

Snodland Town Council
Officer Code of Conduct Policy

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Introduction

The code of conduct defines the standards of behaviour we expect of all our employees. If you do not understand it or how to comply with it, you must ask your line manager to explain it to you. The intention of the code of conduct is to helpfully set out the broad principles of how we should do things – it is not an exhaustive list of what you can and cannot do. (The code of conduct is enforced through our disciplinary procedure).

1 Behave professionally

We expect all staff to interact and work with the public and colleagues in an appropriate and professional way at all times. We expect you to engender public trust and confidence in the council and not to bring the organisation into disrepute. This includes action outside of work that is relevant to your job role or that may undermine public confidence in you to carry out your role. You must not knowingly publish or post anything, including on social media, which could damage the reputation of the Council.

We expect you to co-operate with your manager and comply with all lawful management instructions. You are expected to work in a professional manner with all Councillors regardless of their political affiliation. If you have or enter into a close personal relationship with a Councillor (sometimes referred to as an Elected Member) you need to disclose this (see Section 12).

2 Act with honesty and integrity

We expect you to communicate openly and honestly with your line manager about your work. We expect you to submit accurate claims for expenses and allowances – claiming only for payments which you are entitled to receive. If you receive any payment in error, for example an overpayment of salary or expenses, you must notify your manager as soon as possible. You must keep accurate records of your working time where this is required. You are not permitted to use your position to obtain a discount for goods or services unless this is part of a recognised employee discount scheme.

3 Act lawfully

You must comply with the law in all aspects of your work. You are required to immediately notify your manager in writing if you are arrested, cautioned, charged or convicted of any crime at any point during your employment. Your manager will assess whether this information has any impact on your job role. If you suspect that someone is breaking the law, you must report this - speak to your line manager in the first instance. Alternatively, you should raise your concerns using the Whistleblowing Policy which is in the employment handbook.

4 Respect equality and diversity

Respecting the equality and diversity of the public that we serve, and your colleagues is very important. We expect you to promote our commitment to equality and diversity at all times. You must not discriminate against any individual on the basis of their protected characteristic(s) (ie because of their age, disability, race, religion or belief, gender, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity leave or because of a person's marital or civil partnership status). You should appropriately challenge any discriminatory behaviour that you witness – and seek support from your line manager in the first instance.

5 Contact with the media

You must not make statements to the media on behalf of the council unless it is your job to do so. All media enquiries should be referred to the CEO.

6 Fulfil your safeguarding responsibilities

We are committed to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults, and it is essential that you fully comply with our safeguarding policies and procedures. This includes adhering to specific local rules and procedures that apply in your area of work. If you have any concerns about any aspects of safeguarding, you must raise these with your line manager in the first instance. Alternatively, you should raise any safeguarding concerns using the Whistleblowing Procedure.

7 Handle information securely

We have specific rules on data security which are expressed in our data protection policies. You are required to comply with these rules when handling information. You must not access or use any information obtained in the course of your employment for personal gain. Employees who have access to an IT system which holds information on service users, must only access cases which have been assigned to them. Inappropriate access to information for personal use will be subject to disciplinary action.

8 Data Protection

Any data collected and processed as part of employing and managing employees is held securely. It is accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of completing that specific procedure; process or activity. Records are retained and destroyed in accordance with the organisation's retention schedule. Inappropriate access or disclosure of employee data constitutes a data breach and should be

reported in accordance with the Data Protection Policy immediately. It may also constitute a disciplinary offence, which may be dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure.

9 Comply with all policies, rules and procedures

- You are required to act in accordance with all our policies and procedures and comply with local rules that are in place in your area of work. These include
 - our Financial Regulations
 - our Procurement Rules
 - our IT Policies i.e. computer misuse policy, internet policy, email policy, mobile device policy (see employment handbook)
 - our health and safety policy and procedures laid out in the Health and Safety Handbook
 - including the Drug Alcohol and Substance Misuse policy
 - Anti-Money Laundering and Anti-Fraud Policy
 - All employment policies laid out in the employment handbook

10 Fulfil your management responsibilities

If you have line management responsibility you must make sure your employees are aware of the code of conduct and address any breaches as soon as these occur. We expect you to proactively manage any employment issues that arise in your team in accordance with our employment policies. You are responsible for proactively managing your team's performance and promptly addressing any performance issues that arise. You must not be involved in making significant decisions that involve a relative, partner or friend. You are not permitted to line manage a partner or family member.

11 Declare relevant interests

You are required to declare any private interests that you have and any work that you undertake elsewhere. The table below provides examples, if you have any doubts please contact your manager.

Situation	Action Required
Potential conflicts of interest: For example, • Involvement with clubs or societies that we work with or fund • Involvement with organisations that provide similar services to the Council • Relationships with elected members (Councillors)	Declare any interests that you have outside of work and discuss with your manager and agree how any conflicts can be avoided. You must also declare if your partner or a close relative had a potential interest (Eg if you partner is involved with an organisation that is tendering for work with the Council).

	Mutual respect between employees and councillors is essential. Close personal familiarity however can damage the relationship. It can also be embarrassing to other employees. Such familiarity should therefore be avoided.
Undertaking private work (paid or unpaid) or secondary employment. or consultancy work	Members of the Management Team must obtain written permission from the Council to undertake any other jobs. They will also be required to discuss with their line manager the potential impact of additional work on their role with the Town Council. All employees undertaking additional employment must ensure that work does not conflict with the interest of the Town Council, or impact on their ability to perform their Town Council duties.

12 Declare gifts and hospitality

You must declare any gifts and hospitality that you are offered as described in the employment handbook. If you have any doubts about whether you should accept a gift or offer of hospitality, you should speak to your line manager.

13 Further information

Employees with questions about the code of conduct should speak to their line manager. Managers requiring further guidance should speak to the CEO and/or the Staffing Committee.