties or wasting time during work hours and serious delays in making a decision or taking action
- Coming to work under the influence of alcohol or drugs or bringing illegal substances to work
- Being absent from work without a valid reason or notifying your manager
- Being continually late for work, events or meetings
- Being wasteful or neglectful of company equipment or using company resources for unauthorised or illegal purposes.

Policy Reference: Positive and Fair Workplace, Equal Opportunity, Discrimination, Bullying and Harassment (Fair Treatment) Policy

Discrimination, bullying and harassment

HousingFirst has a zero tolerance when it comes to discrimination, bullying and harassment. HousingFirst will ensure that all decisions affecting employees and tenants are free from discrimination.

Bullying and harassment are against the essence of HousingFirst's Corporate Values and Code of Conduct and you must ensure your behaviour and actions do not offend, intimidate or humiliate any person you engage with in the course of completing your role.

Policy Reference: Positive and Fair Workplace, Equal Opportunity, Discrimination, Bullying and Harassment (Fair Treatment) Policy

Health and safety

Employees must adhere to the Workplace Safety Policy and report any accident, near miss or injury to their manager as soon as possible.

Everyone at HousingFirst is responsible for health and safety. As a minimum, your responsibility is to:

- Immediately report any hazard or potential hazard to your manager to avoid a potential injury
- Report any injury, accident or near miss to your manager as soon as possible
- Ensure you know who your first aid officer and fire wardens are
- Complete the Work Health and Safety (WHS) induction checklist on commencement
- Complete the ergonomic assessment on commencement and each time you move desks
- Request any equipment you need to ensure your health and safety at work.

Policy Reference: Work Health and Safety Policy

Corrupt conduct, gifts, bribes and hospitality

Employees must not participate in any activity that is fraudulent or gives the perception of being fraudulent whether within the organisation or not.

You must not solicit or accept gifts, bribes, hospitality, benefits, service or favours. This may be considered corrupt conduct and certain types of corrupt conduct may amount to a breach of Victorian or Commonwealth Law.

In certain circumstances, declining a gift of nominal value may cause unnecessary offence. Gifts of nominal value may be accepted if declared and approved by the CEO.

HousingFirst maintains a gift register for items with a value of over \$100. The gift register is monitored by the CEO.

Employees have a responsibility to guard against and report instances or potential instances of fraud and corruption. Staff are encouraged to report any concerns or seek guidance from their manager but we understand this is not always possible. As such you should refer to HousingFirst's Whistle-blower Policy.

Policy Reference: Whistle-blower Policy

Conflict of interest

All employees will avoid any actual, perceived or potential conflict of interest with the primary responsibility being the disclosure of the conflict in advance.

Conflicts of interest are particularly likely to arise where a staff member has a family or personal relationship with another party. As such, employees are required to disclose these relationships immediately where it may affect or be seen to affect HousingFirst's efficiency or reputation.

For other examples of where conflicts may arise and how to manage and disclose an actual or perceived conflict, please refer to the Conflict of Interest Policy.

Policy Reference: Conflict of Interest (Employees) Policy

Child protection - mandatory reporting obligations and alternative reporting pathways

HousingFirst employees should consider the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and young people and, if their work involves contact with children and young people, comply with relevant policies and guidelines that apply to such work.

HousingFirst employees are 'mandatory reporters' under the Keep Them Safe shared approach to child welfare which was introduced as part of the Children's Legislation Amendment (Wood Inquiry Recommendations) Act 2009. This means they are legally obliged to make a report to the Child Protection Helpline during the course of their work, they have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child or youth is at risk of significant harm.

HousingFirst employees can refer to the Keep Them Safe Mandatory Reporting Guide or contact the Child Protection Helpline for advice about reporting requirements and related obligations.

Use of equipment and facilities

You must be careful and mindful when using company equipment and resources. You must not abuse, waste or destroy company equipment and resources.

Reasonable use of company equipment and resources for personal purposes is acceptable, however this must not be abused or impinge on the operations of the business, your ability to complete your work, or impact the company financially through time or resource wastage.

Any use of company equipment must not be used for gambling, pornographic, racist or other illegal purposes and not breach other HousingFirst policies or damage the reputation of HousingFirst.

Company cars can only be used for business purposes.

Policy Reference: Vehicle Use, Social Media, Internet & Email Policy

Procuring goods and services

When procuring goods and services for HousingFirst, employees must be responsible with the company's money and ensure good value for money.

You must follow the HousingFirst Schedule of Delegations and Procurement Policy when purchasing for HousingFirst and keep in mind our policies and codes related to conflict of interest, bribes and corruption.

Policy Reference: Schedule of Delegations; Procurement Policy

Corporate Information

Privacy Information kept by HousingFirst will be kept confidential and only be used for functions or activities that are reasonably necessary.

HousingFirst employees have a responsibility to ensure we comply with our obligations under privacy legislation by following the Australian Privacy Principles which set out the standards, rights and obligations we have in relation to collecting, storing, accessing and correcting personal information.

All HousingFirst employees will also ensure they comply with the *Health Records Act* for information we collect and hold on health matters.

Policy Reference: Privacy Policy, Privacy Data Breach Notification Procedure

Confidential information

Information which HousingFirst has released to the public through our website, e.g. the Annual Report, Strategic and Business Plan, media releases should be considered public information. All other information should be considered confidential unless otherwise approved by the Chief Executive Officer.

If you are unsure what information is considered confidential, you should ask your manager before disclosing any information related to HousingFirst via any means or medium.

Public Comment

Employees must not make public comment on behalf of HousingFirst to media, on radio and television or in the press, journals, books or other publications without the prior written consent of the Chairperson or the Chief Executive Officer.

Record keeping

HousingFirst employees have a responsibility to keep full and accurate records of its activities relating to employment, tenants and tenant applications in the relevant record keeping systems and files.

Our records are our corporate memory and provide evidence that we have followed proper procedures and the law in carrying out our work.

Record keeping and electronic and paper based filing should be kept up to date as part of good business practice and to also safeguard our privacy and confidentiality obligations.

Other employment or business

Employees are required to advise their General Manager of any external business or employment they are engaged in when joining HousingFirst. Current employees wishing to undertake additional work or start a business must advise their General Manager before commencing such activity.

Approval will most likely be given if the activity will/does not adversely affect your ability to perform your role, or give rise to a conflict of interest.

HousingFirst staff should not allow their participation in any other work, whether volunteer or otherwise, to impact their ability to efficiently and effectively meet their obligation to HousingFirst or use HousingFirst equipment, resources and time to complete this activity.

HousingFirst reserves the right to review their decision should the activity affect your performance or be in conflict with HousingFirst's business.

Leaving HousingFirst

When you leave HousingFirst, you are required to return all documentation and equipment provided or obtained during the course of your employment.

After leaving, material, ideas and other work produced during the course of your employment remains the property of HousingFirst unless there is an agreement in writing to the contrary.

During subsequent employment and activities, you should continue to respect the confidentiality of information gained during your time at HousingFirst and not use it for personal or financial gain.

Applying this Code

The Code of Conduct forms part of your conditions of employment. A breach of the Code of Conduct may lead to disciplinary action ranging from counselling, further training and up to and including instant dismissal.

Employees should be aware that criminal and civil legal action may also be taken against them as a result of breaches of this Code where state and commonwealth law is breached.

Transparency and accessibility

This policy will be available at www.housingfirst.org.au

Version control

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